



neighborhood coalition for shelter

HELPING NEW YORKERS FIND THEIR WAY HOME

Louis Nine House Opens in the Bronx

Louis Nine House, our newly constructed residence with 46 studio apartments for young adults who are homeless or aging out of foster care, has just opened in the Bronx. Excited residents have been moving in to the green building and getting to know staff and each other over recent weeks. Twenty-year-old Andrew Thomas (pictured), who wants to pursue a career as a computer technician, said "I'm excited because I'm getting my own apartment. Otherwise, I'd be homeless." Sonia Washington, the Youth Development Coordinator at Louis Nine House, related the story of one young woman so eager to live at the residence that she hand delivered all her paperwork, checking and double-checking its accuracy, arrived at appointments alone and without any assistance from a case worker, and called Sonia to find out if she could help process other peoples' applications in order to ensure the speedy approval of her own. Sonia added, "It's scary to know that our young adults have gone through so much hardship in their lives."

Several years ago, NCS noticed an increase in the number of young men and women with a history of foster care using our drop-in center, and learned that the Department of Health and Human Services had recently identified the link between foster care and future homelessness as a "high-priority problem." Three in ten of the nation's homeless adults have a history of foster care. In New York State, a thousand youth age out of foster care annually and 36% experience homelessness. NCS created a cutting-

edge solution to sever the link between foster care and homelessness. Louis Nine House will provide a holistic and nurturing environment where young adults have the best possible chance of moving on to lives of independence and fulfillment.

Referred by foster care agencies and the shelter system, residents of Louis Nine House are offered counseling, educational, vocational, and case management, and health, mental health and substance abuse services. Every resident will be helped to identify their strengths and interests, set goals for their future and guided to a vocational or educational path to achieve them. Emporium Online, our technology training program, is expanding and moving into Louis Nine House, where it will help twice as many people develop the job skills they need to succeed and thrive in today's market. Staff notes that these young adults are facing so many obstacles to success that it can feel like every time they take a step forward, someone is knocking them back. Louis Nine House will help them identify and remove barriers to success so that they can transition to stable and healthy adulthoods.

NCS thanks WHEDCO, the developer of this project and a partner of NCS; Edelman, Sultan, Knox, Wood/Architects, LLP; Mega Contracting, Inc; New York City Department of Housing Preservation & Development and the Low Income Tax Credit Program for construction funding; and, for service and operating funding: New York State Office of Mental Health, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, New York City Department of Homeless Services and HUD Shelter Plus Care Program.



**New Louis Nine House Residents
Andrew Thomas and Araf Meriweather
with OASAS Program Administrative Assistant
Daniel Martinez (center).**



**Louis Nine House, NCS's new
residence for young adults.**

SAVE THE DATE

Spring Into Summer A Night to Party for NCS

Monday, June 1, 2009 • 6:30p.m.

Punch Restaurant

913 Broadway (between 20 & 21st streets)

Honoring: Stephanie Guest,
Past NCS Board President

Benefit Co-Chairs: Michelle Marie Heinemann,
Stephanie Shuman and Sydney R. Shuman

For more information, contact Liz Hinden:
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NCS PROGRAMS

- NCS Residence
- Louis Nine House
- New Vistas
- Transitions
- OPTIONS**
- Emporium Online
- NCS Outpatient Services

NEIGHBORHOOD COALITION FOR SHELTER is dedicated to providing housing and support that can transform lives and to working with community partners to reduce, prevent and ultimately end homelessness.

Message from the CEO



Anne R. Teicher

We are so pleased to tell you about our new strategic plan, which will help NCS transition into the next decade and serve the homeless men and women in our community with more efficacy and scope than ever. Our last strategic plan was published in 2006, and we have successfully accomplished many of the goals laid out back then. We opened Louis Nine House, increased our transitional housing beds, created an OASAS-licensed substance abuse treatment program, strengthened our vocational and job-training program, bolstered our organizational infrastructure, and have undertaken and published research (see article on opposite page). The closing of our drop-in center in 2008, due to New York City budget cuts and policy changes, necessitated the creation of a new strategic plan. This turned out to be a welcome and invigorating process, and our board members and supporters have enthusiastically thrown themselves into the task of bringing NCS into its next stage of development. In the fall, we conducted focus groups and a week-long survey of shelter and soup kitchen attendees in order to identify service gaps and ways to consolidate and strengthen resources and services for homeless and formerly homeless individuals. The feedback from these surveys informed discussion at our board retreat on January 31st as we began shaping our new strategic plan.

One of the most constructive aspects of the retreat was the way in which it brought NCS back to its roots. NCS was founded 27 years ago by Upper East Side community members and religious leaders who were united in a desire to create solutions for their neighbors who were struggling to secure the most basic human needs of food and shelter. At the retreat, board members decided to reinforce our original role in the community by spearheading collaboration with our religious and civic partners. We will increase our engagement in partnerships and collaborations to promote public understanding, improve policies and practices, and join forces with the network of organizations in our area so that the services we provide are both comprehensive and substantial.

We wish to thank the many people who have helped NCS in its mission to reduce, prevent and eventually end homelessness. We are grateful to our committed board of directors, our extraordinary supporters (many of whom contributed so generously to this year's appeal that it surpassed its financial goals), our volunteers who help to enhance our services and brighten the lives of so many, our exceptional staff; and to the many men and women (and the young adults just now moving into Louis Nine House in the Bronx) who have made commitments to more fulfilling and independent lives by becoming members of our NCS "family."

Change of Leadership at NCS

NCS would like to thank Stephanie Guest for ten years of excellent board stewardship and is grateful for her continued and active role on our board. Stephanie has been our board president since 1998 and provided superlative guidance over the years, helping us to accomplish many goals in our struggle to end homelessness in New York City. We are honoring her for her years of service at our Spring Benefit in June, and hope to see you there.



Stephanie Guest

We welcome David Oliver as our new board president and are looking forward to his leadership. David has been on the board since 2006 and was drawn to NCS by volunteering with his daughter, Anne, at an overnight shelter serving NCS clients run by St. James Church and Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church.

Anne was ten years old at the time and was encouraged to play a duet with a homeless man who had been a jazz musician in earlier days. The rapt audience insisted that Anne take a dollar afterwards as compensation for her performance, even though this was probably one of very few dollars they had. David was moved by the experience to become an active member of the NCS community, and has contributed boundless amounts of time and energy since then. His wife, Suzanne, has also been actively introducing new friends to NCS. David comes to us with over 20 years of experience in finance and is currently a portfolio manager at Stone Harbor Investment Partners. David, Suzanne and their three children live on the Upper East Side and embody NCS's founding philosophy of "neighbors helping neighbors."



David A. Oliver

NCS Research: Understanding Homelessness

The results of NCS's second research study were recently published in *The Journal of Personality Disorders* (Vol.22 (6)), which can be downloaded at www.ncsinc.org. Since 2000 NCS has been researching the psychiatric characteristics of chronically homeless individuals in an effort to better understand their complex needs and improve services for this vulnerable population. In 2005, the results of NCS's first study were published in *The Journal of Comprehensive Psychiatry*.

Working for many years with chronically homeless men and women at the Neighborhood Center for Homeless People (NCHP), NCS staff identified clients having difficulty in coping and functioning. When it came to navigating the housing referral system, a segment of this population was uncooperative in the process: they would not present the required paperwork, became defensive when questions were asked about their background and refused to meet with housing providers. These behaviors carried over to other aspects of their lives, making it difficult to build and maintain relationships. The degree of their interpersonal impairment was so severe that it created barriers to employment, as well as to obtaining housing, and as a result, they remained on the streets.

In 2000, NCS partnered with Dr. Samuel Ball, Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at Yale Medical School, to implement a cognitive-behavioral intervention that would help case managers improve engagement, bolster trust in the professional relationship and increase the housing rate among chronically homeless men and women. Although this intervention seemed promising, the results indicated a prevalence of certain unexpected personality traits and called for further research. NCS funded this second research study, and the third study, funded by the National Alliance on Schizophrenia and Depression, will be published in 2010.

Conducted in five drop-in centers in New York City and New Haven, Connecticut, the research studies identified a prevalence of specific personality traits and characteristics among chronically homeless adults that meet the criteria for personality disorders in the DSM-V. People with personality disorders are functionally impaired in many areas of their lives on a pervasive basis, regardless of their situation. They are often vulnerable to substance abuse, anxiety, depression and have a tremendous difficulty collaborating with others. NCS learned that the longer the length of homelessness, the higher the rates or incidence of a personality disorder; however, a personality disorder does not occur as a result of homelessness but appears independently of a history of homelessness.

NCS's findings have sparked discussion at the national level as service providers, academic institutions and government policy makers expressed interest in expanding this research to other parts of the country. It is also believed that personality disorders are prevalent in jail and prison populations, and a study is underway to compare our results with those of incarcerated individuals. These populations have a tendency to overlap, as individuals recently released from incarceration are frequent users of shelters and drop-in centers.

Prior to NCS's studies, there had been little research on the full spectrum of personality disorders occurring in chronically homeless adults. A systemic error was to dismiss these bona fide psychiatric conditions as "difficult behaviors". By identifying the prevalence of personality disorders in difficult-to-serve populations, NCS's goal is to better inform policy makers and service providers about strategies for engagement and optimum service delivery models. In this way hard-to-reach and vulnerable individuals can receive the services they need and we can break the cycle of chronic homelessness.

Autumn Events Bring New Faces to NCS

On October 14th, NCS supporters attended a pre-theater reception at the Paramount Hotel, which was to be followed by a preview performance of the highly anticipated New York debut of *Billy Elliot*. After a charming cocktail hour, attendees proceeded to the theater and were greeted with the unfortunate news that a staging malfunction had caused the cancellation of the performance. With much patience on the part of ticket holders, NCS was able to make sure that everyone saw the performance on another night. We thank everyone who contributed to the theater benefit and hope you enjoyed the show!

On October 22, 2008, NCS board member Stacie Kallenberg and artist and philanthropist Michelle Marie Heinemann hosted 19 of their friends and colleagues for a Lunch and Learn event at the NCS Residence. CEO Anne Teicher and Mark Adiedo, Director of Vocational



NCS staff, board members and supporters at the Lunch and Learn Event at the 81st Street Residence.

and Educational Services, spoke about NCS housing and supportive programs for homeless New Yorkers. The group then toured the NCS Residence, enjoyed a catered lunch and had the opportunity to converse with NCS residents.

Cocktails for a Cause, an event co-chaired by Lauren Ceradini, Matthew Kibble, and NCS board members Brett Craig and Michelle Edgar, took place at the exclusive club Norwood on November 19, 2008. Over 100 young professionals gathered to learn about NCS and the various ways to become involved

in the organization. Partygoers enjoyed cocktails and passed hors d'oeuvres and grooved to the sounds of DJ Izzy. Afterwards, Ronndolyn Black, an NCS Resident, recounted her journey from an abusive husband to homelessness to safety at our residence. NCS would like to thank Halstead Property, LLC, Susan Dougherty and Michael Goldenberg, and Stephanie Shuman for making the event possible.

Holidays Brightened by Volunteers

Board member Stacie Kallenberg organized a holiday decorating party at our NCS Residence in December. Her daughter Chloe, a third grader at Sacred Heart, invited her friends and other members of the Sacred Heart community to take part in the festivities. The girls trooped in wearing their school uniforms of gingham pinafores, knee socks



81st Street resident Pamela Benn, Sacred Heart 3rd Graders and NCS Volunteers Alicia Rivera, Chloe Kallenberg, and Eugenie LePicart, and NCS board member Stacie Kallenberg celebrating the holidays and decorating the residence at the party organized by Stacie.

and navy oxfords, and the residents couldn't have been more delighted by the cheerful mayhem that ensued. Resident Kim Yong Cha said about the event: "It makes us feel welcomed. I feel honored. Without children, Christmas can be a bit lonely." Lonely this afternoon was not, with a gaggle of eight and nine year-old girls pinning home-made paper snow men on all the residents' doors, decorating a tree in the common room, hanging ornaments in the cafeteria, and sharing cookies and sweets with the residents.

Stacie is also a co-chair of Sacred Heart's Community Service Committee, and arranged for NCS to be the recipient of its Angel Tree gifts program. Sacred Heart donated a Christmas tree on which the volunteers hung angel-shaped ornaments inscribed with the name of each resident. Families from Sacred Heart chose ornaments and then bought gifts for each resident according to his wish list, such as hats, gloves, and memberships to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

NCS Awarded \$25,000 from TD Charitable Foundation

On November 29, 2008, representatives from TD Banknorth Inc. visited the NCS Residence and presented a \$25,000 grant to the Neighborhood Coalition for Shelter (NCS). The funding will be used to help identify and develop sites on which to build new units of affordable housing. This year, the TD Charitable Foundation's "Housing for Everyone" program contributed nearly \$5 million to 48 local affordable housing organizations from Maine to Florida. NCS was one of four recipients in the New York metro area selected to receive funding out of a total 89 proposals submitted.



(Front row, left to right) NCS staff: Vashonna Hassett, Director of Louis Nine House; Stephen Lisner, Chief Operating Officer; Anne R. Teicher, Chief Executive Officer. (Back row; left to right) Jack W. Rainey, Vice President, Government & Community Banking, TD Bank; Larry Hughes, former Director of the NCS Residence.

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