

NYCHA Caretaker Saves Baby and Family from Blaze



From left: Tenant Association President Maria Forbes, NYC Council Member Vanessa Gibson (in black and white), State Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner (in black), and Claremont Rehab caretaker Ivan Maestre.

Caretaker Ivan Maestre was honored for rescuing a two-week-old infant and four others from a third-floor blaze at Claremont Rehab in the Bronx on August 2. The ceremony was hosted at the Claremont Community Center on August 10 by New York State Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner, New York City Council Member Vanessa Gibson, and Claremont Tenant Association President Maria Forbes for “the selfless individuals that assisted in the brave rescue of families in the fire,” as reported by News 12 Bronx. Thanks to the prompt response of Mr. Maestre and Con Edison workers, all the victims are fully recovered.

When Mr. Maestre was preparing for the afternoon mop-

ping and heard people yelling “fire, fire,” his first thought was to check on a woman in a wheelchair in the lobby. “You get to know all the residents and who is where at what time of the day,” said Mr. Maestre, who has worked at Claremont Rehab for seven years.

He then went door-to-door down the smoke-filled halls to warn residents, later assisted by the Con Edison employees, until he reached a third-floor apartment that appeared to be the source of the blaze. He kicked in the door, found nobody inside, and closed it to contain the smoke. When he reached a door on the fourth floor, he heard people inside telling him there was a baby.

At this point the smoke

was so thick that it was difficult to breathe. Mr. Maestre told the residents not to open their door—to keep out the smoke—and he immediately went to the roof to open the roof door to let the smoke out.

Mr. Maestre then went down the fire escape and entered the apartment where the residents and baby were waiting. “They were panicked and didn’t know what to do. I was worried that the gas line might explode, so I knew I had to get everyone out fast.”

First Mr. Maestre carried the baby in his arms down four floors on the fire escape. He then returned to the apartment to bring down

like family,” he said. “I saw the people I helped while they were growing up. What I did was just a gut reaction. But if I didn’t do anything, I couldn’t live with myself.”

“What he did was just amazing,” said Ms. Forbes, who helped organize the award ceremony. “He never thought about himself. He just ran right in without hesitation to warn the residents and save that family and baby. It was just his human instinct to help. Many people here are grateful, and we are very proud of him.”

Many of Mr. Maestre’s coworkers and residents congratulated him on the

“
They were panicked and didn’t know what to do. I was worried that the gas line might explode, so I knew I ... had to get everyone out fast.
”

Ivan Maestre, Caretaker

the family dog. The four other residents were able to travel down the fire escape unassisted. The scene on the street was chaotic, but the family members were able to express their gratitude.

“You get to know all the residents, and really they are

heroic deed. When asked to explain how he kept calm and thought clearly, Mr. Maestre mentioned that he is a martial arts instructor and also teaches the discipline to children. “This helped me focus and to have confidence and courage,” he said.

CONTENTS

VOL. 2 AUGUST 2016 NUMBER 8

2 NYCHA Notes:

Say Hello to “J” Stakenburg
Dir. of Emergency Management

Resident Watch to Merge with
Office of Emergency Mgmt.

Watch Ras at Urban Decision-
Makers Conference

3 FlexOps Pilot Initiative Debuts

2016 NYC Gives Campaign

4 NYCHA Recognized for Excellence in Construction Mgmt.

Award for Excellence in
Financial Reporting

5 Employee Voices:

Preserving NYCHA’s Artistic
Heritage, by Aaron Schraeter

6 Public Interest Design, by Jae Shin

7 I Am NextGen: R. Rodriguez

8 News to Use



Caretaker
Gary Carter
has more
time to get
things done
in his personal life.
See why on
p. 3.

NYCHA Notes

Say Hello to “J” Stakenburg, Director of the Office of Emergency Management



Jeffrey Stakenburg, formerly Emergency Manager at the Federal Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), was appointed Director of the Office of Emergency Management in July 2016. Mr. Stakenburg is responsible for coordinating NYCHA’s preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation efforts to minimize

disruptions to the Authority’s operations and services in the event of a large-scale emergency, including natural disasters, acts of terrorism and infrastructure failures. In addition, Mr. Stakenburg provides leadership and guidance for the revision, development, implementation and maintenance of NYCHA’s emergency response strategies and plans.

Mr. Stakenburg—who simply goes by “J”—brings 15 years of experience in the field of emergency and disaster management. Most recently, he worked for FEMA, where he supported 14 presidentially-declared disasters, led highly technical damage assessment and recovery teams, and was selected as one of the subject matter experts tasked with reengineering how FEMA administers its public assistance grant program. As a result of those efforts, J and his team received FEMA’s 2015 Administrator’s Award for Innovation.

Prior to FEMA, J was Chief of Emergency Operations for Lee County, Florida, where his experiences included coordinating public safety responses to wildfires, several natural disasters (hurricanes, floods, tropical storms), aviation accidents, the H1N1 Pandemic and the Deepwater Horizon Oil Release.

An accomplished instructor of adults, J also taught middle and high school English, history, and government in his native Bay Area, California, coached high school basketball, and worked for the City of Oakland as an advisor to the Mayor. In his spare time, he likes to explore historic architecture and study local history. In addition to California, J has lived in Texas, Florida, and most recently, New Orleans, but is now excited to call Brooklyn home.

Resident Watch to Merge With City’s Emergency Response Team



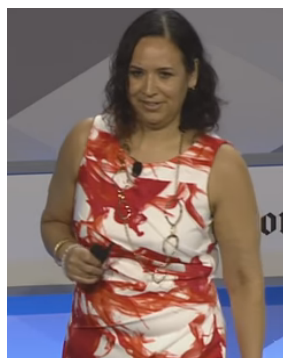
NYCHA has teamed up with the Office of Emergency Management to merge the existing Resident Watch Program with the City’s Community Emer-

gency Response Team (CERT), creating a more responsive community-based watch effort that will be an asset not just to NYCHA developments but also to surrounding communities. CERT trains volunteers for different types of disasters, including hurricanes, large snowstorms, fires, and more. Participating NYCHA residents will join their development’s Resident Watch patrol and complete the 10-week CERT training program to learn how to be prepared and assist in emergencies.

The Resident Watch Response Team (RWRT) will be launched at the Mayor’s Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety (MAP) developments: Boulevard, Brownsville, Bushwick, Ingersoll, Tompkins, Red Hook, Van Dyke, Queensbridge, Stapleton, St. Nicholas, Polo Grounds, Wagner, Butler, Castle Hill, and Patterson Houses.

RWRT is now recruiting members, ages 18 and older, for the fall. If you live in one of the MAP developments and want to help keep your community safe, contact your management office to apply for the RWRT at your development. Visit http://www1.nyc.gov/site/em/community_business/nyc-cert.page to learn more about the NYC Cert program.

Watch “Ras” at Urban Decision-Makers Conference



On July 19, Rasmia (“Ras”) Kirmani-Frye, President of the Fund for Public Housing and the Director of NYCHA’s Office of Public/Private Partnerships, participated in a conference sponsored by the New York Times called “Cities for Tomorrow: The Pre-eminent Conference for Urban Decision-Makers.” People value public systems such as police, libraries, parks, and schools but not so much public

housing, Ras lamented. “But it’s the residents of public housing that make all the public systems you love run,” she said. The top three employers of NYCHA residents are the NYPD, the NYC Department of Education and NYCHA, and the top nine of 10 employers are public systems. “We need to invest in the people who invest in us every day,” Ras said. The Fund for Public Housing partners with public/private entities to improve the way public housing works. Ras urged participants to tell people they know about the Fund. You can watch the presentation at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m839ixojgE>.



New York City Housing Authority
Department of Communications
250 Broadway | 12th Floor
New York, NY 10007

212-306-4384
NYCHANow@nyc.nyc.gov

New FlexOps Pilot Initiative to Improve Customer Service Debuts

It's not every day that Chair Shola Olatoye and General Manager Michael Kelly greet employees with coffee and



Caretaker Gary Carter

donuts. But the morning of July 5 was a special one—a new pilot program called FlexOps (“flexible operations”) had just launched at 12 consolidated developments in four boroughs. (See the announcement in the July NYCHANow [here](#).)

For four months, service hours at these developments are extended beyond the traditional 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. shift. The property management offices at all of these developments will stay open until 8 p.m. one day a week for scheduled appointments with residents. And at some developments, there is coverage of frontline NYCHA staff starting earlier in the day (6 a.m.) or ending later in the

day (7:30 p.m.). All staff participating in the new staggered shifts (which includes caretakers, maintenance workers, and property managers) are volunteers or new hires.

FlexOps is already getting rave reviews—from both employees and residents—at Dyckman Houses in Upper Manhattan’s Inwood neighborhood. Dyckman’s seven buildings—home to more than 2,300 residents—circle a tranquil and spotlessly clean campus filled with tall, leafy trees. Caretakers Loranzo Brown, Tieysha Leak, and Gary Carter are proud to help keep Dyckman’s grounds so pristine. They and three other caretakers volunteered for the



Caretaker Tieysha Leak

early shift there—6 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

“When tenants come out in the morning, they see the elevators clean, the steps clean,

the lobbies and front of the buildings clean,” explained Mr. Brown, who has worked at NYCHA for almost 21 years, the last eight at Dyckman. “Just this morning, a tenant saw me cleaning the elevator when she was leaving for work and said ‘thank you.’”

“I love FlexOps,” said Ms. Leak, a NYCHA employee for 13 years and resident of Washington Houses. “I have doctors’ appointments for my thyroid, so FlexOps works for me. After work, I can also go shopping, do a little cleaning, spend time with my kids, and still get to bed at a good time.”

“I think it’s a good idea,” said Mr. Carter, who has been a caretaker at Dyckman for eight years. “We’re doing the same work, just earlier. The goal is to get more things done before people come down in the morning. And now I have more time to get things done in my personal life. I can pick up my son from school and make doctors’ and dentists’ appointments.”

“Residents appreciate the extra effort,” noted Dyckman’s property manager, Jacqueline Frazier. “I’ve heard positive things.” In fact, according to a survey, 94 percent of NYCHA residents support this proper-

ty management industry standard at their development.

“I think it’s excellent, a great program,” said Nathaniel Green, Dyckman’s Resident Association President, who has been a resident leader there for about a decade.

It helps residents because



Caretaker Loranzo Brown

workers are able to get their jobs done better. Residents work closely with caretakers and property management, putting our two cents in on FlexOps. Residents are satisfied.”

Residents at FlexOps developments can contact their property management office to schedule an evening appointment with office staff. Visit NYCHA’s website (www.nyc.gov/nycha) to learn more about FlexOps, including participating developments and details about service hours.

Same Reasons, Different Name



The Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) has announced the 2016 NYC Gives charitable campaign (previously known as the Combined Municipal Campaign). NYC

Gives offers City employees an opportunity to contribute, through convenient payroll deductions, to a vetted group of charitable organizations that provide urgently needed services to local, state, national, and international communities.

Since the year 2000, City employees have contributed over \$33 million to a myriad of non-profit charitable organizations. DCAS hopes that City employees will continue their giving this year, with more than 850 independent charitable organizations and federations participating.

For more information on how you can participate in the campaign, please visit the NYC Gives web page at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcas/html/employees/nycgives.shtml>.

Thank you for your interest and participation!

NYCHA Recognized for Excellence in Construction Management



From left are: CMAA's Michael Tolliver, George Dandolos of STV, Inc., VP for Construction Programs Farhan Syed, GM Michael Kelly, Special Projects Dep. Dir. Chirag Patel, Special Projects Dir. Vijay Shah, and STV's Lorjan Agalliu, Sokol Bejleri, Jatin Amin and Yakov Kifman.

The Construction Management Association of America's (CMAA) New York and New Jersey chapter recognized the Authority for excellence in managing two major renovation projects at NYCHA developments—both of which were completed ahead of schedule—benefiting more than 6,800 residents.

The Kingsborough Houses renovation project in Brooklyn, which started in September of 2013 and was expected to take two years to finish,

was completed three months ahead of schedule and almost \$2 million below budget, costing a total of \$32 million. The work focused on façade repairs and exterior upgrades for 16 six-story buildings and one 25-story building, benefiting more than 2,500 residents,

NYCHA is also being recognized by CMAA for renovation work completed at Ravenswood Houses in Queens two months ahead of schedule. That project, completed in September of 2015,

4,300 residents.

"As part of NextGeneration NYCHA," said General Manager Michael Kelly, "we are changing the way we do business to become a more efficient landlord, so our residents can live in cleaner, safer, and more connected communities. This recognition from the Construction Management Association of America is proof NYCHA is advancing towards that goal."

NYCHA Construction Program Vice President Farhan

also focused on exterior upgrades at 31 buildings inside the complex, costing a little over \$31 million to complete and benefitting more than

Syed credited a team effort by his Special Projects group, which oversees NYCHA's Bond B portfolio. "It's a pleasure to work with such a proactive group to show that we can meet and exceed our commitments for on-time and on-budget work," he said.

Capital Projects' Special Projects Director Vijay Shah remarked: "The effective cooperation and coordination between construction management firms, Special Projects, and the Development Management Department made the on-time and under-budget completion of these complex projects possible. I am very proud of the role played by our Special Projects staff." CMAA is North America's only organization dedicated exclusively to the interests of professional construction and program management.

Award for Excellence in Financial Reporting

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) presented NYCHA with its prestigious Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for its current budget on August 8.

The award represents a significant achievement by the Authority, as it reflects the commitment of NYCHA's leadership and staff to meeting the highest principles of governmental budgeting.

Along with the award, a Certificate of Recognition has been sent to NYCHA's Department of Budget and Financial Planning, which prepares the annual budget.

NYCHA's Budget Book was evaluated by an independent panel of budget experts and was rated on 27 criteria,



From left at rear are Sungwoo Kim, Anthony Cosentino, Victor Buonocore, Hector L. Ramos, Bobby Belvin, and Glenn Greenfield. Front front left are: Linda Jaffee, Arlene Nieves, Tracey Smith, Helga Nyanffor, GM Michael Kelly, EVP & Chief Financial Officer Karen Caldwell, Chair & CEO Shola Olatoye, Budget & Financial Planning Director Georgiana Okoroji, and GFOA's Patricia Jones and Dawn Donovan.

including its effectiveness as a policy statement, financial plan, operations guide, and communications device. The document is an important part of NYCHA's efforts to achieve transparency and provide clear information to the public on NYCHA's operations.

"The GFOA's continued recognition of our efforts to provide the public with a clear and complete budget report reflects the commitment of our highly dedicated Budget and Financial Planning staff to providing the public with a clear and complete budget," said EVP and Chief Financial Officer Karen Caldwell. "Our success would not be possible without the assistance that we receive from many NYCHA departments."

Employee Voices: Preserving NYCHA's Artistic Heritage

by Aaron Schraeter, Community Coordinator, Resident Engagement Department



Aaron Schraeter, Community Coordinator, Resident Engagement

Millions of people visit New York every year to view great works of art in our City's world-class museums, yet there are scores of works by great artists throughout the five boroughs on view for free at NYCHA developments. These masters include Heinz Warneke (Harlem River Houses), best known for his iconic sculpture of the Nittany Lion at Penn State University; Costantino Nivola (Wise Towers), the national artist of Sardinia; and modern master Philip Guston (Queensbridge Houses North), known as an "artist's artist."

Unfortunately, these works have been largely neglected,

and many are now damaged to a point nearing irreparability. NYCHA has an opportunity and a responsibility to become the stewards of this artistic legacy, restoring and maintaining these precious resources as we repair, rebuild and expand our housing stock.

Preserving our portfolio of art is an issue of asset management. Artworks beautify the buildings and open spaces, leading to a sense of place and belonging. Ensuring the integrity of these

venate these spaces, using them once again as meeting places and landmarks with which residents will identify.

Conversely, allowing artwork to continue to deteriorate will ultimately detract from social and property value, may encourage vandalism and graffiti, and could lead to accidents, such as trips or falls over pieces of crumbling sculpture or murals.

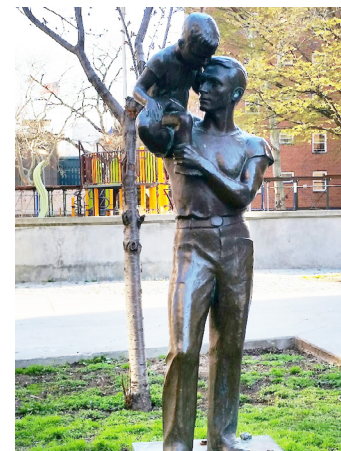
In collaboration with the Performance Tracking and Analytics Department and the Office of Intergovernmental



The artist Marion Greenwood shows her mural, "Blueprint for Living," to NYCHA Vice Chair Mary Simkhovitch at the dedication of the painting in the community building of Red Hook Houses on November 27, 1940.

sculptures and murals helps build a sense of community. Through resident engagement activities, we can reju-

Relations, we are locating, identifying, and recording the condition of NYCHA's entire inventory of public artworks.



This sculpture, by Richmond Barthe, graces the grounds of Johnson Houses. Barthe was an African-American sculptor associated with the Harlem Renaissance.

And, in partnership with the Office of Design, we are developing guidelines and policies to ensure its protection from additional damage during redesign and construction work.

The Authority is in a unique position to create partnerships with museums and private institutions in which we can leverage our holdings to attract additional funding and create a sustainable model of conservancy.



Iconic American painter Philip Guston was a major influence on generations of artists. The above mural, "Work and Play," was completed at Queensbridge Houses' community center in 1940 and was sponsored by the Works Progress Administration, which provided employment opportunities for citizens during the Great Depression. There are scores of historic artworks installed throughout NYCHA locations.

Public Interest Design: Why Should Designers Work *Inside* Government?

by Jae Shin, Enterprise Rose Architectural Fellow at NYCHA

Studying architecture for three years and practicing for four did not make me particularly interested in mold prevention or roof flashing for 80-year-old brick buildings. However, these aspects



Architectural Fellow Jae Shin

of building science are now priorities in my work as an Enterprise Rose Architectural Fellow within the largest owner-operator of public housing in the nation, the New York City Housing Authority. My work plan, crafted by NYCHA and Enterprise Community Partners staff before they solicited fellowship applications, focuses on improving design and design processes throughout the agency by working with fellow staff, resident organizations and the broader design

community. Doing this, the thinking goes, will improve the long-term prospects of the organization, its buildings and the homes of over 400,000 New Yorkers.

The fellowship has been a new trajectory for me. After graduate school, I taught architecture to undergraduates at the New Jersey Institute of Technology and worked as an independent urban design consultant. Through projects like the Newark Zoning Workshop, a popular education tool I designed with the city planning office, I was able to collaborate with neighborhood organizations, communities of faith and block clubs, developing complex and nourishing relationships. However, while this work engaged larger systems I was curious about, I still operated from outside of them. This changed during my time at the well-established firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, which exposed me to the politics, finances, and lifecycle of large-scale projects around the globe.

Now, when I am asked why I traded the freedom and perks of independent and private-sector practice for a job within the largest public housing authority in the country, I try to describe the advantages of designing within a public agency. Applying for the fellowship, I wanted to learn to use design and regulatory tools together. Now that I've been at NYCHA for six months, I've returned to this question by speaking with a number of practitioners at New York City agencies. Here's what they taught me:

Designers in Public Agencies Form Stronger & Richer Alliances

While public agencies can be associated with cubicle culture,

the mandate to be responsive to community needs means that designers can more easily develop alliances and partnerships to move agendas forward. Rick Bell, executive director of design and construction excellence for the City's Department of Design and Construction, believes "the overarching value placed on participation" means that designers in public agencies can spend time "being out in the field, listening, representing and helping formulate strategies to shape meaningful places that are equitable, sustainable, resilient and good for our physical and mental health."

Designers Get Trained TO SOLVE Complex Problems

Public agencies, like many other large institutions, are layered with bureaucratic inefficiencies and outdated management practices, and perpetually suffer funding cuts. But these are the conditions in which change gets made. Charles McKinney, principal urban designer at the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, says that "It is important to realize that government is imperfect, and under-resourced. To be effective you have to do more than you are asked to do, with less resources than are reasonable. You have to be resourceful and unstoppable. My motto is, I will do whatever is required."

Bruce Eisenberg, deputy director of the Architectural Unit of Capital Projects at NYCHA says that "When you work within a public agency, you [have to] understand what makes it tick... Great work can come from figuring out how to make every move, every decision count, not just adding up the sum of the parts, but compiling them in a way to get bonus points."



Exterior masonry work at Lincoln Houses included brick restoration, re-pointing, and waterproofing on the facade, and other work to seal the building envelope.

Designers in Public Agencies Find Fulfilling & Meaningful Work

Finally, the designers whom I spoke with mentioned the fulfillment that comes from improving the environment through the very agencies that we as a society have set up to do just that. Before now, most career paths I considered were academic or with small, values-forward design practices. Today, I've begun to see many other ways to go forward, bringing together the goals and relationships born of advocacy, the practices and ethos of community design, and the organizational ambition and scale of public housing and other social infrastructures by engaging in the details of architecture. Figuring out how to ensure facade systems get properly rehabilitated to prevent mold is one way policy becomes material, how abstractions like a "decent home for every American" become true or fall short. Less mold means healthier homes for the 110,000 children who live in NYCHA buildings.

Abridged from an article published in <https://nextcity.org>.

"I Am NextGen" Honoree Is Award-Winning Caretaker

NYCHA continues to bring outstanding employees, residents and other stakeholders to the attention of the public with its popular "I Am NextGen" campaign. Our latest honoree is Caretaker Roberto Rodriguez, Jr., winner of the 2016 John DeCarlo Memorial Award for Caretakers. Mr. Rodriguez joined NYCHA

as a caretaker in 2008 and was runner-up for the prize for the past two years. He launched his NYCHA career by working in NYCHA's Summer Youth Employment Program in 1999, and then working as a seasonal employee at East River Houses, where he grew up. He is assigned to Johnson Houses in Manhattan.

I am NextGeneration NYCHA



"I really appreciate the kind of work that I do. I help make the residents feel good about where they live. I always give them as much as I can and much more if possible. They tell me, 'Rob you're the best.' I say I try my hardest. I don't like to be called the best because I feel like we can all do the same amount of work. If I could do it, you could do it."

What do you like about your job?

This is something that I always wake up looking forward to. I feel very comfortable helping residents and with residents helping me in return. Since I was a little kid, I used to always like to help clean. I wanted the experience to help to clean where I live, my community. That's when my mom enrolled me in Summer Youth.

How do you get along with residents and staff?

The staff at Johnson makes me feel really comfortable; I really appreciate everyone. And my residents: I always give them as much as I can. They take the initiative and pick up trash in the halls and bring it downstairs. I'm familiar with a lot of people in the development because I have family in the development – they've known me since I was a baby. That makes it more of a relaxing atmosphere.

How do you feel about winning the DeCarlo Award?

When they told me I won, I couldn't believe it. I was very honored and happy. This is something I work hard for. The job is what you make of it—if you come with a positive attitude, you will shine amongst your co-workers.

National Night Out



National Night Out, which brings together residents and the police to make communities safer, was celebrated across the country on August 2. Chair Shola Olatoye and Ingersoll Houses Resident Association President Anthony Sosa (in red) stand with members of the NYPD's Police Service Area 3, who received a mayoral proclamation recognizing their partnership with the community.

Get Your IDNYC Card



Chair Shola Olatoye signed up for a free IDNYC card at the August 2 opening of the Sedgwick Community Center pop-up IDNYC enrollment center in the Bronx – the first IDNYC pop-up at a NYCHA development. NYCHA residents and community members enrolled in the program to receive the free, government-issued ID, which allows card holders to open bank or credit union accounts, provides free membership to 40 of the City's best cultural institutions and discounts on health care services and prescription drugs, and can be used as a library card. Stay tuned for information specifically for New York City employees about IDNYC cards.

News to Use

Use Your Power: Vote

This fall, New Yorkers will make history. We will help elect the next President of the United States as well as our representatives in Congress and in the State legislature in Albany. The decisions we make as voters can help to shape the course our lives will take for years to come. Do you want elected officials who are responsive to the needs of your community? Do you want a say in choosing who will write our laws and lead our country? Having a say means voting on Election Day, and making sure that your friends and family do, too. So circle and share these key dates:

- Tuesday, September 13 – primary election to choose candidates for State Assembly and Senate
- Friday, October 14 – last day to register to vote in the Presidential election
- Tuesday, November 8 – National Election Day!

These elections will affect your neighborhood, your city, your state, and your country for years to come. Make sure you have a say in shaping that future this Election Day. Want to register to vote right now? Download a voter registration form (available at www.nycfb.info/nyc-votes/registering) and mail it in.



It's never too early to make a plan to vote!

1. Use the nonpartisan NYC Votes Voter Guide to learn about the candidates (nycfb.info/voterguide).
2. Look up your poll site: nyc.pollsitelocator.com.
3. Polls will open at 6:00 a.m. and close at 9:00 p.m. on September 13 and November 8.

Know your rights:

- You have the right to bring materials, including the NYC Votes Voter Guide, into the polls when you vote (be sure to take it with you when you leave).
- You have the right to ask an election worker how to vote.
- You have the right to assistance if you need help voting. Assistance can be provided by a person of your choice (except your employer or union representative), including poll workers.
- If you need an interpreter, call the NYC Board of Elections (866-Vote-NYC) for more information.
- You have the right to cast a ballot, known as an "affidavit ballot," even if a machine is broken or your name is missing from the list of voters at your poll site.
- There is no voter identification requirement in New York State. (However, if you did not include your Social Security number or driver's license number on your voter registration form, you will be asked to present identification when you vote for the first time.)

Want to lead a voter registration drive in your building? Call NYC Votes at 212-409-1800.

Reminder: If You Want to Change Your Health Care Plan, Do It by September 30

Employees and non-Medicare eligible retirees interested in changing from one insurance carrier to another must complete and submit a Health Benefits Application form on or before **September 30, 2016**.

Members may request a Health Benefits Application by contacting the Human Resources Customer Service Unit at 212-306-8000 or via email at ASKHR@nycha.nyc.gov. The completed form must be returned to Human Resources, Employee Benefits Division, 90 Church Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10007.

During this special transfer period, employees are only allowed to transfer from their current carrier. They cannot add/drop dependents or add/drop the optional riders. Changes to dependent status and/or optional riders can only be handled during the 2016 Fall Transfer Period. Once you submit an application or make a selection, you will not be allowed to make additional changes.

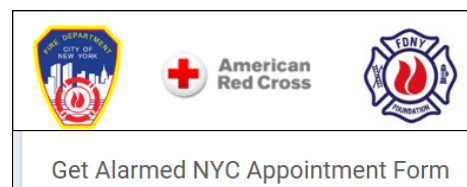
For additional information about the changes to your GHI-CBP or HIP HMO, visit emblemhealth.com/city or email the Human Resources Benefits Team at HRBenefits@nycha.nyc.gov.

NEW: NYCHA eRent Employee Perk

You already know that eRent provides the option to receive your rent bill electronically and make your payment at NO CHARGE.

For employees who are NYCHA residents, that just got better! You can now ensure your rent is on time without ever writing a check or clicking a link. Have your rent deducted automatically from your paycheck twice a month ... set it and forget it! Apply for eRent at your Property Management Office.

Free Smoke Alarms and Carbon Monoxide Detectors



You can get a free smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector through the #GetAlarmedNYC program provided by FDNY and Red Cross. For more information,

call Red Cross at 877-733-2767 or visit <http://www.redcross.org/local/new-york/greater-new-york/home-fire-preparedness-campaign>.