

GM Kelly Announces 'Fix-It-Forward' Initiative



Brooklyn OPMOM property managers held their monthly meeting with Senior VP for Operations Brian Clarke and other administrators to review key performance indicators. The Optimal Property Management Operating Model pilot is a key component of the Fix-It-Forward initiative to improve customer service for public housing residents.

On July 12, General Manager Michael Kelly marked 100 days on the job by announcing "Fix-It-Forward," a major initiative to overhaul maintenance and repair operations and advance the NextGeneration NYCHA goal of operating as an efficient and effective landlord. Fix-It-Forward is in line with the Authority's 10-year strategic plan to focus on its core business as a landlord, and offers common-sense fixes to key parts of NYCHA's repair process to decrease response times and increase the customer satisfaction of residents.

Solutions intend to reform

each stage of the repairs process—from enhanced customer service at the front end of a repair request, to the execution of repairs at the back end of a request.

"We know what our residents and public officials know—meaningful change at NYCHA starts with the most basic and fundamental responsibility we have as a landlord: maintenance and repairs," Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye said. "After hearing from residents and staff about their frustrations and challenges, we took a hard look at our operating procedures. Fix-It-Forward, which enables us to execute

NextGen through comprehensive initiatives, is their good feedback put into an action plan."

"Despite progress, NYCHA's track record on maintenance and repairs has been poor—period," GM Kelly said. "Inadequate funding, aging buildings and cumbersome procedures have failed our residents who are forced to live in substandard conditions, and handicapped our hardworking maintenance workers, skilled trades men

and women, and caretakers, who work every day to improve the quality of life for our residents. Without the resources and improved operating procedures to set NYCHA up for success, we cannot move the needle on maintenance and repairs and become the landlord our residents deserve."

The meaningful changes included in Fix-It-Forward are intended to increase efficiency, provide a more timely

(cont. p. 7)

NYCHA Connects



Counsel to the Mayor Maya Wiley, Mayor Bill de Blasio, HUD Secretary Julián Castro, and NYC Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito joined Chair Shola Olatoye to announce a plan to bring free, broadband service to more than 16,000 public housing residents.

When NYCHA's Digital Van parked at Mott Haven Houses in the Bronx on July 16, it wasn't only to provide free Internet access to public housing residents. The visit

celebrated the announcement of new initiatives that will significantly expand NYCHA's pioneering efforts to breach the digital divide for public housing families. (cont. p. 4)

CONTENTS

VOL. 1 AUGUST 2015 NUMBER 5

2 GM Michael Kelly Announces Organizational Changes

3 Quarterly Management Meeting

Say Hello to VP for Public Safety Gerald Nelson

5 Seasonal Employees Are Back

6 NYCHA Notables: Graphic Artist Keith DeCesare; IT's Broadband Initiatives Manager Anthony Palermo; and Human Resources' Haydee Garcia, Melva Roberson and Gloria Velez

8 News to Use:

Computer Upgrades are Coming

Take Advantage of Employee Discounts



Why was Keith DeCesare (formerly Keith Piaseczny) honored at the first anniversary of the 9/11 Memorial Museum's opening on July 30? See story on p. 6.

GM Kelly Announces Organizational Changes

In a July 10 email to staff, General Manager Michael Kelly announced a series of organizational changes and staff appointments that followed an agency-wide assessment of functions and operations at the development level and at central offices.

"If we are to create safe, clean, and connected communities, we must fundamentally change the way we do business," the message read. The assessment "identified opportunities to consolidate processes, eliminate redundancies, realign functions and prioritize operations."

Building on a restructuring initiative announced by Chair and CEO Shola Olatoya and GM Kelly in January, the most recent changes are in keeping with the principles of Next-Generation NYCHA, the 10-year strategic plan to stabilize the Authority and "to operate as a smarter organization."

The changes include:

- The Office of Facility Planning and Administration has been renamed the **Department of Real Estate Services**. This renamed department has assumed responsibility for all NYCHA non-residential real property leasing and licensing activities, including retail store marketing and leasing; wireless communications leasing and licensing; inter-city agency property

use agreements; community facility use transactions; and corporate office leasing. In addition, the Department of Real Estate Services will lead our NextGeneration NYCHA strategy to leverage NYCHA's ground floor spaces, which will enable NYCHA to locate more services and programs on development grounds.

- Creation of the **Heating Services & Operations Department** to develop a comprehensive plan to address NYCHA's heating concerns. The department will report to the Senior Vice President for Operations Support Services, with NYCHA veteran Robert Knapp serving as director, as previously reported.

- Transferring of the **Energy Finance & Sustainability Management Department** from Finance to the Capital Projects Division to pursue a comprehensive sustainability agenda. Led by newly appointed **Vice President of Energy Sustainability, Bomee Jung**, this department will continue to manage the Authority's utility costs through a combination of financial management, competitive procurement, and implementation of energy projects.

Ms. Jung's leadership positions at Enterprise Community Partners, Inc., and as a mayoral appointee on the

City Planning Commission, will support the development of NYCHA's comprehensive sustainability agenda.

- **Chris Haun**, formerly Acting Director of the Department of Energy Finance and Sustainability Management, has been appointed Director of the Energy Finance Department, where he will continue to lead efforts in analyzing and monitoring NYCHA's utility consumption; procuring gas and oil through competitive bid process; and projecting utility needs.

- Administrative responsibility for all direct **social service components** has been transferred from Operations to Community Programs and Development to allow for the development of a comprehensive and collaborative service and program delivery model for residents.

- **Kilsys Payamps-Roure**, formerly Special Assistant to the Chair, has been appointed Chief of Staff to the General Manager. In addition to managing the daily operations of the GM's office, Ms. Payamps-Roure will oversee and provide strategic support on priority initiatives and projects. She also will serve as liaison to NYCHA's external partners and to the Office of the Chair, and will represent the GM in various capacities.

- **Ukah Busgith**, formerly Director of Manhattan Borough Community Operations, has been appointed Senior Director of Borough Community Operations within Community Programs and Development. In this capacity, she will over-

see borough operations, transitioning services to a partnership-based model and providing oversight to ensure compliance with NYCHA and HUD regulations.

- **Xiomara Carcamo**, formerly Director of Operations' Quality Assurance Department, has been appointed Director of Strategic Initiatives for Operations and will report to the Senior Vice President for Operations Support Services. The unit will focus on executing initiatives aligned to overall strategic goals.

- **Shanna Castillo**, formerly Assistant Director at Resident Economic Empowerment and Sustainability (REES), has been appointed Director of REES and will assume oversight of economic opportunity programs and initiatives.

- **Lillian Harris**, formerly a Director in the Leased Housing Department, has been appointed Director of the Management Services Department. Reporting to the Senior Vice President for Operations, Ms. Harris will be responsible for resident tenancy matters as well as program and policy administration for property management.

- **Jenelle Hudson**, formerly Community Operations Borough Director for Brooklyn, has been appointed Director of Resident Engagement, where she will head the development of a new resident engagement model. Ms. Hudson brings a unique perspective, having extensive experience serving residents in times of crisis and calm.

(cont. p. 5)



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

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

Deputy Mayor Buery Visits Managers' Quarterly Forum

Now that NYCHA's strategic plan for the next 10 years has finally been publically launched, our NextGeneration NYCHA work has just begun. That was the message with which Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye welcomed senior staff on July 14 for the second Quarterly Leadership Meeting, after attendees watched a video compilation of NextGeneration NYCHA media coverage.

Presentations included "NextGeneration NYCHA by the Numbers" by Karina Totah, Senior Advisor to the Chair, and Policy Analyst Valerie Rosenberg; an overview of the central office reorganization from Chief of Staff David Pristin and General Manager Michael Kelly; "Coaching to Promote Positive Organization Culture and High Performance" by Toni Harris Quinerly of Community Resource Exchange; an overview of current operations initiatives from Brian Clarke, Carolyn Jasper, Thomas Johnston, James Artis, Anthony Porcelli, Lillian Harris, and Aaron Trauring; and a presentation on the Fund for Public Housing by Rasmia Kirmani-Frye.

But perhaps the most interesting segment of the meeting was the Chair's conversation with Richard Buery, Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives, who talked about organizational change and the challenges of tackling tough mandates

in hostile environments. Prior to joining the Mayor's staff, the Deputy Mayor, a native of East New York and a graduate of Harvard, served as CEO of the Children's AID Society. To date, his primary focus in the de Blasio administration has been the rollout of the Mayor's City-wide pre-K program.



On NYCHA's challenging road ahead, the Deputy Mayor advised that we keep our eyes on our goal of safe, clean and connected communities and quoted his favorite section from a speech of Theodore Roosevelt's, which is often referred to as the Man in the Arena:

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

SAY HELLO: Get to Know NYCHA Leadership

Gerald Nelson joined NYCHA as Vice President for Public Safety on August 3, 2015. In this role, he is responsible for planning, organizing and directing all of NYCHA's public safety services and activities, ensuring the provision of general law enforcement, criminal investigation, fire suppression and prevention, rescue and emergency medical services, disaster responses, nuisance abatement and code enforcement, and for leading NextGeneration NYCHA efforts to achieve safe communities for our residents and employees. The Offices of Safety and Security and Emergency



Gerald Nelson
VP for Public Safety

Preparedness will report to the Vice President for Public Safety and be part of NYCHA's newly formed public safety program.

Gerald recently retired from the New York City Police Department after more than 40 years of service. He started his career in the Housing Bureau in 1973 and subsequently served

in the Police Academy, Project Stabilization Unit, Internal Affairs Bureau, Recruitment Section, Personnel Services Bureau, Transit Borough Bronx, and Housing Borough Bronx/Queens. His last post was Commanding Officer of Patrol Borough Brooklyn North. He has also commanded the School Safety Division, the Housing Police Department's Personnel Services Bureau, SAT-COM Housing Operations, Housing Borough Bronx/Queens, and Transit Borough Bronx. Gerald has also served as Executive Officer of Detective Borough Queens and as Adjutant of Patrol Borough Manhattan North.

Gerald holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Government and Public Administration from John Jay College and a Master's degree in Public Administration from Marist College. He is also a graduate of the FBI National Academy, 172nd Session, at Quantico, Virginia. Currently, he is the Regional Vice President of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) for the New York, New Jersey and Connecticut Chapters and is a past president of NOBLE's New York Chapter.

NYCHA Connects with Broadband Access (cont.)

"We are here this morning to announce a program that will transform the lives of thousands of NYCHA residents across New York City," said Chair and CEO Shola Olatoye, who joined HUD Secretary Julián Castro, Mayor Bill de Blasio, Counsel to the Mayor Maya Wiley, and NYC Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito at the East Side House Mott Haven Community Center for the historic announcements.

The initiative, led by the Office of the Mayor's Counsel in partnership with the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications and NYCHA, will invest up to \$10 million to bring



Resident Board Member Victor Gonzalez and GM Michael Kelly speak with residents at the event.

free, high-speed broadband service to over 16,000 public housing residents at five public housing developments.

The program will begin with a demonstration project that will bring wireless access to the 7,000 residents at Queensbridge North and Queensbridge South Houses.

Following Queensbridge, the City will create a second network to serve the 6,500 residents of Red Hook Houses East and West in Brooklyn. A third network will be built at Mott Haven Houses, with more than 2,500 residents.



Forest Houses resident Marsha Robinson uses NYCHA's Mobile Digital Van for online courses and homework at Monroe College.

The announcement comes in conjunction with ConnectHome, a bold new initiative by President Obama to offer broadband access, technical training, digital literacy programs, and devices for residents in HUD-assisted housing units. New York City—one of 27 cities that won HUD's competition to participate in ConnectHome—has been recognized for its commitment to aggressively expand affordable access to broadband.

"Through ConnectHome, my administration will be able to deepen our private partnerships and leverage our public investment in universal, affordable broadband for New Yorkers who struggle to support their families and desperately need broadband," Mayor Bill de Blasio said.

Building on Prior Initiatives

The ConnectHome program will bring affordable, residential broadband access within reach of more NYCHA households, complementing the wireless networks the administration is building in Queensbridge, Red Hook and Mott Haven. Both initiatives are part of the City's broader strategy for getting to universal affordable broadband by 2025.

"No child should worry about whether or not she can finish her homework because her family can't afford broadband at home," said Maya Wiley, Counsel to the Mayor. "Getting high-speed Internet access to low-income New Yorkers is a game changer for families and for the City that needs all our residents to be able to use 21st century tech-

nologies to improve their lives and build their communities." said Chair Olatoye. "Our residents, who include more than 100,000 children, have lacked access to the benefits that the wireless broadband Internet provides. Today, thanks to the vision of our president and our mayor and the commitment of our partners to equal opportunity for all New Yorkers, the digital divide between NYCHA and the rest of our City begins to close."

Recalling NYCHA's prior efforts to provide digital access and training to residents—recognized by the City and HUD—IT Program Administrator Diane Chehab, who helped spearhead NYCHA's Digital Van, remarked, "It's gratifying to see how NYCHA's early initiatives are now being expanded in the City and now nationally. We

“
Today, thanks to the vision of our president and our mayor ... the digital divide between NYCHA and the rest of our City begins to close.
”

Shola Olatoye
Chair and CEO

nologies to improve their lives and build their communities."

Using a model similar to the libraries' "mi-fi" program that launched in New York City last year, Sprint, with support from HUD, will make mobile Wi-Fi devices available to over 15,000 NYCHA households in the Bronx that include K-12 students. The program is expected to benefit 28,000 children in the borough.

"NYCHA's vision for the families who live in our communities is one that is safe, clean and connected,"

have so many stories of residents who gained access to educational or City services or jobs through broadband and assistance provided by our two Digital Vans and staff."

Prior grants from the City's NYC Connected Communities Program funded computer labs at 12 community centers, where training and assistance were available to residents in the five boroughs.

See the page 6 profile of Anthony Palermo for more information on NYCHA's telecommunications initiatives.

Seasonal Employees Seek Summer Jobs and Permanent Opportunities

Some residents saw posters at their developments, others learned from resident associations, and still others found the good news on Facebook or Twitter: NYCHA was hiring again for its Seasonal Program. After a hiatus of two years from lack of funding, the Seasonal Program is again providing valuable job experience and income for housing development residents.

"We're really excited about being able to bring people on board so developments can get the help they need and participants can get valuable work experience and a paycheck," said Cherry McCutchen, deputy director in NYCHA's Human Resources Department. "Residents could apply right at their development and were then processed in central office by our Human Resources staff."

Reflecting NYCHA's concern for the safety of all its employees, seasonal employees receive a day of safety training before they start the job. NYCHA safety trainer Eman Alawamleh conducted the first in a series of training sessions on July 13 at 90 Church Street, where many of the seasonals were anxious to participate.

"I heard that these jobs can lead to permanent positions, so I thought I'd give it a try because I'm an excellent worker," said Tyrek Williams at the first safety session. A

"I need some income to pay for college bills and books," said Luis Rodriguez, who previously worked in retail. A resident of Taft Houses in Manhattan, Mr. Rodriguez

"People think that injuries will never happen to them, just other people. But if you do your job without following safety procedures, one day it can happen to you," Ms. Alawamleh warned. Ms. Alawamleh discussed real job situations, such as a new employee who wants to impress her or his supervisor and is reluctant to raise safety concerns. "Safety is the responsibility of everyone," Ms. Alawamleh said, emphasizing the serious consequences of job injuries for employees, their families, co-workers, and the Housing Authority.

Ms. Alawamleh also covered topics such as employees' safety rights, occupational exposure to pathogens, personal protective equipment, and fire safety.

"Write my name and phone number in your manual," she told NYCHA's newest employees, "so you can contact me anytime for a question."

More than 400 seasonal employees are now providing much needed assistance, so if you see a new face at your development dressed in NYCHA blues, say hello and thank them for helping to keep NYCHA looking good.



Safety trainer Eman Alawamleh prepares new seasonal employees to work safety during summer employment.

resident of Saratoga Village in Brooklyn, Mr. Williams plans on using his income for his children's daily expenses and also hopes to save for a car.

Felicia Sanchez, a resident of Wise Towers in Manhattan, also hoped for a chance at a permanent position. "I'm happy to have an opportunity to come and provide for my family and hopefully be considered for more employment at NYCHA," she said.

attends Bronx Community College, where he is studying Criminal Justice.

When possible, seasonal employees are assigned to housing developments near where they live. Most jobs involve assisting caretakers maintaining development grounds or other areas. These jobs can present safety issues and require knowledge of potential hazards that were discussed at the safety session.

Organizational Changes (cont.)

- **Sideya Sherman**, formerly Director of REES, has been appointed Vice President for Strategy and Partnership within Community Programs and Development. She will support EVP Melanie Hart in transitioning Community Programs and Development to a partnership-based, collective impact service model

as outlined in NextGeneration NYCHA.

- **Joseph Schmidt**, formerly Deputy Director of Technical Services, has been promoted to Director of Procurement. A 26-year NYCHA veteran who began his career as a maintenance worker, Mr. Schmidt's work in the Technical Services

Department in Contract Services Support provides valuable experience and information for this new role.

The following additional appointments included in GM Kelly's message were reported in the prior issue of *NYCHANow*: **Sibyl Colon**, promoted to Director of the Optimal Property Manage-

ment Department; **Erenisse Tavarez**, promoted to Director of ESD; and **Conrad Vazquez**, appointed Director of the Manhattan Property Management Department.

NYCHA Notables



As the Broadband Initiatives manager in IT's Infrastructure Department, **Anthony Palermo** has been working to provide telecommunications and other services for residents since the TIES (telecommunications, internet, entertainment and security) initiative he began in 2001. Since 2006, the 36-year NYCHA veteran has

focused on utilizing existing and providing additional infrastructure for broadband.

"NYCHA has been trying to bridge the digital divide for years and we are now seeing those efforts leveraged in a really exciting way by the Mayor's new initiatives," he said (see p. 1). "The demonstration project at Queensbridge Houses will utilize the TIES infrastructure connection between apartments that we completed in 2005, and the demonstration project at Mott Haven Houses will use extra capacity that we included in NYCHA's fiber-optic network installed between buildings in 2013 for the layered access security system. The Mayor's Office was delighted to learn that we had these assets in place," said Mr. Palermo.

An architect as well as an information technology expert, Mr. Palermo is utilizing his institutional knowledge of NYCHA's physical plant and existing IT assets to help select properties for the broadband rollout that will eventually bring high-speed broadband service to over 16,000 residents at five public housing developments.

"Working with City Hall is really interesting because collaborating with the Mayor's Office as well as the NYC Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications brings a lot of concerns and talented people together. I am proud to be part of the process."



General Services Graphic Artist **Keith DeCesare**, known as "Keith the Artist" to the September 11th families and community, took part in the ArtAID Signing Ceremony at the National September 11th Memorial and Museum on July 30 that celebrated the first anniversary of the official opening of this important New York City

institution. Since the attack on the World Trade Center in 2001, Keith has given out free copies of his "healing art" to those most affected by the tragedy. The artworks feature a series of Angel Memorials created by Keith to honor heroic uniformed officers and others that answered the call on 9/11.

The stunning series of Angel Memorials—including the Firefighters Angel, the NYPD Guardian Angel, and the EMS Healing Angel—are currently on display in the museum and can also be seen on Keith's Facebook page [here](#). The Facebook page also includes many moving comments that show the artworks' profound impact on victims' families and countless others around the world.

"It was truly gratifying to be surrounded by dozens of loving friends at the First Anniversary celebration of my work being acquired by the museum, and a powerful validation to have 9/11 family members and first responders in attendance. Many came in from great distances," said Mr. DeCesare.

"In addition to members of the clergy, there were also dozens of volunteers from Ground Zero, in particular from St. Paul's Chapel in attendance—so for us it was a sort of reunion," he said.

Mr. DeCesare and his wife found the gathering so inspiring that they spontaneously asked one of the priests to renew their wedding vows. "Surrounded by so many supporting friends and family for such a significant event, it was something we had to do," he said.

The best praise comes from home. Kudos to NYCHA's HR team for the letter they inspired from Elevator Mechanic's Helper Sun Tsang.



Melva Roberson, Haydee Garcia and HR Director Kenya Salaudeen.

Director Kenya Salaudeen,

My name is **Sun Tsang**. I had recently changed City agencies to NYCHA and my daughter had to see the doctor. My wife called me and said the girls were not covered anymore!

So I called 90 Church Street Human Resources and spoke to Ms. Garcia. She was great. She got back to me ASAP and fixed the dilemma!

Every time I have a problem and I call Human Resources, your staff (including **Haydee Garcia, Melva Roberson and Gloria Velez**) is so professional, passionate and polite. I only remember some of the names but believe me, I spoke to a bunch of different agencies and the other outfits don't want to help or do their jobs like here.

Your Human Resources is the best! Always willing to help, always following up on your problems, and never rude.

Sincerely,
Sun Tsang

Let us know about your noteworthy personal or professional accomplishments at NYCHANow@nycha.nyc.gov or as indicated on p. 2.

Fix-It-Forward (cont.)

sequencing of work, decrease wait times and most importantly, enhance customer service. Operation strategies are being piloted in several test developments and best practices will be assembled to



Simple repairs such as window guards will be completed faster through real-time scheduling.

implement authority-wide.

In response to resident concerns and in-the-field feedback, Fix-It-Forward identifies and provides solutions for the following problems:

Problem: Repairs take too long.

Solution: Optimal Property Management Operating Model (OPMOM)

As outlined in NextGen NYCHA, OPMOM is structured to empower local property managers at test developments to build their own budgets and determine staffing needs. The Authority projects that localization of management will lead to a reduction in repair time for basic maintenance to seven days. The OPMOM pilot launched in January at 18 developments, impacting 19,993 apartments.

Problem: Wait times between individual repairs on a single project take too long; multiple requests have to be made for repairs.

Solution: Real-Time Dispatching and myNYCHA App

Repairs will be tracked in real-time through dispatch communications, instead of paper work slips. The myNYCHA app will enable residents to create, submit, view, schedule/reschedule and update inspections and maintenance service requests 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Solution: Real-Time Repairs

Simple repairs, such as smoke detectors, window guards, and minor plumbing repairs, and more complex repairs requiring skilled trades or vendors will be scheduled with the residents in real-time.

Problem: Mold continues to be an issue.

Solution: Capital Repairs & Revised Procedures

NYCHA has systematically changed how mold is handled, with a greater emphasis on determining the root cause

Solution: Enhanced Performance Measures

NYCHA is working to reorient performance-based measures to the total time to complete an entire repair, or service time. NYCHA will also communicate performance results by posting the OPMOM balanced scorecard that tracks metrics and performance at a property in the key areas of operations, including maintenance and emergency service levels, budget, customer service and resident satisfaction.

"I'm no stranger to criticizing NYCHA," said Aixa Torres, Resident Association President at Smith Houses. "But, for the first time since I can't remember when, NYCHA is

“
After hearing from residents
and staff about their frustrations
and challenges, we took a hard look
at our operating procedures.
”

Shola Olatoye
Chair and CEO

Problem: Complex repair projects have unnecessary delays.

Solution: One Call

Complex repair projects typically require multiple components (for example, plumbing, carpentry, plastering, and painting) and require an individual work order to be opened for each part of the job, since each task requires a specialized trade and skill. The One Call initiative will allow residents and property managers to schedule all necessary components of a repair project with 'one call.'

Problem: Minor repairs should not take as long as they do.

which leads to mold, instead of superficial repairs that don't address the underlying problem.

In collaboration with the New York City Department of Mental Health & Hygiene, NYCHA engaged environmental scientists from Rutgers University and Hunter College to help design new training programs. NYCHA has trained more than 350 supervisors in mold remediation. Supervisors have trained staff in the field to improve staff competency on how to address the root cause.

Problem: Perception that data and metrics on work orders aren't real.



Revised procedures for capital repairs emphasize determining the root cause of mold instead of superficial repairs.

giving us possible solutions to the problems with maintenance and repairs instead of more excuses. This is a different NYCHA than it was two years ago and in another two years, I hope it's even more different and we see more positive changes."

News to Use

Computer Program Upgrades Are Coming



The IT Department will be upgrading two frequently used programs that will improve service for NYCHA's approximately 6,000 desktop computer users. Internet Explorer is being upgraded to version 11 and Adobe Acrobat also is being upgraded to version 11.

The upgrade is expected to begin mid-August and should take several weeks to complete. Upgrading will start with computers at central office locations and then move to computers in the field.

This upgrade is necessary for better compatibility with websites and other software, as well as increased security and vendor support.

IT will download the software to all employees' computers automatically after hours and on weekends to minimize business interrup-

tions. Therefore, it is imperative that employees DO NOT SHUT DOWN (power off) their computers during this time period. Employees will be notified by email before the upgrades begin and when they are complete.

The email will advise computer users to prepare for the upgrades by not "shutting down" their machine at the end of the day until further notice. Instead of turning the power off, users should "log off" the desktop by clicking on the "Start" button, then selecting "Logoff."

Please close all applications and save all your work.

Computers will be rebooted automatically as part of the upgrade and any work not saved will be lost.

The upgrades should not disturb users' Favorites list or any other settings.

If you experience any problems as a result of the upgrades, please call the IT Service Center at 212-306-7000 or contact the Service Center 7000 by email at svctr@nycha.nyc.gov.

Approaching Retirement?

Approximately three months prior to retirement, employees should schedule an appointment with Human Resources' ASKHR at (212) 306-8000. Prior to the appointment, you must visit the NYC Employees Retirement System (NYCERS) to obtain a printout of your

pension estimate. NYCERS, located at 340 Jay Street in Brooklyn, is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekdays. No appointment is necessary. Employees may visit NYCERS' website at www.nycers.org for additional information.

Take Advantage of Employee Discounts



Get the most out of summer and the most out of New York with an array of employee discounts you may not even know about!

When you check out [Employee Discounts on NYCHA Connect](#), under the HR tab on the top, you will find access to some awesome offers.

How about:

- a 10-50% discount on Yankee home games,
- up to a 40% discount on

movie tickets, and

- even a steep discount for Broadway shows?

If you'd rather stay healthy this summer or work out on your home computer, how about:

- a \$19.95 premier monthly membership at the New York Sports Club,
- 20% off the monthly rate and 50% off the joiner's fee at the YMCA, plus a summer membership special,
- or the latest version of Microsoft Office Suite for your home computer for an amazing \$9.95?

Some of the discounts are listed directly on Connect and others are featured on [CityShare](#), the New York City portal with access to a wealth of information and services for City employees.

Retirees – Your Letters are Welcome

Dear NYCHANow:

On January 20, 2015, my sister, Cardell Stokes Phillips, passed away. Cardell was an employee of the Authority for over 40 years; 15 plus of which were spent in the title of PAA 3, in the Office of the Chair of the Authority. Cardell loved the Authority, and as such, treated it as though it were a well-respected and loving member of her own personal family. NYCHA gave her an opportunity to meet many, many people, some of which eventually became her close personal friends for a lifetime. NYCHA also afforded Cardell an opportunity to encourage others to become employees of the Authority; myself, Brenda Stokes Robinson being one of those, and as such never felt a moment of regret. Thanks to you NYCHA, as well as to Cardell, for 18 good years of employment that ended in a beautiful, wonderful and financially secure retirement in 2003.

Thank you,
Brenda Stokes Robinson