



neighborhood coalition for shelter

HELPING NEW YORKERS FIND THEIR WAY HOME

Bronxscape: An Exciting New Green Project

"We did something incredible here and we made someplace beautiful for a bunch of kids who need more beautiful places in their lives."

—Ed May, Parsons School of Design
2008 Design Workshop participant

Louis Nine House, NCS's new "green" residence for young adults who are aging out of foster care or are homeless, was selected as the 2008 project for Parsons School of Design's annual Design Workshop. This intensive 15-week course provides the opportunity for architectural and design graduate students to work directly with a client to design and then fabricate a project.

The 14 students have transformed the building's basic green roof into "Bronxscape", 3,500 square feet of communal rooftop space where residents can relax, socialize and even plant their own garden. In line with the 'green' design and construction used throughout the building, the vegetation on the roof keeps the building cooler, saves energy, and extends the life of the roof.

In early January, students toured the building and met with NCS staff to discuss how the space might be used. Each student presented a proposed design; then NCS and the students selected elements from each that they believed would best meet the needs of the new residents. When a design was finalized in early May, students created working drawings for the Buildings Department, ordering the wood, steel and dirt, while applying to city agencies for permits. Finally, they donned hard hats and tool belts, hoisted steel girders up to the roof and together completed the construction.



The 2008 Parsons Design Workshop class with a model of Louis Nine House's Bronxscape.



Under construction: a Design Workshop participant atop the Pavilion.



Panoramic view of Bronxscape's North Garden and pavilion.

Bronxscape far exceeds NCS's expectations.

The enhanced rooftop offers green spaces for group activities and shaded areas for reflection, reading or conversation. A large open pavilion, with an area for dining and food preparation, is the centerpiece of Bronxscape. Attached to the pavilion is a greenhouse, where residents can sow and care for seedlings, which they later transplant into their own personal planting boxes. For many residents, this may be their 'first experience eating vegetables or pieces of fruit that they have grown and nurtured. The lush gardens are sustained through an irrigation system, which collects and redistributes rain water, and the pavilion's roof has photovoltaic cells to capture solar energy that will light the roof in the evenings.

NCS is grateful to Parsons School of Design, faculty members David J. Lewis and Kent Kleinman and the students who participated in Design Workshop 2008. Portions of this project have been funded through the generosity of the Bronx Borough President's Office, the Real Estate Board of New York, Barker Welfare Foundation and The Hyde and Watson Foundation. We also thank the staff of WHEDCO, the developer of the building, for helping to make this happen. If you are interested in learning more about Bronxscape or Louis Nine House, please contact Tanya Hackel at 212-537-5143.

Design Workshop 2008 has been documented from conception through construction by Ed May at www.marcbnyc.blogspot.com.



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NEIGHBORHOOD
COALITION FOR SHELTER
is committed to ending
homelessness by providing
men and women with
housing and support that
can transform their lives.

Message from the CEO



Anne R. Teicher

The City's decision to close the Neighborhood Center for Homeless People (NCHP), NCS's 77th Street drop-in/referral center for homeless men and women, was not specific to our agency, but is part of the City's policy shift to greatly reduce the number of drop-in centers. The Center was closed on June 25th, after serving our community and our homeless neighbors for 19 years.

The outpouring of support from Community Board 8, our elected officials, clergy, community organizations and individuals spoke to the crucial role this program played in our community. We thank everyone who has supported NCHP through the years.

NCS is looking forward to an exciting and challenging year as we continue to expand our important work. We will be opening Louis Nine House, a new residence for 46 young

adults aging out of foster care, and moving vocational services to this new residence to serve a greater number of people (including the young adults living there). This move includes Emporium Online, which is expanding to serve individuals with disabilities referred by state agencies. We are especially gratified to report that we will be acquiring sites for two new buildings to create 120 units of housing for homeless mentally ill adults. Finally, we will be publishing the findings of our second research study in the *Journal of Personality Disorders*.

More good news to share! NCS's Outpatient Treatment Program, which opened last fall, has received a three-year license from the New York State Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Programs (OASAS), the longest licensing period the Office will assign.

I look forward to keeping you updated on the work of Neighborhood Coalition for Shelter as we continue to create new housing and supportive services for homeless and formerly homeless individuals.

NYC's Changing Policies Toward Homeless Individuals

In 2004 the Mayor announced his five-year plan to reduce homelessness by two-thirds by 2009. While the City has had some success—the census in the adult shelter system declined for three years and the total shelter population (including families with children and individuals) has declined from 36,600 to 34,401 since the launch of the plan—the goal of reducing the total shelter population by two-thirds (12,100 total shelter population by 2009), is clearly unattainable. And, although street homelessness has been reduced citywide, the number of individuals living on the streets of Manhattan has actually increased by 21% from 2007 to 2008. At a hearing at City Hall on September 23rd, two critical questions were addressed: 1) why homelessness in New York City has not decreased more quickly, and 2) whether DHS needs to consider new strategies.

Primary policy initiatives the City has undertaken to address homelessness among single adults include:

- Focus on prevention by establishing HomeBase programs in communities generating the most homelessness (which includes programs for families as well as individuals), and, collaborating with prisons and hospitals to improve discharge planning so people don't wind up on the streets or in shelters.
- Focus services and resources on housing chronically homeless people, particularly those living on the streets. Implement a "street to home" approach that steers the chronically homeless towards stable housing, rather than emergency shelters.

- Shift to a "housing first" model, allowing people from the streets or shelters to obtain housing with intensive services provided while they work toward psychiatric stability or sobriety.
- Shift resources to create Safe Havens (with a reduction of drop-in centers), a low-demand type of housing/shelter program that provides a safe place to sleep and receive services for those people who refuse other types of housing or shelter. Staff attempt to engage and motivate clients toward permanent housing and sobriety.
- Reduce number of shelter beds provided by the faith community which utilizes these shelter beds for clients of drop-in centers.

We believe that some of the City's policy changes in the way it delivers homeless services to single adults have yielded (or will yield) positive results. However, other changes may reduce rather than expand options for homeless people. Research and long experience have demonstrated that engaging a homeless population with diverse needs is best accomplished by providing multiple ways for them to access the services system.

Although we applaud the goal to move individuals directly from the street to homes, the reduction of drop-in centers and shelter beds in the religious community eliminates two important ways that some of the neediest are able to receive help. Further, with the emphasis on

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NCS Celebrates Spring Benefit

On May 14th, NCS's Spring Benefit, *There's No Place Like Home: A Celebration of New York City*, was held at the Level Loft of the Metropolitan Pavilion.

Over 300 guests, including long-time friends and many new supporters, raised almost \$200,000 for NCS's programs that help homeless individuals secure housing, employment and long-term self-sufficiency. NCS was honored to welcome Grammy Award-winning artist Pras Michel of the Fugees as its special guest.

The sleek loft was transformed into areas representing New York City throughout the year, with different activities for each season. A runway featuring designs by Nicole Miller took center stage in a re-creation of Spring Fashion Week in Bryant Park, while putting greens and a pro-golf instructor from The Golf Club at Chelsea Piers helped guests perfect their swing and capture the summer spirit. A bar featuring the Times Square New Years' Eve Ball in winter and a downtown Autumn Café completed the year-round City theme.

Guests strolled along a tree-lined path and bid on a broad array of silent auction items—from dinner at the Gramercy Tavern to a diamond-studded Mont Blanc watch. They enjoyed a variety of hors d'oeuvres by Glorious Food while listening to a capella music, spoken word,



Grammy-Award winning artist Pras Michel speaks about his documentary *Skid Row*.



NCS Board Member Michelle Edgar (left) with Junior Committee Member Leena Jain.



Friends of NCS (left to right): Joe Ryan and Colin and Rebekah McCabe, with Board Member Stephanie Shuman and husband Fred.

saxophone and guitar performances, all capturing the eclectic musical sounds of New York City's streets and subways. DJ Izzy—one of New York's hottest turntablists—entertained the crowd well into the evening.

Pras Michel spoke about the pressing needs of homeless individuals, which he experienced first-hand while living as a homeless person for his investigative documentary, *Skid Row*. NCS created the Pras Michel Enrichment Award, a college or vocational-training scholarship for a resident of Louis Nine House, NCS's new and completely "green" residence for young adults aging out of foster care, which is opening this winter in the Bronx.

Architecture students from Parsons School of Design were present to answer questions and display a model of "Bronxscape," the innovative green roof communal space, which they recently constructed at Louis Nine House (see the front page article to read more about this exciting project). Speakers included David Oliver, incoming Presi-

dent of the NCS Board of Directors, and Ronndolyn Black, a tenant at the NCS Residence.

NCS thanks the members of the Benefit Committee and Junior Benefit Committee for helping to make this event such a huge success.

NCS is grateful to the following individuals and companies who generously contributed items and services to the Silent Auction:

Giuliana Simona Abaton	Deborah Harrison	Tina Hansen	Mirror Lake Inn	The Salty Paw
Alan Wasser Associates	Miller Jewelry	Hay-Adams Hotel	Mont Blanc	Sam Ash Music
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Chris Madden, Inc.	Chelsea Piers	Madison Avenue	Philosophy	Anne Watkins
Clarins Cosmetics	Gramercy Tavern	Limousine	PicNic Market	The Wayne Thomas Salon
Cornelia Day Resort	Eric Green	Marc Jacobs	Pink Elephant Club	West Elm
Dance Manhattan Studios	The Hampton Classic	Mario Badescu Skin Care	Rumblefish	Wolffer Estate Vineyard
Dean and Deluca	Horse Show	Maxx New York	Saks Fifth Avenue	Zoochini

Mother-Daughter Volunteer Day



On June 5th NCS hosted the first ever mother-daughter volunteer day with fourteen sixth-grade students from The Chapin School and seven of their moms (pictured above). The project was organized by Suzanne Oliver, wife of NCS Board President David Oliver, and their daughter, Anne, at the NCS Residence. The volunteers stuffed and delivered “dignity bags” with toiletries and personal items for the men and women who were leaving the drop-in center. They also baked cookies and brownies for the tenants of the NCS Residence. The group enjoyed lunch in the rooftop garden of the Residence, where Rodney spoke about his experiences as a homeless person and now as a resident of NCS. If you are interested in volunteering with NCS, please contact Millicent Cavanaugh, Director of Volunteer Services, at 212-537-5150.

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NYC's Homeless Policies

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...serving the chronically homeless, and the limitations the City has imposed, those who are newly homeless, or sporadically homeless, often have to wait until they are on or back on the streets for at least nine months before they are eligible to receive services from a city-funded outreach team.

Recent findings by the Independent Budget Office as well as DHS's own report published in late September, indicate that the total number of homeless people has decreased little since 2004. Many people are now reporting, anecdotally, that they are seeing increasing numbers of people on the streets again. (And, with recent economic events, we can expect this trend to continue.) We strongly support any efforts that will reduce and eventually eliminate the need for anyone in our city to be homeless, but we fear that some of the policies being put into effect may ultimately undermine the City's efforts in accomplishing this goal.

How to Help

Although the Neighborhood Center for Homeless People (NCHP), NCS's drop-in/referral center, closed on June 25, 2008, after 19 years of service to the Upper East Side community, NCS continues to provide critical housing and supportive services that assist homeless and formerly homeless men and women in their journey to independent living through counseling and treatment, educational and vocational training, and job placement. Your help is more important than ever. To make a contribution to NCS, please go to www.ncsinc.org to make a secure online donation or return the enclosed envelope to donate by check or credit card.

How to help an individual facing homelessness and in need of immediate assistance:

Call 311 and request that a member of the City's Homeless Outreach Team be contacted.

Refer the individual to Grand Central Neighborhood Social Services Corporation's Multi-Service Drop-in Center, 120 East 32nd Street, between Lexington and Park Avenues. (212) 883-0680. Open 24 hours a day.



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neighborhood
coalition for shelter

