Security Is A Priority

Beginning a new year normally leads organizations to review their progress and set new goals. For this organization, providing a safe living environment for their tenants is a goal that was addressed in 2013 and continues to be a high priority in 2014. Currently 29 out of the 78 Hope properties have security features such as: new light fixtures, key fobs, security camera installations and 24-hour security. Moving forward in 2014, the goal is to address the security needs of the remainder of our properties, so that all tenants feel safe in their homes. In a continued effort to enrich the lives of our tenants we’re also working closely with local police precincts to help keep our East Harlem/El Barrio neighborhood safe. If these security improvements have not reached your building, feel free to contact Hope at 212-860-8821, Ext. 122.
In this edition of the Hope Herald, we celebrate our ongoing commitment to work with the East Harlem community. The Annual Award Dinner was a tremendous success for Hope Community as we celebrated our 45th Anniversary. The Fall Fest, one of our oldest traditions, was resurrected this year. This free outdoor event is a culmination of educational and fun activities for everyone. In this issue we continue to highlight ongoing projects with the merchants and ways Hope Community is trying to help them. In our effort to make improvements in Hope managed properties, we have installed new washer and dryers in buildings with existing laundry rooms. We have also provided a convenient way for our residents to pay their rent each month through a service called Rezzcard. We could not have held any of our events or expanded our programming this year without the contributions from our community partners and other supporters. To them we continue to say, “¡Muchas Gracias!”

**A Brief Hello from Hope’s Executive Director**

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**Hope Listens to Tenants’ Concerns**

Hope Community’s Annual Meeting took place on Thursday, November 21, 2013 at Carlos Rios Senior Residence. Tenants met with Walter Roberts, Executive Director, Board Members and Staff and shared concerns regarding their apartments and buildings. All issues were heard and are being addressed by the appropriate property management team. Some tenants made it a point to comment on how much they appreciated their superintendent and what great work was being done where they reside. Hope encourages tenants to voice their thoughts at any time throughout the year. Please direct concerns to property management at: 212-860-8821 Ext. 122

Hope’s Annual Meetings take place the third Thursday of November.

**Greening and Saving Small Businesses with Con Ed**

Thank you to Consolidated Edison of New York for its recent grant to fund a series of workshops to educate local business owners about the Small Business Direct Installation (SBDI) program. The SBDI program offers free energy surveys and steeply discounted “green” products such as light fixtures, high pressure water sprayers and thermostat setback. The business owners usually recover their investment in less than six months, often saving thousands or even tens of thousands of dollars a year in water and energy costs. The workshops will be hosted by Business Manager Michelle Raymie and will take place throughout March, April and May.

If you’re interested in these workshops please contact: 212-860-8821 Ext. 143

![Consolidated Edison](image)

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Above Walter Roberts listens to tenants.
UC Columbus Dispatch, a Hope tenant since 2009, is a luxury car service located in the heart of East Harlem. Owner Carlos Heras has been a small business owner since the age of 23 and has been driving a cab since 17, when his father bought him a car that had a "Livery" sign on it. According to Mr. Heras, back then there was no taxi and limousine commission and it was easy to become a driver. Now, there is a process and he makes it clear that he is sure to carry out all requirements asked of the organization.

He recalls how challenging it was then in East Harlem: "There were a lot of drugs," says Mr. Heras, who admits that at one point the cabbies largest clients were drug dealers. A naïve young cab driver, he was oblivious to the clientele he was chauffeuring around then. He says he has witnessed growth in the neighborhood and believes it began during the Giuliani administration. "Things have changed," he says "[East Harlem] is much better. Giuliani gave the streets back to the public and if you feel safe, you will go the extra mile to invest in your neighborhood." This change encouraged him to invest some more, so he broke off from his then partners to open his own business. Now with, four in-house employees and a fleet of 35 cars, he is expanding and creating a multi-service facility that will include: car insurance, income tax preparation and a legal representative for drivers (to address motor vehicle and Taxi and Limousine Commission issues). His future plans include an acquisition of 35 more vehicles for a total of 70.

Part of what makes UC Columbus Dispatch unique is his new single-parent training program. As a driver, a parent will have a flexible schedule and make a very good income, plus receive free training. Training will include: education on the Taxi and Limousine Commission Guidelines and a focus on the company’s priority of courteous customer service. Mr. Heras says, "This business can cause a lot of stress." As a small business owner, cancer survivor, father of two and caretaker for his elderly parents, he has managed to thrive. Though he began working for an income, he is now inspired by the other cancer patients who often told him, "to keep going", business skills he has learned and providing employment for others. "I have 45 families that depend on this business... these guys trust me...", he says and it is clear he does not plan to let any of them down. By providing affordable commercial spaces, Hope makes it possible for small businesses like UC Columbus Dispatch to grow and stay in the community, contributing to its economic vitality.

For quality and safe car service or information on the Single-Parent Training Program, please contact, UC Columbus Dispatch and ask for Carlos Heras at 212-316-1119 or visit: www.uccnycexclusivetransport.com

Supporting Small Business Saturday

On November 30, 2013, Hope Community, Inc., through its Visit El Barrio Initiative, showed support for the 3rd Annual Small Business Saturday. Founded by American Express in 2010 and celebrated yearly on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, this nationally supported day encourages people to "Shop Small," and has grown into a movement that millions of individuals, businesses and communities have embraced nationwide. Hope joined this effort to encourage consumers to continue buying local and investing in East Harlem/El Barrio by distributing local business directories and information via print and social media on the importance of shopping local. In addition, Hope received and distributed balloons, pens, doormats and over 600 "Shop Small" tote bags to individuals and businesses throughout East Harlem to celebrate the day. To find out more about this and Hope Community’s other efforts to support small businesses visit: www.visitelbarrio.com
In October 2013 the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), funded by the New York State Department of Health and administered by Kings County Hospital, provided a food delivery service for seniors which took place at Hope Community’s Carlos Rios Senior Residence. Any senior above the age of 60 qualifies for this program. The seniors received deliveries on the 8th and 29th of October. Out of 102 residents, 65 registered to participate in the program. Residents and their relatives, along with some home attendants, volunteered to help unload and sort bags and distribute the foods.

Nitia Vaz-Smith, Social Service Coordinator and organizer of the project, says that there was a lot of work to be done, but “they all had a good time...listened to music and had interesting conversations along the way.” In order to make the distribution process efficient and pleasant for all involved, the food was distributed in slots of 30 minutes, two floors at a time. Each senior received: milk, a block of cheese, rice, beans, chicken, corn, fruit and juice. Residents (and sisters-in-law) Marta, Maria and Gloria Torres received services and

This past October, JPMorgan Chase and Hope Community collaborated to offer residents of East Harlem a Financial Literacy and Home Buyers Workshop Series. Topics of discussion ranged from Money Management and Understanding Credit to The Home Buying Process. Workshops were led by Mortgage Bankers Catherine Botero and Kenneth Ufret. There were a total of 49 registrants and though not all were able to complete the workshop series, they did report its impact. Efrain Rivera, a Saturday student and young father of three, was unable to complete the series due to an unexpected scheduling conflict. He says, “I learned a lot...as soon as I came home from the first class I sat my family down and we began to create a budget.” He plans to become a home owner in a few years and says the workshops helped him see how important maintaining a budget and being credit conscious is. Regina Pluchinotta, a graduate, said, “It was very informative.” She is ready to buy a home soon and knows the workshops prepared her. Nikki Merkerson, Business Development Officer at JPMorgan Chase Retail Home Lending said, “The workshops here [at Hope] have been one of the most successful.” Instructor Catherine Botero agreed saying, “It was very successful” and was surprised that “two to three months later people are still inquiring.” She found it interesting that what seems “simple to some can change a life [for others].”

The Financial Literacy and Home Buyers Workshop is provided in English and Spanish. It is part of Hope’s mission to “enrich the lives of the people who live and work in this community.” Hope and JPMorgan Chase will be collaborating again to provide more of these workshops. (See the Upcoming Events Section in this newsletter and visit www.hopeci.org)
volunteered to help distribute. They mentioned that they believed the program was necessary and beneficial for the seniors. Seniors often have to brave the cold weather to participate in these programs; being able to stay indoors and have the program come to them was a big plus. Residents left with their food donations in bags provided by Health First. The residents are looking forward to the next distribution, which will now be a monthly event.

This program is open to all Senior Residents at Hope Properties. If you are a senior above 60 years of age and would like to register for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, please call: 212-860-8821. Ext. 6313 Find out more about this program at: www.usda.gov/CSFP

On Tuesday, November 26, 2013, Friends of Hope hosted the annual Thanksgiving Dinner for the residents at Carlos Rios Senior Residence Building. Family, Board Members and Staff joined residents to share in this yearly tradition.

Thanksgiving Dinner at Carlos Rios

Happy New Year! Each year we make New Year’s resolutions that often go by the wayside but there’s a solution to your resolution woes. How about taking an inner vacation? As the year begins, I encourage my customers, friends and colleagues to eat raw foods for seven to 31 days.

Why eat raw? The going belief is that the healthiest foods for your body are uncooked. Raw foods provide the body with life giving enzymes. They help it to rest, detoxify and renew itself naturally. Cooking denatures the enzymes naturally present in food. Enzymes are the life force of our food because they help us to digest and absorb nutrients. If we overcook our food, our bodies work harder to process the food by producing more enzymes. If we fail to get these enzymes naturally over time, we may begin to see a host of health problems including digestive conditions, nutrient deficiency and weight gain. Raw foods include fruits, vegetables, nuts, grains and seeds. These foods also release needed protein properties.

So, taking an inner vacation means eating raw foods, letting the natural enzymes work for you, while giving your body a well needed rest. This well-deserved rest comes at the start of the new year and right after the cooked food-filled holidays! One big benefit is that you lose weight! So this may be the first year you don’t have to make a resolution to lose weight that you can’t keep; eating raw will do it for you. Make sense?

For more information that will make “Sense” to you, contact Marcia at the Natural Essentials and Wellness (NEW) store located at 2105 1st Avenue, at the corner of East 108th Street in East Harlem, New York City Phone: 212-369-4300 or email: NewRxx@gmail.com
Above from left to right: Reed Rickman, President of Apex Mechanical Corp., Melissa Mark-Viverito, New York City Council Member, Walter Roberts, Executive Director and Ann Henderson, Board Chair at the Hope Annual Awards Dinner, September 26, 2013

Above from left to right: Walter Roberts, Executive Director, John Liu, New York City Comptroller, and Ann Henderson, Hope Community Board Chair

Above: Dean Jacqueline Mondros, Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College, CUNY, accepting her Community Service Award, (left: Walter Roberts, right: Lynda Baquero)

Above: Mark Jahr, President of the Housing Development Corp., Keynote Speaker

Thank You To Our Many Supporters Including:
Celebrating 45 Years of Rebuilding Neighborhoods One Block At A Time

The Library Reading Room at New York Academy of Medicine

The Manna House Faculty Three, Musical Guests
John Robinson, Bass—Bertha Hope, Piano—Peter Lewis, Drums

Fred Benfredj, owner of Exotic Fragrances, accepts his Community Service Award from Walter Roberts and Lynda Baquero

Below: Lynda Baquero, WNBC 4 News, our MC for the evening, sharing a few words about Hope Community, Inc.

The New York Academy of Medicine

The Library Reading Room at New York Academy of Medicine
Fall Fest is Back!
The Hope Community, Inc. Fall Fest took place on Monday, October 14, 2013. The event is one of the many annual events that the tenants and community look forward to. Having been absent for two years, it was Hope’s goal to assure it would return in 2013. Over 100 children and 12 organizations participated. Children enjoyed drawing with chalk, face painting, arts and crafts, a bounce house and other fun activities. It was a welcomed event. While interviewing families, many mentioned their past experiences with Fall Fest and were pleased at its return. The Fall Fest will continue to take place every Columbus Day on 104th Street between Lexington and Third Avenues. The goal is to expand with more participation from educational organizations, vendors and more. Thanks to the committee and staff’s hard work this event was a success!

If you would like to volunteer and assist us at the 2014 Fall Fest, please call: 212-860-8821 Ext. 162.

Hope Community, Inc. supported El Museo Del Barrio and the East Harlem community as they marched in the Three Kings Parade on Monday, January 6, 2014. All residents are welcome to march in this annual event. To join us for next year’s parade call: 212-860-8821, Ext. 162.

FAQ’s (Frequently Asked Questions): In our last edition we printed:

Q: When I recertify, will my rent increase?

A: No, failure to recertify means you will lose your rent subsidy and your apartment rent will increase to the non-regulatory rate.

We mentioned we would share more about this...

Q: Why is completing my recertification so important?

A: It’s important because this assists the property management in maintaining records that will help the building/apartment you live in keep the “tax credit” that allows your rent to stay affordable. If Hope fails to receive a tax credit towards your apartment/building your rent will go up. This is independent of your income. If you’re due to recertify please contact property management: 212-860-8821 Ext. 122.

HOPE GLOSSARY

Market Value Rent: Refers to the rent paid according to the location, size, amenities of the apartment you live in. This is simply the rent a tenant “might” be paying if they did not rent from an affordable housing organization such as Hope.

Non-Regulatory Rent Rate: This term refers to the amount of rent that you would pay if your rent was at market value.
The New and Easy Way to Pay Your Rent

The Rezzcard was introduced to Hope tenants in 2013, as a convenient way to pay their rent. The process is simple: you take your Rezzcard to your local payment center along with your rent, hand the teller the card along with the money and in moments your rent is paid!

Cynthia, manager at CFSC Check Cashing at 2033 2nd Avenue (between 104th and 105th Street) says, “It’s safer and faster than mailing because it goes in [the system] right away.” Instead of spending for a money order, a stamp and envelope you just pay a small fee. She favors the Rezzcard because of the many issues customers have complained about when purchasing money orders; either the money order arrives late or not at all. With Rezzcard, your rent is paid within minutes and is posted the next business day. Some tenants leave to work early and get home late,” says Andrew Melendez, Administrative Assistant at Hope. He encourages tenants to switch to Rezzcard because of the convenience. He says that one particular resident is late to work every month in order to arrive at Hope during office hours with her payment. Cynthia says that it’s a similar process to wiring money and you leave the payment center with a receipt in hand. Rezzcard has over 1000 convenient locations in New York City and over 100 in Manhattan alone.

If you are a Hope tenant and have not received a Rezzcard please contact your property manager (212-860-8821, Ext.122) and ask how you can begin using Rezzcard. For more details you may also visit: www.rezzcard.com

D.O.H. Educates on Abatement

The Department of Health (D.O.H.), through their Veterinary and Pest Control Bureau, offers free pest control workshops that focus on rat abatement. Hope Community, Inc., contacted The Department of Health to request these workshops in the East Harlem community. The first workshop, led by research scientist Carla Rossi, took place on December, 19, 2013 at the East Harlem Cafe. Owner Michelle Cruz donated her space to help spearhead this project.

The two-hour workshop provided information on rat biology and their habits. Carla addressed key topics such as: Sanitation Is Prevention, Ridding Your Space of Clutter, Managing Your Garbage, Proper Baiting and Myths About Rats. Both commercial and residential tenants attended and were pleased to learn about this issue. A local beauty salon owner attended the workshop because she wanted to learn how to deal with this issue as it had caused her a serious loss in business: “You can hear them after dark.” Her concerns were immediately addressed and a joint visit from property management and D.O.H’s Carla Rossi was scheduled. Since the visit, the owner, who wishes to remain anonymous, has taken measures to remove the clutter from the basement and says, “Things are getting better.” Hope continues collaborating with the D.O.H. to educate the East Harlem community on rat abatement.

If you have concerns regarding this issue where you live, or would like to attend our the next workshop, please contact: 212-860-8821 Ext. 162. To learn more about rat prevention call: 646-632-6548 or visit: www.nyc.gov/rats
Hope Community, Inc. is committed to our tenants safety, because of this we want to make sure that you received the form pictured below. New York City law requires that tenants living in a building with three or more apartments complete the following form. Did you receive the below form from your property manager? 

**New Washers and Dryers for Hope Tenants**

Hope properties with existing laundry rooms received new washers and dryers in 2013. The upgrade for the laundry rooms included: a new paint job, front loader-energy-efficient washers and dryers and new tables and chairs. The removal of the old machines and installations of the new ones were all completed on Thursday, December 26, 2013. (continued on the next page)
New Washers and Dryers for Hope Tenants (Continued)

This laundry room upgrade is just another example of how Hope Community is committed to enriching the lives of their tenants and the East Harlem community. If you have any questions regarding upgrades in your building, please contact property management at 212-860-8821 Ext. 122.
**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- **The Women’s Entrepreneurial Forum:** Monday, March 31, 2014. For more information please visit: www.hopeci.org, www.visitelbarrio.com or email: mraymie@hopeci.org.

- **Spring Financial Literacy and Home Buyers Workshop**
  Four Class Series: Tuesdays April 22, 29, May 6 and 13 or Saturdays, April 26, May 3, 10, 17
  *YOU MUST: ATTEND ALL FOUR WORKSHOPS, BE AT LEAST 18 YEARS OLD AND REGISTER.*

  To Register Please Call: 212-860-8821 Ext. 162

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**FRIENDS OF HOPE**

DONATE $125.00 & RECEIVE A COMMEMORATIVE BRICK PLACEMENT AT MODESTO “TIN” FLORES COMMUNITY GARDEN

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**RESIDENTS OF EL BARRIO/EAST HARLEM CELEBRATING LONG LIVES**

Above: Hope’s longest living tenant, Consuelo Montalvo, at the Carlos Rios Residence where she now resides, pictured above with her son, Joe Montalvo

Born in Puerto Rico, Consuelo Montalvo moved to New York City in 1946. She has over five decades in this neighborhood and has seen a lot of change especially in the people in the community. She says there was a warmer feel back then: “People were different but every thing has its time.” This onetime seamstress recalls how she enjoyed piece-work but never liked embroidery. She commented, “Too slow...I liked the machines, they worked fast!” At age 97 she is a grandmother of four, great-grandmother of eight and great-great-grandmother of one. Her only child, Joe Montalvo, shared that when she reflects upon her life in this neighborhood, she often says one thing, “Yes...things change.”

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**HOPE TIDBIT:**

SOME OF OUR EMPLOYEES STARTED AS INTERNS AND EVEN AS VOLUNTEERS. VOLUNTEERING IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY. IF YOU’D LIKE TO VOLUNTEER AT HOPE, CONTACT US ON THE WEB AT: www.hopeci.org or call 212-860-8821 Ext. 162