

News from Henry Street

265 Henry Street, New York, NY 10002 Tel: 212.766.9200 Summer 2006

Self-Help Program Offers Support in Transition from Homelessness

Henry Street Settlement provides pathways to self-sufficiency.

One of the most innovative programs offered by Henry Street Settlement's Transitional and Supportive Housing division is Self-Help, a homelessness-prevention program for families transitioning out of the shelter system and families outside of the system who are at risk of eviction. The program offers extensive case management services, such as support groups for shelter residents and life skills workshops, and serves about 150 families every year.

Self-Help prepares each client for a more self-sufficient life with instruction in vital areas such as financial literacy and budgeting, household management, nutrition, hygiene, parenting and conflict resolution. Many adult clients have never been the head of a household before they transition out of the shelter system. According to Program Coordinator Theresa Young, last year the program showed a 98% success rate, with only one client losing her apartment despite the best efforts of case workers.

When families relocate from the shelters to permanent housing situations, a case aide helps them transition into their new communities and connects them with resources they may need for support.

Ms. Pierce*, a client from Urban Family Center, has four children with severe chronic asthma. She was using the emergency room as their primary source of medical care, spending hours at a time there, until Self-Help located an asthma

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Art Show Starts the Year off Strong

The sale of a limited edition Jim Dine print, *The Henry Street Robes*, 2005, was a generous and important contribution to the success of the 18th annual fundraiser. See Page 4



left: Chief Executive Officer Verona Middleton-Jeter (l) welcomed Honorary Art Show Chair Kitty Carlisle Hart.



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Self-Help Program continued from front page

clinic for her, and connected her with the hospital's pulmonary specialist, who met with her about managing her children's conditions.

Every client faces unique barriers and challenges to finding and remaining in a stable housing situation. Through intervention and client advocacy, such as help with the public assistance system and conflicts with landlords, Self-Help case aides help clients manage issues that might otherwise threaten their housing stability. Clients are informed of tenants' rights and responsibilities, how to advocate for themselves and their families, and how to navigate the legal system.

Yancy, a client, was unable to get some major repair work done in her apartment. "My super wouldn't fix anything in my building, and he wouldn't give me the landlord's number," she says. "My case worker got the number, and she got my landlord to fix my tub and get an exterminator to take care of the rats and roaches. At least I can live there now."

Through Self-Help, Henry Street Settlement also provides small one-time monetary grants to any family hit with a crisis that put it at risk of homelessness. New York City's new subsidy program, Housing

"I thought it was too late for me to go back to school. [My case aide] helped me get my grandson in day care, and I went to a GED program. Now I feel ready to take the test. It is never too late."

—Ms Cooke, Self-Help client

Stability Plus, places families in the shelter system on a five-year graduated program, whereby most or all of their rent is paid for them in the first year, and their share increases incrementally each year until they are better able to support themselves. These clients are then encouraged to take part in GED preparation, computer skills classes, and other educational opportunities that might improve their access to employment.

"I thought it was too late for me to go back to school," says client Ms. Cooke. "I wasn't ready, but every month [my case aide] would tell me that I should try. She helped me get my grandson in day care, and I went to a GED program. Now I feel ready to take the test. It is never too late."

The case of Ms. Clark* is also typical. A single mother, seven months pregnant, she was having trouble enrolling her children in school after moving from a shelter into a Bronx apartment. She was experiencing medical problems from the pregnancy, which kept her from completing the registration forms. A Self-Help case aide intervened to help navigate the problem and successfully enroll her children in school without endangering her health. Ms. Clark's children are now attending school, and Henry Street was able to get the baby a crib and baby clothing with an emergency grant from *The New York Times* Neediest Cases Fund. Self-Help continues to work with Ms. Clark to support her and help her maintain self-sufficiency for her family.

One of the self-help program's primary strengths lies in the hiring of formerly homeless clients as case aides. This peer-to-peer case management approach is meant to help families determine a credible and realistic baseline to start from so they can develop an action plan to move forward and keep themselves housed.

Mr. Wilson*, a single father, regained custody of his nine year-old daughter after overcoming a substance addiction. The two were forced out of his sister's apartment by her landlord, because they were not on the lease, and they ended up in the shelter system for nine months. After Mr. Wilson moved into permanent housing, a Self-Help case aide helped him identify a drug rehabilitation facility in his new community so he could avoid a relapse. In addition, the facility offers parenting classes.

Henry Street is proud of Self-Help's accomplishments. "Through our services, we have helped families to develop a strong foundation that helps them maintain stability in housing and prevent recidivism," says Chief Executive Officer Verona Middleton-Jeter. "We look forward to building on this success to help our clients retain their homes." ■

*Clients' names have been changed to protect their identities.

The Self-Help program offers extensive case management services for families transitioning out of the shelter system and families outside of the system who are at risk of eviction.

Building with

Essential work opportunities on offer to community youth

School may be out until the fall, but Henry Street Settlement continues to reach out to young people in the critical summer months between semesters with employment opportunities that will help them on a path toward future success. The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) offered through the Settlement gives youth ages 14 through 21 important entry-level work experience.

SYEP is often a young person's first and only opportunity for employment. Participants earn minimum wage working a maximum of 25 hours a week for seven weeks. They can earn about \$1,150 in a summer. In the meantime, they also take 17 hours of education workshops in topics such as financial literacy, health, career development and college preparation.

Henry Street's summer programs also give young people opportunities to develop social skills and begin their professional growth. Seventeen year-old Timothy Colon was once at risk for dropping out of high school. He began seeking permanent employment in 2004. Through SYEP, he was encouraged to join the 2005 Counselor in Training (CIT) program at Camp Ralph and Rose Hittman. Behavioral structure at the camp helped Colon set goals for himself and focus on the mentally and physically demanding process of joining the program. He



George Hirose

Real-World Experience Summer Youth Employment

learned trust and teamwork. Now he's enrolled in a GED program and earning college credits toward a mechanics degree.

David Kong, a high school junior, had a similar experience, having started with SYEP in 2005 as a junior counselor for Camp Henry. Though shy, he was enthusiastic and supportive, and learned quickly that he was a role model for his group of young campers. He overcame his shyness and excelled in his leadership role. From that initial summer, he joined the in-school youth program and flourished, most recently raising money for and participating in the New York AIDS Walk, an accomplishment he is very proud of.

This year, the Department of Youth and Community Development has funded Henry Street to fill 300 slots for summer youth jobs within the city and 414 slots for jobs outside of the city.

In addition, Henry Street's In-School Program for Youth Employment and Education, which strives to improve the academic performance of teenagers through after-school work-readiness training and internships, guarantees summer work to all its 156 enrolled participants, provided they apply for it. According to Vance McDowell, who coordinates the program, 127 in-school participants alone submitted applications in 2006.

By the early June application deadline, Henry Street had received about 600 applications for out-of-city jobs and about 900 applications for in-city jobs, far more than Henry Street can accommodate, attesting to the popularity of the program and its importance to the youth of the community.

In an effort to secure additional SYEP funding, youth from Henry Street spoke up at a press conference and rally at City Hall in May. Twenty-two teenage and adult Youth Services representatives from Henry Street joined seven other community organizations at a rally later in the day as well, with the result that key City Council members and their colleagues pledged their support for restoring an additional

\$9.4 million for SYEP to the city's 2007 fiscal year budget, identified by the council as a funding priority.

The dedication of young people to preserving these valuable opportunities validates the work of the Youth Services staff.

High school junior Shaquana Gardner knows the value of the program, having participated twice. She also has two years of experience in the in-school youth program, where she gained a solid foundation that has helped her hone her talents and set goals for herself. She is currently employed at a leading non-profit agency, where she has been steadily building up work experience.

Even in summer months, Henry Street Settlement does not lose sight of its commitment to the youth of the Lower East Side. Whether starting a young person on a path toward gainful and empowering employment, providing a chance to study subjects in the arts that might otherwise have been out of reach,



or allowing students to escape the regular pressures of city living at a wooded, lakeside sleep-away summer camp, Henry Street continues to live out its mission of opening doors of opportunity to enrich lives and enhance human progress. ■

above: Counselors in Training prepare campers on bike for a ride through the trails at Camp Ralph and Rose Hittman.

below: In-School Program for Youth Employment and Education participants such as these are guaranteed jobs through the Summer Youth Employment Program if they apply for them.



photos: Sari Weintraub

Art Show Starts the Year off Strong

Success of annual fundraising event surpasses that of previous years



Ken Wittenburg

right: Henry Street board Vice Presidents Elizabeth Reid and Jeffrey Tucker pause for a moment with board President Dale Burch.

inset: Henry Street board members and Art Show guests enjoy the preview gala on February 22, 2006.

The 18th Annual Art Show was a tremendous critical and financial success. This February's Art Show, inaugurated with an elegant Preview evening, was the most successful yet, netting just over \$1.1 million for the Settlement.

Proceeds from the Gala Preview, run-of-show ticket sales and a successful silent auction provide vital funding for Henry Street's social services and arts programs. Generous support from lead underwriter Lehman Brothers and from Fairfield Greenwich Group significantly enhanced the financial success of this year's event. The sale of a limited edition Jim Dine print, *The Henry Street Robes*, 2005, created and generously donated by the artist with the support of Pace Prints, also added notably to the bottom line.

Art world notables Agnes Gund, Kitty Carlisle Hart and Richard J. Schwartz served as Honorary Co-Chairmen. Steven and Heather Mnuchin, Byron and Anita Volz Wien, and Kathy and Richard S. Fuld, Jr. were Co-Chairmen. Henry Street board members joined the Chairmen to greet philanthropic ticket holders, gallery guests and representatives of ten generous Corporate Benefactors at the Gala Preview on February 22, 2006.

Close to 11,000 people attended the show over the five days it was presented at the Park Avenue Armory. Leaders from the worlds of art, business and media, including Oprah Winfrey, Glenn Close, Jerry Seinfeld, Steve Martin, Jerry Stiller and philanthropist Lily Safra were spotted enjoying the show and adding to their collections.

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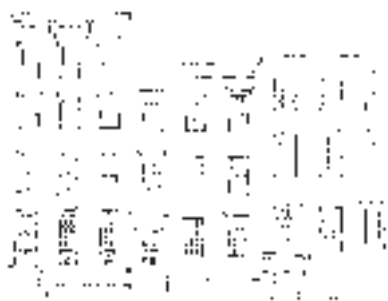
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Henry Street Settlement
265 Henry Street
New York, NY 10002
www.henrystreet.org

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