

# LENOX HILL NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE

## NEWSLETTER



## Early Childhood Center Students Present Performing Arts Showcase



Students from our Early Childhood Center performed for an audience of family, friends, community members and Neighborhood House staff in their Performing Arts Showcase. Each class sang songs and danced on stage in our Auditorium, with selections including “I Can Sing a Rainbow” and “The Rocket Ship Song,” which they had prepared with guidance from their teachers and our Visual and Performing Arts staff. Performing arts education is an important part of the curriculum in our Early Childhood Center. Learning songs and dances helps the children with language development and vocabulary, social skills and emotional regulation and fosters creativity and learning through play.

## Center @ Lenox Hill Neighborhood House Members Brighten the Neighborhood through Gardening Project

Members of the Center @ Lenox Hill Neighborhood House have been beautifying the landscape outside of the Center through a volunteer gardening project. The initiative, led by Center members and supported by the Center’s Deputy Director Ariana Elezaj, began more than a year ago as a small project but has grown to include more than 20 volunteers who meet daily to tend to the garden. The Neighborhood House provides bulbs and plants for the garden, with members selecting the plant varieties and planning the landscape design. Currently growing in the garden is a combination of vegetables and flowers, including tomatoes, hot peppers, summer squash, petunias, gerbera daisies, purple and burgundy dahlias, pink hibiscus, impatiens and marigolds. This project enhances our sense of community at the Center while also creating an attractive lush, green area for both Center members and the entire neighborhood to enjoy.



## Neighborhood House Presents Standby Guardianship Clinic in Partnership with Pfizer

Our Legal Advocacy Department helped groups of families at a pro bono Standby Guardianship clinic in partnership with Pfizer. This clinic benefited parents concerned about their immigration status or their health by enabling them to make a plan for appointing a legal guardian for their children in the case of an immigration or health-related separation. Parents can specifically designate the types of decisions the temporary guardian is allowed to make, and may also sign a form that would allow their children to travel back to their home country in the event of a parental deportation. We are grateful to Pfizer for their partnership in providing this vital service to our community.



## CARE Program Clients Enjoy Weekly Chair Yoga Class

Clients in our CARE program for older adults living with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia enjoy a chair yoga class every Friday. This volunteer-led activity is a wonderful way for program members to stretch and to connect with one another, with class conversation and movements serving to stimulate clients' cognitive and physical abilities. Our instructor, Lynn Lehmkuhl, is a Registered Yoga Teacher, and the founder of ElderChair Yoga, which brings yoga to those who suffer from physical or cognitive impairments. This chair yoga class is just one of the many participatory offerings in this award-winning program.

## Early Childhood Center Hosts Focus Group for Father Figures

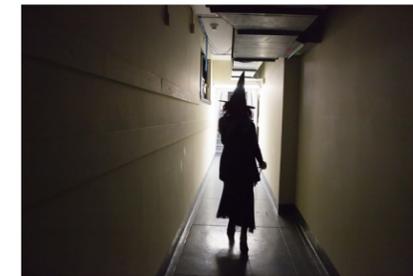
Led by Social Worker Colin Estrellado, LMSW, our Early Childhood Center's Father Figures Focus Group provided a space for father figures to dive deeper into questions about child development and to communicate areas in which they could use support. The goal of the meeting was to set the groundwork for an ongoing Father Figures Support Group, in which group members will meet to learn about topics such as promoting self-esteem, and to provide ideas for future events and groups. Client-led programming—in which we provide support for the needs that the group expresses—is important as we continue to adapt and innovate to better serve our clients and community.



## Center @ Lenox Hill Neighborhood House Presents Into the Woods SR.

Members of the Center @ Lenox Hill Neighborhood House presented *Into the Woods SR.*, a pilot production of the classic Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine musical adapted for older adult theater groups. The cast worked for three months to prepare for a weekend of sold-out performances, which were produced by Assistant Director of Arts and Wellness Rose Ginsberg. Leading up to the performances, Sondheim (who wrote the music and lyrics) and Lapine (who wrote the book) enjoyed visiting a rehearsal to meet the cast and observe some of the scenes. The performance was featured in both *The New York Times* and on Playbill.com. Congratulations to our wonderful cast and crew on a fantastic show!

*Into the Woods SR.* was presented through special arrangement with, and all authorized materials were supplied by, Music Theatre International, New York, NY 212-541-4684 [www.mtishows.com](http://www.mtishows.com). All photos by Caitlin Ochs of *The New York Times*.



## Neighborhood House Attorney Helps Client Avoid Eviction and Secure New Apartment

**I**lene Goodman, Esq., a Housing Attorney in our Legal Advocacy Department, successfully helped Jasmine Moreno, a mother of two, relocate to a new apartment and prevented her eviction from her new apartment in back-to-back eviction cases. Ms. Moreno had lived with her mother, siblings and two children, ages eight and ten, in her mother's apartment. After her mother moved away from New York City after retirement, the landlord filed an eviction case against Ms. Moreno and her family because her mother was the only signatory on the lease. Ilene negotiated on behalf of Ms. Moreno, while she searched for a new place to live with her children. Ms. Moreno ultimately relocated to a new apartment in the same neighborhood so as to avoid changing her children's school district. Shortly thereafter, Ms. Moreno lost her job and was unable to keep up with her rent payments, putting her at risk of eviction once again. Ilene was able to prevent this eviction, giving Ms. Moreno time to begin a new job and pay off her rental arrears; Ilene also assisted Ms. Moreno in obtaining financial assistance from charitable organizations while she got back on her feet. Ms. Moreno is now comfortable in her new job and her family is living stably in their new home. She states, "It is challenging when you are the only parent or adult in your household and hard times such as this fall upon you. I am truly grateful for Lenox Hill Neighborhood House."



## Neighborhood House Hosts Annual First Avenue Community Street Fair



**T**he Neighborhood House welcomed thousands to our annual First Avenue Community Street Fair, an event that stretches from 68th Street to 79th Street. Neighborhood House staff shared literature and spoke with our neighbors about our community and our programs. Our tents also featured musical performances by several cast members from *Into the Woods SR*, as well as a dance lesson led by Dance Teacher Hannah Swanson and story time with Assistant Teacher Charlton Roussell. Visual and Performing Arts staff offered face painting, while *The Teaching Kitchen at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House* passed out homemade healthy granola samples for Fair attendees. Neighborhood children especially loved playing in the giant bouncy castle that we brought in for the event!

## Resident and Director of Women's Mental Health Shelter Help Train Peace Officers

**P**atricia Bullock, a resident of our Women's Mental Health Shelter at the Park Avenue Armory, and Melissa Flanagan, our Shelter Director, were invited by the Department of Homeless Services to participate in Mental Health Consumer & Service Provider Panel Discussions, a segment of the Crisis Intervention Team Training Program for new NYPD recruits who will be working as Peace Officers in the City's shelter system. Held at the Bedford-Atlantic Men's Shelter in Brooklyn, the panels—one comprised of shelter directors and the other featuring the voices of clients currently in the shelter system—were designed to help shape a culture of empathy and understanding about mental health and homelessness for new officers who will be working to improve safety in the shelters. This is the second time our Women's Mental Health Shelter has been asked to participate in the training, which gives our clients and staff a great forum for raising awareness about our model of trauma-informed care and showing the insight, individuality and resilience of the women we serve at the Shelter.



## Center @ Lenox Hill Neighborhood House Hosts Book Festival



**M**embers of the Center @ Lenox Hill Neighborhood House enjoyed participating in the Center's first Book Festival. Organized by Arts & Wellness Coordinator Kristina Bustos, the event featured a creative writing workshop led by member Rebecca Marks, a free bookstore led by member Curtis Merkel, an information session table with the New York Public Library's Webster Branch and a special book reading from author Sula Miller, who read from her book "Welcome to... The Widows Club." The Center hosts multiple festivals and fairs throughout the year, including the Intercultural Festival, Health Fair and Screenings, Autumn Festival, Job Fair, International Film Fest and more.

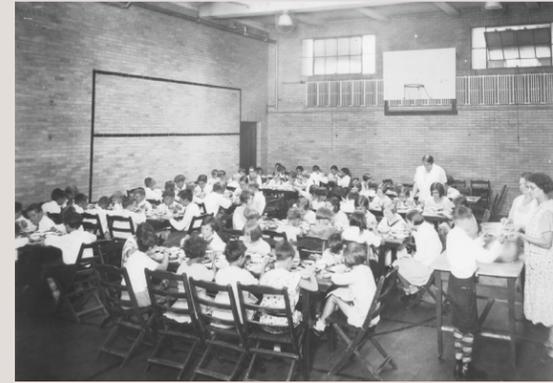
## RealArts Summer Campers Explore Arts and Technology

**T**his past summer was filled with dance, drama, music and visual arts for our RealArts Summer Campers. Our Visual and Performing Arts teachers created an exciting curriculum around our theme of Video Games that explored how technology influences art, with field trips to the Cooper Hewitt Museum, American Museum of Natural History and TADA! Youth Theater providing inspiration for the children. The Camp culminated in a fantastic Final Bow performance titled "Play at Your Own Risk!" that was written by our older campers in collaboration with our Visual and Performing Arts staff. The show featured original dance routines and spectacular props constructed by our children. Our younger campers presented an art exhibition, showcasing the visual art works they created during the summer. The exhibition also featured an augmented reality component in which visitors scanned bar codes next to each student's work to view a special video of works created by that student.



## Neighborhood House Then and Now

Today, 125 years after our founding in 1894, Lenox Hill Neighborhood House remains vital to our community, adapting our programming and services, innovating and using data and performance metrics to enrich lives and fit the changing needs of our community. At its core, our work has not changed since our predecessors founded a free kindergarten for low-income immigrants—the Neighborhood House still educates children, feeds hungry neighbors, advocates for vulnerable individuals and provides critical, comprehensive services to immigrants and low-income New Yorkers, helping them to gain the skills they need to strengthen themselves and build a better community for tomorrow.



## Adult English Learners Visit Whitney Museum of Modern Art



Students from our Intermediate English class for Adult Learners enjoyed a trip to the Whitney Museum of Modern Art as part of their 12-week course at the Neighborhood House. During their visit, they took a guided tour of the museum, focusing on three different artists from the Whitney's collection from 1900 to 1960. The students practiced their conversational skills through a discussion of the art and their reactions to the individual works. After the tour, the students had the opportunity to screen print a canvas bag as a keepsake. Offsite excursions allow students to practice their English in a real-world setting with the support of their teacher and within a community of English learners.

## Mark Bittman Visits *The Teaching Kitchen*

Acclaimed journalist and cookbook author Mark Bittman visited the Neighborhood House and met with our *Teaching Kitchen* team to learn about how our farm-to-institution model is helping organizations across the city, state and beyond to serve more fresh, healthy and local food. He spoke with our staff, asking questions about our menu and farm-to-institution model, and discussed both the potential and challenges of addressing public health issues through a food lens. At the end of his visit, our staff presented Bittman with a copy of our new *Teaching Kitchen Farm-to-Institution Cookbook*, which contains hundreds of healthy institutional recipes that we serve across our programs and teach others to prepare.



## Saint Peter's Members Show Off Their Acting Chops



Members of our Senior Center at Saint Peter's Church acted in a short play, "I Hope I Get It," for an audience of their peers, family, friends and community members. The actors presented comedy scenes, monologues, poetry and reinterpretations of classic songs, all tied together with improvised dialogue between the class and the instructor that told the story of a group of people auditioning for a play. To wrap up the show, the class and the audience engaged in improvisation games in which participants guessed the names of celebrities such as the Pope, Frank Sinatra and Barbara Walters by asking yes or no questions. The final performance was the culmination of a three-month acting workshop led by volunteer and professional actor Johnny Culver.

## Early Childhood Students Receive Hearing and Communication Screenings



Through our ongoing partnership with The New York University Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, we welcomed graduate students from the school's Department of Communicative Sciences and Disorders on a visit to our Early Childhood Center. During their visit, NYU graduate students and staff administered hearing and communication screenings to students in our three- and four-year-old classrooms. Parents and caregivers were invited to observe the tests and speak with the facilitators about their child's communication development and aural health. These health screenings are an important part of the holistic structure of our Early Childhood Center, which provides multiple avenues of support for our families so that their children can excel.

## Neighborhood House Expands with New Addition to Historic Headquarters

The Neighborhood House recently completed a magnificent expansion to our Headquarters on East 70th Street to better serve the growing needs of our community. We added 5,000 square feet of interior program and office space to the eastern wing of the building, including a beautiful new Early Childhood Center classroom, multipurpose spaces for workshops, meetings and classes, a new room for our CARE program for older adults living with dementia, new office space for our staff and more. Our Early Childhood Center students especially love their new classroom.

The capstone of this capital project is the creation of the Gilroy-Stout Green Roof and Garden, a 1,500 square foot environmental oasis on the roof of our building. The garden was designed by our own David French, Director of Philanthropy and Healthy Food Initiatives, and includes native grasses and wildflowers. This one of a kind Green Roof not only provides a beautiful environmental space to enjoy with wonderful views of our community, but it will also help to reduce power demands and the run-off of rainwater.



## Meet Teaching Kitchen Chef Seema Pai

**T**eaching Kitchen Chef Seema Pai joined the Neighborhood House this year after a career change from academia which led her to the food and restaurant industry. From 2008 to 2014, Seema was an Assistant Professor of Marketing at Boston University's School of Management. While at BU, she taught Marketing Fundamentals, Pricing Strategy and Tactics and other marketing courses. Seema then left academia to pursue her passion for food and cooking, moving to Seattle to found, co-own and operate a food truck serving made-from-scratch Indian street food. She then came to New York and worked in restaurants and catering, including a wine bar, an Indian restaurant helmed by a multiple James Beard Award nominee and, most recently, the newest venture by a two-time Michelin-star-awarded chef. She received her Bachelor of Commerce from R. A. Podar College (Mumbai), her MBA from the Indian Institute of Management in Lucknow and her Ph.D. in Business and Marketing from the University of Southern California. Seema is fluent in Hindi and speaks Tamil as well. Of her work at the Neighborhood House, Seema declares, "Being a part of *The Teaching Kitchen at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House* gives me a rare opportunity to combine my love for teaching with my quest for bringing sustainable, made-from-scratch, nutritious and tasty food to our community. Helping other nonprofit food service organizations make this a reality is constantly rewarding." We are so excited to welcome Seema to our team!



## Neighborhood House Celebrates Pride Month

**T**his past June marked the 50th anniversary of the historic 1969 Stonewall Uprising and a half-century of LGBTQAI+ liberation. We were proud to host celebrations across the Neighborhood House, with events at the Center @ Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, our Casa Mutua supportive housing residence in East Harlem, our Women's Mental Health Shelter at the Park Avenue Armory, the Senior Center at Saint Peter's Church and our Headquarters on East 70th Street. Special events included film screenings, discussion groups, conversation over tea and rainbow cupcakes and more. Our diversity is our greatest strength and we celebrate our community every day of the year.

## Goldman Sachs Employees Volunteer with our Early Childhood Center and RealArts Summer Camp Programs

**W**e welcomed 14 volunteers from the Goldman Sachs Community TeamWorks program to our Early Childhood Center and RealArts Summer Camp. The volunteers were part of a company-wide initiative for Goldman Sachs staff members to give back to the community by donating their time to local nonprofits in a day of service. The volunteers assisted in activities with our Early Childhood Center students in the morning, including helping our children to make friendship bracelets and storytelling and then learned more about our Visual and Performing Arts programming while enjoying a healthy and delicious lunch prepared by our Food Services team—the same lunch that our clients across our programs were eating. In the afternoon, the volunteers joined our RealArts Summer Camp, helping our staff to engage the children in activities such as guided visualization exercises, improv acting, dance routine practice and visual arts.



## New York State Health Foundation Awards \$225,000 to Help Scale *The Teaching Kitchen*

**W**e are excited to announce a \$225,000 grant from the New York State Health Foundation, a private, statewide foundation dedicated to improving the health of all New Yorkers. The funding will help to support scaling *The Teaching Kitchen at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House* to reach a statewide, and ultimately, nationwide audience, through a web-based eLearning version of our award-winning curriculum, as well as additional *Teaching Kitchen* videos, downloadable materials and other resources to assist nonprofit programs to move toward our farm-to-institution model. Thank you to the New York State Health Foundation for their continued outstanding support of *The Teaching Kitchen at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House*!



## Strengthening Our Community Since 1894 Come Join Our Team

*Volunteers at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House use their unique skills, talents and experiences to enrich our programs for thousands in need. We offer an extensive array of meaningful and rewarding volunteer positions for everyone from teens to older adults. Opportunities to volunteer are available weekdays, evenings and weekends.*

*To apply to be a volunteer or for more information, please contact Volunteer Director Anthony Snowden at [asn Snowden@lenoxhill.org](mailto:asn Snowden@lenoxhill.org) or 212-218-0487 or visit our website at [www.lenoxhill.org/volunteer](http://www.lenoxhill.org/volunteer)*

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