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Working Together to Feed Our Neighbors

The BronxWorks Newsletter
November/December 2017

In this Issue:
Tis the Season! Welcoming Families, Serving Nutritious Meals and Providing Safe Spaces
Cranksgiving Hits the Ground Running
Did you know?
Staff Profile
Recent Event Highlights
Year-End Appeal
Thanks to our friends at MedAlliance Medical Health Services, BronxWorks food pantry participants received a holiday turkey to help them celebrate with families and loved ones.

**The BronxWorks Commercial Kitchen at the Carolyn McLaughlin Community Center (CMCC)** - Turkey burgers with sweet potato fries, a salad, and fresh fruit. Tilapia with cilantro sauce, yucca with red onions, and fresh spinach. Black beans with plantains and brown rice with fresh veggies. These are just a few of the nutritious meals that the kitchen at the Carolyn McLaughlin Community Center (CMCC) at 1130 Grand Concourse serves every day.

Maribel Abreu and Daisy Pinero, the kitchen’s two full-time cooks, are experts at adapting dishes inspired by different cultures from around the world, often taking recommendations from staff members. They have been with BronxWorks for 20 and 17 years respectively, and work closely with other staff and interns from various BronxWorks programs.

The kitchen at CMCC feeds nine BronxWorks sites and many programs including three after-school programs, childcare programs at the BronxWorks family residences, Positive Living, and the Living Room Safe Haven. Depending on the time of year, between 600 and 700 meals per day are created in the commercial kitchen. Through partnerships with organizations such as Grow NYC and Food Hub, the BronxWorks commercial kitchen receives weekly deliveries of local and regional fresh produce. Grow NYC is on site at CMCC each Wednesday and sells fresh food boxes worth $25 for $14 to community members on a weekly basis.

"**Fresh Food Box is a great way that we have expanded our reach to the community,**" says Rachel Gill, BronxWorks Kitchen Manager.

The kitchen also prepares holiday-themed meals, such as turkey, sweet potatoes, and green beans. BronxWorks staff members organize celebrations to accompany the special meals. "Making the environment festive is a team effort," says Rachel.

**Recipes for Positive Living** - The BronxWorks Positive Living Department serves people living with chronic illness, including HIV/AIDS. Positive Living provides case management services, enhanced housing services programs, nutrition workshops, and other programs to empower participants to manage their health conditions and lead healthy lives. Positive Living also hosts food pantries two or three times per month with healthy produce, fresh protein seasonal items and more for 50-60 participants and their families. Dietitians lead nutrition education groups with cooking demos based on recipes included with the food pantry.

The program recently received turkey donations from Med Alliance and raffled them off to participants for Christmas. Some key ingredients for a happy winter season include family, festivities, and nourishing holiday meals. A core component of the BronxWorks mission is to feed our neighbors in need. Every day, BronxWorks strives to live this part of our mission and feeds hundreds of children, adults and seniors, as well as individuals living with chronic illnesses. In the winter months, BronxWorks serves holiday and culturally-inspired meals, gives away turkeys, provides bags of healthy foods for families, and offers a welcoming space for community members to celebrate the season. Below are a few of the ways the agency feeds the Bronx.
"The holidays are a difficult time for some, and our clients appreciate the support they receive from staff and the friends they have made in the program," says Rebekah Facteau, Program Coordinator, Food and Nutrition Services at Positive Living.

"It makes a difference in the way they experience the holidays for the better. It's really rewarding work, I feel honored to get to be a part of it," she says.

Feeding Bronx Seniors and Celebrating the Holidays - Between the Morris Senior Center and the Heights Senior Center, there is a food pantry offered by the BronxWorks Department of Senior Services every week. Pantries take place on alternating Fridays. The Morris Senior Center provides 125 bags of food weekly while Heights Senior Center provides 70 bags. Each bag contains about three meals, often including bread donated from a local baker.

"It's not just the food that draws the seniors," says Maria Rivera, Department Director for Senior Services.

The centers also provide referrals to other BronxWorks services, information on community events, and occasionally give away lightly used clothing. In addition to food pantries, BronxWorks provides breakfast and lunch daily to seniors. The seniors at the Heights and Morris will celebrate the Winter holidays with a special meal. This year, they will enjoy Pernil, a Puerto Rican baked pork dish on December 21. A group of the seniors will also be traveling to Lancaster, Pennsylvania to see a production of The Miracle of Christmas. "They love seeing live shows," says Maria. "It's a great way to celebrate."

Click here to learn a little more about why feeding the Bronx a healthy meal is such an important part of the BronxWorks mission.

DONATE
Cranksgiving Hits the Ground Running

Every year, cyclists in cities all over the country join together for an exciting scavenger hunt for charity called Cranksgiving, known as "a food drive on two wheels." Volunteers bike from one grocery store to the next to buy food for those in need. Cranksgiving started in New York City in 1999 and is now in 80 locations around the world, including the Bronx, for the past two years.

On November 11, 75 cyclists gathered in the Mott Haven section of the Bronx to participate in the event. They received shopping lists and maps of local markets and purchased bags of food, which were donated to BronxWorks program participants. In spite of the cold weather, participation was up 50% from last year. Ed Mundo, an avid cyclist and longtime participant in the Manhattan Cranksgiving, brought the event to the Bronx. When looking for a charity, he turned to BronxWorks. "I've been homeless, and I wanted to find an organization that supports homeless people," Ed said. He is already beginning to plan next year's Bronx Cranksgiving.

Did You Know? Los Amigos de Moore

DID YOU KNOW? On December 5, a group of BronxWorks senior participants known as Los Amigos de Moore was recognized for their efforts in addressing food access issues in Mott Haven through gardening and cooking by United Neighborhood Houses (UNH) and the Department for the Aging (DFTA). Los Amigos, Spanish for "the Friends," tend to the garden in front of BronxWorks E. Roberts Moore Senior Center and attend gardening and cooking workshops at Hostos Community College and Columbia University, among other activities. The group was established in 2015. BronxWorks is proud that these seniors are working together to improve food access and increase nutrition awareness in the Mott Haven community.
Tiffany Martinez, Care Coordinator at BronxWorks Community Health Home, helps put her clients on a path to a stable and healthy life. She meets with clients in their homes, arranges medical appointments, helps them with housing issues, and connects them to resources they might not have known existed.

Tiffany also remembers the little things, like her clients' birthdays. "I called a client recently and said, "Sam, do you know what day it is tomorrow? It's your birthday!"" Tiffany wants more than stability for her clients, she wants to make them happy.

Tiffany started at BronxWorks nearly five years ago, not long after she received her Bachelor's from New York City College of Technology in Brooklyn. While in school, Tiffany worked at a storage facility and did not have a background in non-profit work.

"BronxWorks helped me start my career. I was grateful they took a chance with me," she says.

Tiffany's favorite part of her job is watching her clients grow. "I love seeing the progress that my clients make," she says. Sam, the client mentioned earlier, was a particularly successful case for Tiffany. Sam was referred to BronxWorks as a frequent Emergency Room visitor. When Tiffany first met her, Sam was reluctant to seek medical attention for her substance abuse issues. Tiffany persuaded Sam to get help. Tiffany also coordinated Sam's medical appointments, spoke with her about substance abuse, and worked with the BronxWorks Homeless Outreach Team on her housing situation. Now, Sam is living independently in Brooklyn, and is grateful to Tiffany for all of her help.

"I really appreciate getting acknowledgements from the clients. Sometimes we may be their only support," Tiffany says.

Growing up, she always knew she wanted to help people as an adult and is very empathetic. Tiffany is considering attending graduate school for Social Work. When she's not assisting clients, Tiffany enjoys spending time with her nine-year-old daughter.

*Client name has been changed.*

Recent Program Highlights

25 years of Home Instruction for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)

On October 25, BronxWorks celebrated the 25th year of collaboration with the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) and HIPPY USA for the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters program, also known as HIPPY, which empowers parents to become their children's first teachers. HIPPY is an evidence-based family support model that works directly with parents in their homes to help prepare children ages 3 to 5 for school.
**Team BronxWorks runs the NYC Marathon**

The 2017 TCS NYC Marathon is in the books after a rainy day and an inspiring race on November 5! A huge and heartfelt congratulations goes out to all the runners of Team BronxWorks for raising over $13,000 to support BronxWorks programs for children and young adults! Several BronxWorks staff came out to cheer for the runners at mile 21 in the Bronx – one of the toughest points in the race!

**Willie Colon Turkey Giveaway**

New York Jets Guard (retired) and Bronx native Willie Colon returned with his family and several of his teammates to the BronxWorks Classic Community Center as part of his annual Willie's Turkeys and Toys community program! Residents of Melrose Houses and the community center participants ate breakfast together and received turkeys to help celebrate Thanksgiving and the upcoming holidays. Thank you Willie and the team for your ongoing generosity to the Bronx!

**Bronx Borough President Turkey Giveaway**

Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr in collaboration with Governor Andrew Cuomo and Fresh Direct handed out free Thanksgiving food boxes for the holidays. Thanks to their generous donations, over 150 families from the BronxWorks Jobs Plus program and Betances Cornerstone Community Center went home with Thanksgiving dinner.
BronxWorks celebrated #GivingTuesday 2017 on November 28 with friends and supporters at the Hard Rock Cafe Yankee Stadium! Pictured above is Board Member Doug Tween and his wife Suzanne along with their guests. The evening was filled with fun, networking, and inspiring stories from BronxWorks program participants and staff. Many thanks to all who joined us at the event, donated to #GivingTuesday and to our sponsors.

This Halloween Pricewaterhouse Cooper (PwC) and United Way NYC brought a SPOOKTACULAR Halloween party to the Carolyn McLaughlin Community Center at 1130 Grand Concourse. This annual party included amazing costumes, exciting games, and lots of candy!
On Tuesday, November 28, BronxWorks Executive Director, Eileen Torres and BronxWorks Cornerstone Director, Kiesha Roberts were proud to welcome Chelsea Clinton and Wes Moore, CEO of The Robin Hood Foundation, at the City Harvest healthy food market outside the BronxWorks St. Mary’s Cornerstone Community Center.

On Friday, November 17, the BronxWorks Early Childhood Learning Center celebrated the rich cultures within our organization at the Family Heritage Luncheon. Participants had the opportunity to learn about the traditional art, music and food of their classmates and teachers.

Give to the BronxWorks Year-End Appeal
The end-of-year giving season is now in full swing! Gifts made to our Year-end Appeal will benefit programs that support children and young adults in the Bronx. As 2017 draws to a close, please consider giving to this important work.

Watch the BronxWorks "Thank you" video above to see how BronxWorks is making a real difference in the everyday lives of children and young adults in our community!

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www.bronxworks.org

If you have any questions or would like more info about BronxWorks, please contact Allison Gangi at agangi@bronxworks.org or 646-393-4002.

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