



## [The January 2022 Newsletter](#)

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## **Thankful For the Outpouring of Support This Holiday Season**

The 2021 holiday season confirmed our belief that our supporters are as determined as we are to ensure that all of our participants had something to make their celebrations special. It was

another challenging season due to the Omicron variant and increasing COVID cases, as well as supply-chain issues and other economic hardships--not where we hoped to be two years into the pandemic. However, as we have done over these two years and in years prior to the pandemic, we partnered with our supporters to help us provide some joy and holiday spirit for the families and households that need it most, and so many came through for us in a huge way.

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### **Immaculate Conception School Donated Holiday Gifts For Families and Students**

As they did in 2020, Immaculate Conception School in Tuckahoe, NY brought holiday joy by the truckload with gifts for our families. The donations included gifts for babies, school-age children, adults, and holiday decorations for families who moved into permanent housing. Students also hand-made cards and included them as a special token to our participants. Thank you to all of the faculty, parents, and students at Immaculate Conception for your generosity!

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### **Overtime Larry Collected Coats, Shoes, and Warm Clothes for our Cornerstone Community**

Content Creator and internet host @OvertimeLarry summoned his 300k+ followers to collect over 30 bags of coats, shoes, and winter clothing for BronxWorks participants at the St. Mary's Cornerstone Community Center and surrounding community. He and his team joined BronxWorks to hand the clothing out this month. Thank you, Overtime Larry and all of your followers, for making this happen!

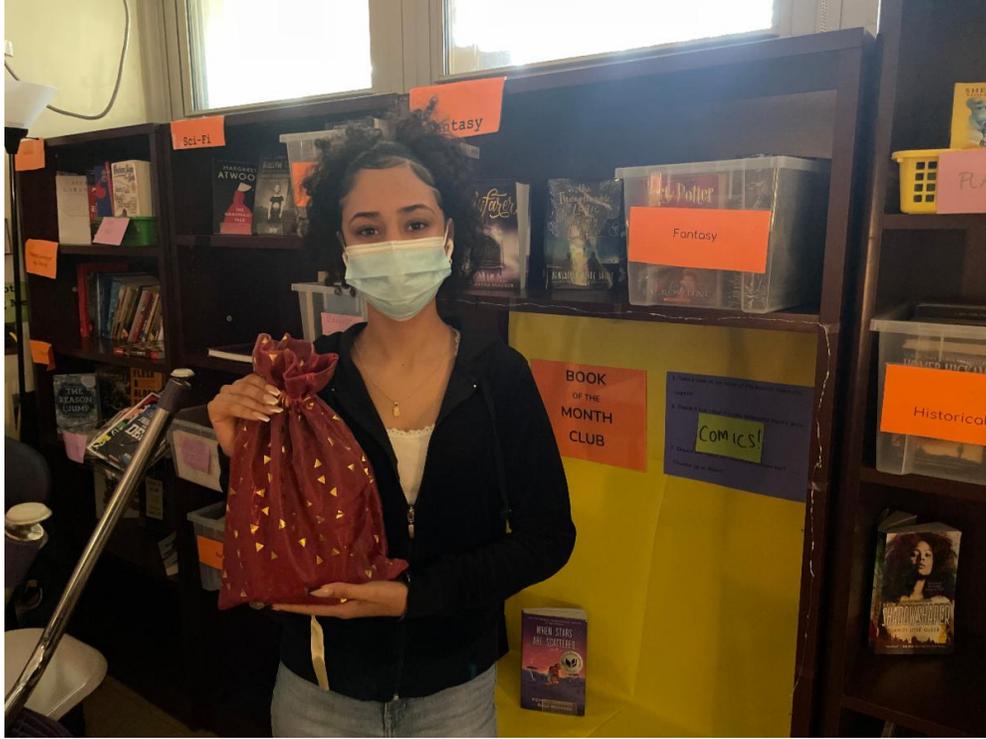


## FDNY Hispanic Society Celebrates Three Kings Day with BronxWorks Families and Children

The FDNY Hispanic Society celebrated Three Kings Day with a huge gift giveaway event for BronxWorks families and children. Participants were able to meet with a team of firefighters in full uniform, take pictures with FDNY mascots, meet a K-9 unit, and pick out an armful of gifts donated by the FDNY Hispanic Society. Such an amazing and exciting day for our children and families. Thank you, FDNY Hispanic Society, for bringing joy to our community!

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## Holiday Wishes from Linklaters and USI



This year both Linklaters and USI supported a holiday wishes drive for students at the Jill Chafetz Transfer School. JCTS is a public high school designed for older students aged 16 to 21 who have fallen behind academically. BronxWorks and school staff work with students to create individual academic plans to put them back on track to graduate with a high school diploma. For their holiday wishes, JCTS students were asked to share an act of kindness that they performed over the past year and to indicate something they wished for themselves. Many of our students asked for gifts for their families or for younger siblings. Linklaters and USI organized gift drives to fulfill the wishes of every student.

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### **Turner Construction Company Sponsors Holiday Food Pantry**



Once again, Turner Construction Company sponsored a special holiday food pantry at the Carolyn McLaughlin Community Center. As a long-time supported of the BronxWorks Community Food Pantry, Turner donated special holiday food items, like pork shoulders, to bring some extra joy to our families and participants. Volunteers from Turner Construction also helped prepare and set up the pantry. Thank you Turner for your support year after year, especially during the holiday season!

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### **Capitolis Throws a Holiday Party for Our Early Childcare Learning Center**



Capitolis and long-time BronxWorks supporter, Jordan Hamowy, treated children and families from our Early Childhood Learning Centers to a holiday party where they could come together to celebrate. Participants received refreshments and a gift and enjoyed holiday-themed crafts and activities. Thank you to Jordan and Capitolis for your generosity. Our families were overjoyed to celebrate the holidays together.

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### **Leadership Council, Old Maroon Rugby Football Club, and All of Our Other Supporters**



The outpouring of donations and gift drives this holiday season was unbelievable! From long-time supporters to new connections, each gift helped to make the holidays so much brighter for our participants. The BronxWorks Leadership Council sponsored a holiday gift drive for middle school students. Old Maroon Rugby Football Club donated bags of gifts and gift cards to support the drive. Other supporters include World Vision, SIRRUS Fund, United Neighborhood Houses, and the hundreds of individuals who purchased items from our Amazon and Target wishlists this season. On behalf of all of our participants, thank you!

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## Did You Know? BronxWorks Services for Older Adults Department is Expanding



Activities at Morris Innovative Senior Center

The BronxWorks Services for Older Adults Department will be expanding over the next few months. BronxWorks will be adding three new centers offering an array of services for older adults, bringing the total to seven centers altogether. Centers will offer food pantry services, daily meals, arts and crafts, fitness classes, and more. The Morris, Heights (temporarily closed), East Concourse, and E. Robert Moore Senior Centers will be joined by new centers at the Carolyn McLaughlin Community Center, Soundview Senior Housing, and Twin Parks West.

**"The addition of these new centers will allow BronxWorks to reach more older adults throughout the borough, giving them somewhere to be with friends, participate in activities, and get assistance if needed." - John Weed, Assistant Executive Director**

To learn more about our Services for Older Adults Department and stay up-to-date with new program announcements, visit our services page on our [website](#).

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## Staff Profile: Maria Rivera

Some of the best stories that

come out of BronxWorks are of our staff who have grown with our programs but have also contributed to our growth through their years of providing services in our communities. Maria Rivera, who has worked in our Services for Older Adults Department for almost as long as we have had the department, is one of these stories.



Maria Rivera, Department Director,  
Services for Older Adults

Maria was born and raised in Manhattan, her parents having immigrated to New York City from Chile. Maria credits her love of serving people from her childhood, growing up in and around restaurants. Her father was a chef, as is her brother.

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**“That is why I am so in tuned with food. It's one of things I like to do most, feed people breakfast and lunch.”**

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Maria earned her Bachelor's Degree in Sociology and Psychology from Lehman College, and her Master's in Social Work from Hunter College. She worked for Project SOS providing case work for homebound elderly and oversaw the Older Adults Luncheon Club at a senior center on 183<sup>rd</sup> Street. When the Older Adults Luncheon Club eventually closed, BronxWorks took it over and hired Maria to help transition the program to the Morris Senior Center.



Over 22 years at BronxWorks, Maria has supported the expansion of the Senior Services Department. She became Department Director in 2008 and has seen the department grow to include four Older Adult Centers; a Senior Housing Assistance Program (SHAP); a Senior Housing Improvement Program (SHIP) two Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCS), Elder Abuse Prevention, Geriatric Mental Health services, and other supportive programs and satellite offices for seniors. This year, Maria helped BronxWorks expand the department, adding three new Senior Centers at the Carolyn McLaughlin Community Center, Soundview Senior Housing, and Twin Parks West.

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**“Older Adult Centers are so important for our communities. It gives our participants a place to go, to see their friends, and is so important for their mental health.”**

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Maria says that working with older adults became her calling when she saw how older adults are treated in society and how many of them live in isolation. She said the biggest challenge for her and staff throughout this pandemic is not seeing the participants day to day. To address the isolation for her participants, the department immediately conducted wellness checks with each participant every single day. They transitioned to virtual classes and activities until they were finally able to hold in-person activities on a limited basis. Still, she says, its not like it used to be. They cannot hold parties or organize trips yet, which many of the participants are eager to resume. Despite the challenges, Maria is encouraged by the dedication that her staff has shown to providing services for older adults and is hopeful to resume all of the programming with participants in the future.

Outside of work, Maria is all about her family, and spending time FaceTiming with her grandson. She loves to dance and travel, but these days she spends most of her time making improvements to her house.

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## Photo Essay



BronxWorks Artist-in-Residence and Recreation Coordinator, Francis Palazzolo (right) speaks with BronxWorks Participant Annie W. (left) about her portrait, *Annie, Black Woman For President*, on display at the New York Historical Society.

## **BronxWorks Client Artwork Featured in New York Historical Society Exhibit**

The New York Historical Society Museum exhibit, "Art for Change: The Artist & Homeless

Collaborative", is currently on display at the Joyce B. Cowin Women's History Gallery through April 3, 2022. The exhibit features a number of pieces created through the Artist & Homeless Collaborative, a public art project founded in 1990 by multidisciplinary artist Hope Sandrow. Francis Palazzolo, BronxWorks Artist-in-Residence and Recreation Coordinator and individuals from BronxWorks Safe Havens have interdisciplinary portraits on display at the museum now! [Read more and meet some of the artists here](#).



## Toys For Tots Donates to BronxWorks Workforce Development Programs

BronxWorks was thrilled to receive donations from Toys For Tots this year. Our Workforce Development Programs received over 100 toys for children and families participating in these programs. Thank you, Toys For Tots, for making the lives of our neighbors brighter!



## Message of Hope Foundation and UPS Foundation Donate Hope Kits

The Message of Hope Foundation in conjunction with the UPS Foundation donated over 200 Hope Warmers Kits for men, women, and children. Each kit contained warm articles of clothing, such as hats, gloves, scarves, and sweaters, as well as stuffed animals



## BronxWorks Is Providing Tax Assistance To the Bronx

Tax time is here! BronxWorks certified tax professionals make sure our Bronx neighbors get the most out of their taxes with programs like the BronxWorks Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program. Individuals and families can make an appointment to

and plush toys for children. The adult kits were distributed to participants of our Positive Living programs, and the childrens kits were given to students of our Cornerstone Community Centers. Thank you to both foundations to giving warmth this winter season.

make sure they don't miss a deduction and learn more about tax credits, like the Earned Income Tax Credit, that they may qualify for! Appointments start January 31.

Learn more about Tax & Financial Services programs [here](#).

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## Supporting the Families Affected by the Bronx Apartment Fire

### Bronx Fire Victims



Fatoumata Drammeh Foutama Drammeh  
Muhammed Drammeh Nyumaisha Drammeh  
Haji Dukary Fatoumata Dukureh  
Haja Dukureh Mariam Dukureh  
Mustapha Dukureh Omar Jambang  
Sera Janneh Haouwa Mahamadou  
Seydou Toure Fatoumata Tunkara  
Isatou Jabbie Hagi Jawara  
Ousmane Konteh

BronxWorks mourns the 17 lives lost, including 8 children, in the recent tragic building fire. We grieve with the families affected by the fire who have lost loved ones, homes, belongings, safety, and shelter. As a trusted resource for the Bronx community, BronxWorks has been designated to provide case management and other resources to the families affected by the fire. To read more, click [here](#).

If you would like to support our efforts and the families affected by the fire, visit the [donation page](#) and designate "To Benefit Programs For Victims of Bronx Fire".

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**Help Support BronxWorks**

There are many ways you can support BronxWorks.

- Make a contribution. [Donate Now!](#)
- Purchase essential items for our participants from our [Amazon Wishlist](#)
- Setup an Amazon Smile account and [choose BronxWorks](#) as your charity and Amazon will donate on your behalf every time you make purchase

[Visit our Website](#)

## Announcements



text "HERO" to  
917.886.2512



@herodadsnyc



IRB NUMBER: 2021-12757  
IRB APPROVAL DATE: 3/22/2021

**Montefiore**  
Care Management Company  
UNIVERSITY BEHAVIORAL ASSOCIATES

This program is supported by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the United States (U.S.) Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$7.3M with 100% funded by ACF/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official view of, or an endorsement by, ACF/HHS or the U.S. Government. For more information, please visit the ACF website, Administrative and National Policy Requirements. These services are available to all eligible persons, regardless of race, gender, age, ability, or religion.

### Are you...

- ✓ 18 or older?
- ✓ A Non-Custodial Parent with a child younger than 24?
- ✓ Trying to improve your parenting skills?
- ✓ Unemployed or looking for a better job?

Join HERO Dads!  
You can earn up to \$450!



Dads can do hair.  
And a lot of other cool things.

HERO Dads can help you strengthen your relationship with your children and build your family's financial security. And best of all, it's FREE.

Are you or someone you know 18 or older? A Non-Custodial Parent with a child younger than 24? Trying to improve your parenting skills? Unemployed or looking for a better job? BronxWorks and Montefiore have partnered for HERO Dads! Go to <https://bronxworks.org/HERO> for more information or text "HERO" to 917.886.2512.



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