Dear BronxWorks Friends and Family,

It is worth saying, still, that 2020 was unlike any year we had ever encountered, as an organization, as service providers, as Bronx community members, and as New Yorkers. Together we have endured an unprecedented crisis that has fundamentally reshaped how we must function as a society. For BronxWorks, the COVID-19 pandemic pushed us to the very brink of what we could muster to provide the services upon which our communities have come to rely. At every turn of the crisis, we have adapted and overcome challenges thanks to dedication of our staff, the generosity of our supporters, and the collective humanity that we have witnessed throughout this extraordinary year.

In this issue of the BronxWorks Report to the Community, we reflect on our work in the first year of the pandemic. From our response in the early days of the crisis to the adjustments we made in our programming to the ongoing support that we offered as the needs of Bronx communities evolved. We look back on the incredible devotion displayed by BronxWorks staff who persevered through hardships of their own to provide essential services, especially to the most vulnerable members of our communities.

Throughout the pandemic, we upheld our mission to feed, shelter, teach, and support our neighbors to build a stronger community. In 2020, BronxWorks made a difference in the lives of over 60,000 people. As a part of our relief efforts we increased the number of food distribution sites from 4 to 12, which combined to distribute 20,907 bags of food to over 12,000 households. Our Homeless Outreach Team made 31,228 contacts with street homeless persons, placing 63 in permanent housing and 334 in transitional housing. Our Adult Homeless Services and Supportive Housing Departments never stopped providing services to over 1,700 individuals and families that reside in our transitional and supportive housing facilities. Our Children & Youth programs engaged 3,628 school-aged youth and provided hundreds of students with the resources needed to continue their studies throughout the pandemic. Our free income tax preparation services assisted 2,647 households, enabling them to secure over $3,500,000 in refunds and Earned Income Tax Credits.

All of this work and more was made possible by the invaluable leadership from our Board of Directors, the strength of our community partnerships, and the outpouring of support we received from foundations, corporations, and thousands of individual donors seeking to help the Bronx recover. We would like to thank everyone who supported our work. As we look ahead, we are reminded of how much work still remains, not only to recover from the pandemic, but to build a better future for the Bronx.

Thank you for allowing us to share this important issue of our Report to the Community with you. Together, we will continue to work to support the communities of the Bronx.

Sincerely,
Eileen Torres, Executive Director
Roger Begelman, Board Chair
The BronxWorks COVID-19 Response

Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Bronx has relied upon the collective resilience of our staff and our community, our ability to come together as a community to fulfill all of our needs, and our unbroken dedication to rise up to the challenges of the present and to build a better future.

During the widespread uncertainty at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, our top priority was ensuring the safety of our staff and participants, while continuing to provide our community with the vital services for which BronxWorks is known. Essential programs and offices, like our Homeless Outreach Team and our transitional and supportive housing facilities, added safety measures and office modifications to remain open and to continue to welcome and work with our community’s most vulnerable members. Other offices, like our senior centers, shifted quickly to virtual programming and remote engagement.

The COVID-19 pandemic was not a singular crisis with a distinct and specific solution. It affected different groups of people differently. It evolved and brought to the forefront deep-rooted inequities in our society that have required a multi-faceted and flexible approach to help mitigate. As different needs surfaced throughout 2020, BronxWorks rallied resources and attention to meet them. From addressing food insecurity to supporting students in remote learning to checking-in on our older adult community members or providing shelter to our homeless and unstably housed, BronxWorks services were vital at every phase of the pandemic and will remain important for the Bronx as we work toward our recovery.

The Early Challenges

As the COVID-19 pandemic worsened in March of 2020, we saw a variety of challenges surface. Many of our community members lost jobs or income as the New York City economy ground to a near halt during the early lockdowns. Unemployment in the Bronx skyrocketed to nearly 25%. We saw the need for food rise drastically, and as we maneuvered our programs and increased our emergency food services to meet the rising food insecurity, demand at our pantries increased over 600%.

Before COVID-19 vaccines were developed, the wellness and safety of our participants were an utmost concern. All of our case management services, including supportive housing and our senior centers, began telephonic wellness checks to ensure the most vulnerable members of our community were healthy, to see if they were in need of assistance, and to decrease feelings of isolation through friendly conversation.

In the early months, COVID-19 testing was the most important tool in helping to curtail the spread of the virus. We began to provide on-site testing at our congregate supportive housing locations. We outreached to our community members to provide virtual education and resources during a period of extreme uncertainty. We sought every available action to maintain strong relationships with our community members, especially for our street homeless population, to provide stability and support in the face of immeasurable hardships.

Re-Opening in Phase II

On July 6, all BronxWorks offices transitioned to NY PAUSE guidelines for New York City’s Phase II re-opening. Non-essential staff who were previously working remotely returned to their offices for hybrid work schedules to allow for social distancing. Because our location and walk-in office presence is such an important aspect of providing social and community services, BronxWorks prioritized safe office re-openings as soon as regulations allowed them.

New protocols and safety measures were adapted at all of our locations, including barriers, floor and wall signage to encourage proper social distancing, and hands-free infrared temperature scanners for staff and visitors of each office. Throughout Phase II, BronxWorks maintained hybrid work schedules to keep office capacities below 50% to ensure maximum safety for staff and to accommodate community members and program participants.

We were eager and excited to re-open our sites to participants and to resume as many in-person programs as possible. Re-opening proved crucial not only for our programs to regain some normalcy in their operations, but more importantly for our community members to resume various aspects of their lives. Re-opening our childcare centers, summer camps, and after-school programs allowed many families to return to work. Re-opening our walk-in offices helped us intake and triage thousands of emergency need requests.

For the duration of 2020, BronxWorks remained in Phase II with our staff working hybrid schedules to enforce social distancing guidelines and ensure the safety of our staff and participants as we welcomed back in-person programming.

BronxWorks Launches New Website Design

In 2020, we embarked on a project to redesign the BronxWorks website. We engaged Decker Design Group and set about interviewing a range of stakeholders, staff, Board Members, and other partners to determine the concept, theme, and direction of the new website. The COVID-19 crisis heightened the need for rapid communication, which pushed us to undertake the project to update our website. The project ultimately ran the course of the year and into 2021, when the brand new website was launched.
Supporting Our Students Through an Extraordinary School Year

One of the biggest consequences of the pandemic has been the impact on schools and student learning throughout the 2020 school year and summer. The true effects of the pandemic on long-term student learning will not be fully understood for some time. The top priority for educators and educational support workers remains to support our students in this new landscape of school and learning.

Installing Wi-Fi in Our Three Family Residences

On March 16, 2020, New York City announced the closure of the nation’s largest public school system and a switch to a completely remote learning approach that would remain for the entirety of the 2020 school year. The announcement brought many of our longstanding concerns to the forefront as we knew firsthand that students experiencing homelessness face numerous disruptions and barriers to school attendance and learning, even during the best of times.

BronxWorks manages three family shelters that provide transitional housing to over 660 families every year. Many of the nearly 400 school-aged children residing in our family shelters already struggled with school attendance. Over the past three years, BronxWorks has managed an innovative program called Attendance Matters, in partnership with Gateway Housing and the Samuels Group, to improve school attendance among our shelter residents. Attendance Matters coordinates efforts between BronxWorks staff and schools, tracking daily attendance for individual students and addressing barriers when necessary.

Before the pandemic, barriers could often be simply resolved, such as ensuring a mother could afford to wash her children’s clothing. With the added challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and now school closures, we recognized how difficult it would be for the 385 school-aged children living in our shelters to adjust to the new learning platforms. The first challenge was fundamental: access to reliable internet connection. New York City shelters were not equipped with Wi-Fi connection. We immediately gathered our resources, understanding that the City’s task of connecting all family shelters to Wi-Fi would be a large undertaking and that our families had no time to waste. We innovated a plan with our security camera contractor to piggyback Wi-Fi connection through the buildings’ existing network and install hotspots for every three apartments. By May of 2020, all three family residences were connected to fast and reliable Wi-Fi.

Providing fast and reliable Wi-Fi was important for us to ensure that our students had the best chance to participate in the remote learning school year. It was also important to support adult family members as they searched for permanent housing or employment opportunities. The resources to execute the project successfully and in a timely manner were made available thanks to the New York Community Trust, the Robin Hood Foundation, JP Morgan Chase, Gateway Housing, and many private donors.

Learning Labs

When New York City schools switched to full-time remote learning, the New York City Department of Education in conjunction with the Department of Youth and Children Development created the Learning Lab program to support families adapting to the new learning model and their own hybrid schedules. Knowing the level of support that families in our communities may need in terms of digital access and childcare, BronxWorks immediately joined the Learning Lab program, establishing centers at our Cornerstones and Community Centers. Learning Labs take place during the day and are open to all children. Learning Lab students could access BronxWorks facilities and resources during the school day when they could not be home with a parent or guardian. In addition, students participating in the BronxWorks Learning Labs received breakfast and lunch and were eligible to enroll in traditional after-school programs provided by BronxWorks.

Celebrating Milestones Together Virtually

While some of the NY PAUSE orders were lifted in June, we felt that virtual graduations remained the safest way for BronxWorks to commemorate the end of the school year with our students. Our programs came up with creative ways to observe and celebrate these milestones with our participants. Graduation ceremonies included slideshows and pictures, spotlights on student accomplishments, sing-a-longs, and many heartfelt speeches.

Celebration creates community. It is therefore always important to come together to celebrate the accomplishments of each of our participants. Every milestone for our participants is a success for the BronxWorks community. In a year filled with challenge and tragedy, celebrating the bright moments becomes even more significant. We salute the BronxWorks Class of 2020 - from our youngest Early Childhood Learning Center participants (ECLC) to our elementary and middle school students to the BronxWorks program participants enrolled in the Jill Chaifetz Transfer School (JCTS). Throughout these trying months, we could not be prouder of their resilience, determination, and grit.
History Makers in 2020
Returning to In-Person Programming in the Summer
The BronxWorks Children and Youth Department were thrilled to open limited programming for all age groups in July. In 2020, the BronxWorks History Makers program celebrated its 15-year anniversary. History Makers is made possible in partnership with Fordham University and the Center for Community Engaged Learning. As a mainstay of the BronxWorks Center for Achieving Future Education Program (CAFÉ), History Makers exposes high school students to the college experience. Due to COVID-19 concerns, History Makers completed a virtual curriculum with 18 participants made up of sophomores, juniors, and seniors. The students were recruited from Frederick Douglass Academy III, Theatre Arts Production Company School, Celia Cruz Bronx High School of Music, and Manhattan Hunter Science High School. Students attended daily classes and workshops facilitated by Fordham University staff and faculty over the course of two weeks. History Makers was founded to provide underprivileged Bronx students with the education and support required to show that college is a real opportunity for all.

Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) - Summer Bridge Program
In the 2020 summer, 360 students from Academy for Language and Technology, Frederick Douglass Academy III, and Career in Sports High School participated in the SYEP Summer Bridge Program. We understood how important SYEP is for participants to have a meaningful and beneficial internship during the summer months, and we did not want to forfeit such a crucial experience. Year after year, SYEP has given our older youth a wide range of employment opportunities and experiences to build their résumés and earn money over the summer. Although enrollment in the 2020 SYEP cohort was limited, the program secured partnerships with multiple organizations and BronxWorks programs to provide students with virtual project-based experiences during the five-week period. In addition to their projects, students learned about successful résumé writing, financial literacy, and interview skills, and explored different career opportunities. The Summer Bridge program was funded thanks to the Robin Hood Foundation. In addition to Summer Bridge, 200 students participated in a modified SYEP program offered by the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development. While also in a virtual format, the program provided valuable experiences as well as a source of income to the participants.

Programs for Younger Youth
Thanks to our partners, BronxWorks was delighted to offer summer programming at both the Bronxchester and Carolyn McLaughlin Community Centers. Both programs provided a wide array of fun and educational activities for students ages 5-12. The participants enjoyed group activities, outdoor play, STEM lessons and experiments, art projects, educational games, and literacy. BronxWorks staff provided many club-type workshops for students to explore different subjects like origami, healthy nutrition, and puppetry. Summer programs also provided outdoor activities that promoted physical fitness and creative play. All students followed safety guidelines and were also encouraged to observe social distancing with their fellow campers. Staff and campers also participated in a short health screening prior to the start of each day. In order to maximize participation and support as many families as possible, some students chose to attend the summer program remotely. Families were provided with Grab & Go bags containing markers, crayons, construction paper, and other art supplies so they could participate in activities with their friends in the program. BronxWorks staff were impressed with how well the young children adapted both virtually and in-person. BronxWorks continues to offer after-school programs at multiple locations throughout the Bronx for students of all ages. Social distancing guidelines are observed, limiting the number of students in each room and ensuring masks are worn and shared spaces are kept clean. Supper is provided to after-school participants.
Food Insecurity

BronxWorks increases food distribution to meet community need.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly altered life for everyone, our neighbors in the Bronx are left especially impacted by the events of 2020. BronxWorks food pantries, community health programs, kitchens, and senior service programs continue to provide relief in areas with great need.

In response to the pandemic and an increased need for food, BronxWorks distributed 20,907 bags of food in 2020. This enabled about 12,000 individuals to prepare over 125,000 meals. This year, the provision of food was especially essential, as the pandemic resulted in persistently high unemployment rates and an increased need for food due to the closure of school programs and senior centers. These effects were felt heavily in the Bronx, as an area already disproportionately affected by food insecurity, chronic health conditions, and unemployment.

In light of this, BronxWorks felt it was essential to increase our number of food distribution sites from 4 to 12 in 2020. BronxWorks also used community centers, farm stands, and fresh food boxes to provide low-income households with over 10,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables this year.

The consequences of food insecurity are dire: Studies show that children without consistent access to food are more likely to experience language, motor skills, and behavior challenges. People who are food insecure are also disproportionately affected by chronic diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure—putting them at even greater risk of COVID-19.

Farm Stands and SNAP-Education

Farm Stands Reopen with great success and SNAP-Ed adapts to an online format.

BronxWorks was able to safely open Farm Stands in the Summer of 2020. In addition to providing fresh, local, and affordable produce, our farm stands offer cooking tutorials, provide accessible recipe ideas, and offer SNAP-Education. Providing this information ensures that community members have the resources necessary to make healthier choices.

With the need for social distancing still present in 2020, the SNAP-Education team created a virtual platform that the community could access from the safety of their homes. Educational materials were distributed as YouTube videos, virtual demos and workshops, and through digital and printed newsletters, and online advocacy.

Outreach During COVID-19

BronxWorks adapts to offer services in digital formats.

Many BronxWorks programs adapted to various digital formats in 2020, allowing for the continuous provision of services while adhering to social distancing guidelines. Many programs were able to effectively deliver program services in this manner, such as the BronxWorks Community Health Programs, which quickly implemented the use of digital materials to provide services.

In place of in-person activities our Community Health programs created YouTube videos that showed how to make healthy recipes, offered online nutrition classes, developed virtual physical education workshops, and hosted virtual yoga classes to ensure that community members could continue to lead healthy and active lives. As the Bronx slowly recovers, programs are once again implementing in-person services while maintaining these new avenues of digital outreach.

Meals Remain Essential

The CMCC Kitchen remains open to provide fully prepared meals for those in need.

The BronxWorks CMCC kitchen staff adapted in order to work throughout the pandemic, providing meals for essential programs such as those under the Homeless Services Department. Personal protective equipment was quickly obtained, and social distancing guidelines were put in place to ensure the continuation of services in a safe manner.

Meals prepared by the CMCC kitchen fed hundreds of street homeless clients that depend on BronxWorks for food and shelter. The CMCC kitchen also provided healthy meal samples to go at the BronxWorks Community Food Pantry in place of the regular in-person cooking demonstrations offered. This allowed clients to safely try healthy recipes made with pantry goods available. Overall, BronxWorks sites served 59,116 meals to Bronx residents in 2020.

Combatting Isolation in Senior Residents

BronxWorks adapts to offer services over the phone for some of our most vulnerable community members.

Our senior community felt themselves especially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Due to the risks senior citizens face when contracting COVID-19, our senior centers were forced to close, leaving many seniors feeling especially isolated. Throughout the year, the BronxWorks Senior programs tried to mitigate these feelings of isolation by offering in-person and over the phone wellness check-ins. Check-ins were provided to more than 2,500 seniors and offered emotional support during a time of increased uncertainty.

Meal delivery was offered in 2020 in place of the in-person congregate meals normally provided for senior center participants. Prior to COVID-19 closures in 2020, 1,888 seniors were able to enroll in BronxWorks Senior Centers, many of whom received essential services and case assistance.
BronxWorks Shelters and Adult Homeless Programs Never Closed Throughout 2020

There was no other option, even with all the unknown of those early pandemic months, we knew we had to keep open our shelters and adult homeless programs to provide a safe space for our homeless families and individuals. The BronxWorks Living Room Drop-in Center made immediate space modifications so it could continue to welcome street homeless adults, providing crucial refuge for our city’s most vulnerable members. The challenges of 2020 may have grown, but the goals remained the same. The Homeless Outreach Team made 31,228 contacts with street homeless persons. Once we have engaged an individual, or brought them into shelter, staff at our sites continued to work with our clients to secure permanent housing.

Our three homeless family shelters provided temporary shelter to:

- **662 families** with 2,281 people
- **152 families** with 489 people
- **201 homeless adults** placed in stabilization beds

Adult Homeless Services placed

- **63 homeless adults in permanent housing**

We provided temporary shelter to

- **795 homeless adults** at our three safe havens and the Jerome Avenue Men’s Shelter.

BronxWorks Workforce Development Department Provided Employment and Tax Assistance

Even as the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted many aspects of our daily lives, other processes could not be delayed forever. As the tax season arrived in 2020, BronxWorks again offered free income tax services for our community members through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program. BronxWorks VITA helps New Yorkers who earned $64,000 or less file their taxes free of charge.

In 2020, BronxWorks free income tax preparation assistance was given to 2,647 households with about 8,000 people, enabling them to secure $3,000,000 in refunds and $578,000 via the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

The pandemic affected our communities in a number of profound ways, not the least of which was the loss of jobs and income as the New York City economy ground to a near halt in the early spring of 2020. Despite the challenges within the economy, the BronxWorks Workforce Development Department continued to offer job training and search services.

BronxWorks Partnered with the NYC Complete Count Fund to Ensure the Bronx Community Is Represented in the 2020 Census

The NYC Complete Count Fund was the first-of-its-kind Census-related community organizing program. The Fund supported community-based organizations, like BronxWorks, in helping NYC reach a full, accurate count for the 2020 Census. The data retrieved from the census gives community leaders vital information so they can make informed decisions about planning for their communities’ future. Numerous programs benefit from census work, such as Medicare, Medicaid, SNAP, highway planning, housing assistance, special education grants, National School Lunch, and many more. Census responses determine where over $675 billion in federal aid are distributed nationwide. In addition, the results of the census are used to determine the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives. 2020 was the first year the census was available to be completed online and by phone.

As a part of the partnership, BronxWorks conducted extensive internal training for our programs and staff to assist and motivate the members of our community to participate in the census. During an extraordinary year, BronxWorks Census efforts included digital and social media outreach, physical pledge cards, pop-up census centers, and in-person tabling and resource distribution at all of our over 40 sites throughout the borough.
Financials

BronxWorks, Inc. Consolidated Statement of Accounts
Unrestricted Net Assets from Operations Year Ended June 30, 2020

Operating Support And Revenue

**Earned Revenue**
- Government grants: $78,674,041
- Program service fees: $1,989,528
- Medicaid: $1,271,031
- Investment income: $118,667
- Other revenues: $188,645

*Total Earned Revenue*: $82,241,912

**Public Support**
- Foundation grants and other contributions: $701,076
- Contributed services: $268,608
- Net assets released from restrictions: $1,836,372

*Total Public Support*: $2,806,056

*Total Operating Support and Revenue*: $85,047,968

Operating Expenses

**Earned Revenue**
- BronxWorks programs: $7,035,799
- Services for the elderly: $3,066,058
- Homelessness/prevention/relocation: $25,405,311
- Family shelter for the homeless: $24,555,506
- Health programs: $2,406,288
- Children and youth: $10,900,507
- Workforce development: $2,140,200

*Total program services*: $75,509,669

**Supporting services**
- Management and general: $7,378,722
- Fundraising: $844,355

*Total Supporting Services*: $8,223,077

*Total Operating Expenses*: $83,732,746
Leadership

Executive Team

Eileen Torres
Executive Director

Scott Auwarter
Assistant Executive Director

Erica Coleman
General Counsel

Gordon Miller
Chief Financial Officer

John Weed
Assistant Executive Director

Julie Belizaire-Spitzer
Department Director, Homelessness Prevention and Access to Benefits

Ann-Chevealle Brown
Director, Human Resources

Tamu Bryan
Controller

Riziki Bushu
Director of Grants and Contracts

Noel Concepcion
Department Director, Adult Homeless Services

Ursula Cooper-Hunter
Department Director, Children and Youth Services

Gianna Dell’Olio
Director of Advancement and Communications

Amy Greenbaum-Strauss
Director of Training & Education

Marjorie Jeannot
Department Director, Family Shelters

Bibi S. Karim
Department Director, Community Health, Positive Living, FEP, and ESOL

Arturo Lopez, Esq.
Director of Legal Services

Rudy Murillo
Director of Operations

Yonnel Olivo
Director of Information Technology

Amanda Pérez
Director of Quality and Compliance

Felicia Rickett-Samuels
Vice President of Human Services

Maria Rivera
Department Director, Senior Services

Robert Rivera
Director of Security

Shali Sharma
Department Director, Supportive Housing and Health Policy

Ken Small
Development Director

Betty Ann Tamaisar
Department Director, Workforce Development

Marjorie Jeannot
Department Director, Family Shelters

Bibi S. Karim
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Department Director, Senior Services

Robert Rivera
Director of Security

Shali Sharma
Department Director, Supportive Housing and Health Policy

Ken Small
Development Director

Betty Ann Tamaisar
Department Director, Workforce Development
**Board of Directors**

**Officers**

Roger Begelman  
Chairperson, Managing Director (Retired), Goldman Sachs

Janice K. Hart  
Vice Chair, Managing Director, Senior Operational Risk Manager, Markets

**Members**

Joan D. Rosenthal  
Treasurer, Managing Director (Retired), JPMorgan Chase

Adele Ursone  
Artist

**BronxWorks Leadership Council**

The BronxWorks Leadership Council is a collection of committed people who bring unique knowledge, connections and skills that complement those of the formal directors to more effectively support the agency.

**Chair**

Kate Machan  
Legal Counsel & Special Projects Manager at Zeta Charter Schools

**Members**

Patricia Arellano, Managing Director at Simplicit Inc.  
Oliver Dirks, President & CEO at Balanced Systems Risk Management  
Josh Goldstein, Student at NYU School of Law  
Eric Halpern, Portfolio Management Associate at Hall Capital Partners LLC  
Brett Isaac, CFA, Manager, Corporate Finance at Grant Thornton LLP  
Wendy Koranteng, Financial Analyst, Private Wealth Management, Goldman Sachs  
Eric Lipkind, Investment Advisor, Investment Management Division at Goldman Sachs  
Kruti Mehta, Associate Director of Operational Strategy, Zeta Charter Schools  
Neelima Panoli, Senior Project Manager, RXR Realty  
Michael Wynter, Founder of Positivity Market