

BronxWorks Classic Cornerstone Community Center Program Director Patrick King recites a poem written by Langston Hughes at a Black History Month event.

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February is Black History Month! To recognize the significance of Black History, all month long, BronxWorks highlighted black history makers on [social media](#), including President Barack Obama, NYC Mayor Eric Adams, Olympic athlete Lia Neal, Doug Williams, the first black quarterback to start and win a Super Bowl in the NFL, and Jackie Robinson, the first African-American to play in Major League Baseball.



The BronxWorks Classic Cornerstone Community Center joined The Melrose Houses Tenant Association at their Black History Month event to celebrate the contributions of Black people and discuss why Black History is so important. The event featured Classic Cornerstone Program Director Patrick King, who recited "I, Too", a poem written by Langston Hughes, renowned poet, playwright, and leader of the Harlem Renaissance.

Jerome Avenue Men's Shelter Achieves a Strong Year of Housing Placements



A recreational area at the BronxWorks Jerome Avenue Men's Shelter.

The BronxWorks Jerome Avenue Men's Shelter (JAMS) is a 200-bed behavioral health shelter that provides transitional housing to adult homeless men with mental illness and, oftentimes, co-occurring substance use disorder. It is a key resource in the effort to address homelessness in New York City. Over the course of 2021, JAMS completed 82 housing placements, over 40% of the program's census. In total, the BronxWorks Adult Homeless Department made 197 housing placements in 2021 across six different programs that also includes three safe havens, the Living Room Drop-in Center, and the Homeless Outreach Team.

Tamara Gayle, the Residence Director of JAMS, says her program, as a component of the overall Adult Homeless Department, was so successful in housing placements over the past year for a number of reasons.

It all starts with intake: clients come to JAMS from sites and programs throughout the city. When they arrive, JAMS assigns each client to a Case Manager, who schedules a client meeting to collect the necessary consent forms that allow staff to pull a client's incident history, past assessments and psychosocial analyses, and any old or active housing applications. Clients are quickly registered for the onsite medical clinic run by Care for the Homeless and scheduled for a psychiatric evaluation within the first 30 days of arrival. Case Managers meet with clients regularly to create a personalized service plan and to assist them with other resources like obtaining vital documents or entitlements and benefits. Every client arrives with a different story to tell, and it is up to JAMS staff to record their histories accurately and thoroughly to complete the best and most competitive housing application available to them.



Staff at the BronxWorks Jerome Avenue Men's Shelter working through cases.

Successful housing placements, though, go beyond the completion of a housing application; they rely on an array of surrounding support that prepares a client for the housing process and long-term success after placement. Successful placements start with a frank and open relationship with clients, educating them on the process and preparing them for realistic housing expectations. The process can take a long time, and clients can become easily discouraged. To help manage the uncertainty, Tamara ensures that her team regularly meets with each client to provide timely updates throughout the entire process.

Preparation also involves psychoeducation, helping clients develop insight into their own diagnoses. While clients are living at JAMS, staff work to connect them to treatment for their diagnoses or substance use and encourage proper medication adherence. For the more complicated cases, staff complete applications for Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) or Intensive Mobile Treatment (IMT) teams to secure an additional level of support and outpatient care for clients once they move out, giving housing providers and clients more confidence in the long-term success of the placement.

“We want every line of defense for the client,” Tamara says.

The work does not end when a client's housing application is accepted; one of the most critical components is aftercare, or the work done with the client after they are placed to ensure success. JAMS staff establish open communication with each housing provider throughout the placement process. They are present during housing interviews and they physically assist with move-ins and transitioning clients to the new housing provider, known as a "warm hand off". As a reward for a successful move-out, JAMS gives each client a housing starter kit containing the essential items needed for independent living, like cleaning supplies, kitchen utensils, and toiletries. For the three months after a client moves out, JAMS schedules and conducts home visits to ensure that they are adjusting comfortably to their new housing situation, keeping up with their activities of daily living, making sure that rent is paid, and that there are no disruptions within the community.

It is this holistic, person-centered strategy, rooted in the belief in the Housing First

approach, that has led JAMS to achieve so many successful housing placements over the past year. Housing First is the belief that providing permanent housing and thereby resolving a client's homelessness can serve as a platform from which they can pursue their goals and improve their quality of life.

It must be noted that COVID-19 did bring challenges to the work, including a complete move of the program and its entire census to a hotel in Manhattan, along with a corresponding move back to the Bronx and delays in the housing application process, just to name a few. Throughout it all, the team at JAMS, as well as the entire BronxWorks Adult Homeless Services Department, have persevered, coming in day after day to end homelessness for a remarkable number of clients.

Staff Profile: Tamara Gayle

Unique challenges attract unique talents. At the forefront of the effort to mitigate homelessness in New York City are dedicated shelter staff like Tamara Gayle, Residence Director of the BronxWorks Jerome Avenue Men's Shelter (JAMS). Tamara was born and raised in Queens, NY. She still lives in Queens to this day. Her family immigrated from Panama, and as the first daughter of an immigrant parent, Tamara holds onto that first-generation identity closely.



Tamara Gayle, Residence Director,
Jerome Ave. Men's Shelter

“I strive to make sure that I am doing what my family came here for, to attain that dream. It is a beauty and also a burden.”

Tamara completed her Bachelor's Degree at City College and received her Master of Social Work from Fordham University. She first joined BronxWorks in 2017 as a Case Manager Supervisor for the EXCEL Program and Young Adult Workforce Program within our Children & Youth Department. In 2019, she joined the Jerome Avenue Men's Shelter as the Assistant Program Director, and in January 2021 she was promoted to Residence Director.

Tamara brings a range of experience to the position. She started her career working with women with young children to develop parenting skills and prevent abuse. She then worked in a 100-bed adult homeless men's shelter as an evening Case Manager. Tamara still remembers her first housing placement, from the interview to the day she physically helped move the client out of the shelter and into the unit. After that, she worked in harm reduction at Planned Parenthood with individuals living with HIV/AIDS. All of this experience drives the way Tamara and her team manage the caseload at JAMS.

“This work is heavy, demanding, and task-oriented. It’s a beast. That’s why I have always been very firm about onboarding, training, and coaching my staff.”

To this end, Tamara has recently developed a sort of boot camp for preparing new staff for the challenges of working at JAMS. The boot camp lasts for nearly two weeks and covers everything from education on the population, trainings on typical diagnoses and what their presentations may look like, an overview of crisis prevention and intervention, case management skills such as interviewing, de-escalation, case writing, service planning, and an in-depth explanation of the housing process. The boot camp also includes bi-annual refreshers for all staff.

Whether it is with young people or adults, Tamara brings the same qualities in her approach to working with every population. “Any population you work with, people just want to know that you care about them,” she says. “There is more in common between working with young people and adults than there is different. You’re met with the same resistance at first, and you go through the same motions showing up for them, earning their trust, and supporting them in their journeys.” As the Residence Director, Tamara still carries a case load and loves to work with the more challenging cases. “When you see what they are able to accomplish with the support of staff, that’s why you work so hard.”

Outside of work, Tamara is all about her family and her dog, Blu. She loves sharing meals with the people she cares about, and also volunteers as a mentor for young adults on their own paths to finding their passions.

Did You Know? BronxWorks Will Once Again Participate in the Five Boro Bike Tour



**Join #TeamBronxWorks at
The TD Five Boro Bike Tour
Sunday, May 1, 2022**

The **TD Five Boro Bike Tour**, America’s largest cycling event, is back! After a two-year hiatus, **#TeamBronxWorks** returns to the Five Boro Bike Tour

on **Sunday, May 1, 2022**, cyclists will ride over 40 miles of car-free streets through all five boroughs in New York City.

We are looking for interested riders to join **#TeamBronxWorks**. When you ride for BronxWorks at the Bike Tour you are helping raise money and awareness for **children's programs at our shelters for homeless families**. Slots will be available to people who **commit to raising a minimum of \$750**.

Email Digital and Content Manager Aaron Cipollina at acipollina@bronxworks.org if you or someone you know is interested in joining our team!

Can't ride but still want to support our team?
[Meet our riders here!](#)



Photo Essay



**BronxWorks Job Fair at the Carolyn McLaughlin
Community Center**

BronxWorks welcomed dozens to an in-person job fair on February 16. Applicants had a chance to meet with current BronxWorks program directors, coordinators, and representatives from multiple departments, including older adult services, education, security, family homeless services, and community health. If you want to join a human services organization that is making an impact in the lives of our Bronx neighbors go to <https://bronxworks.org/careers> and apply today!



Council Member Althea Stevens Visits Older Adults

New York City Council Member Althea Stevens paid a visit to BronxWorks older adults at Sedgwick Social Club (pictured) and the River Park Residence Naturally Occurring Retirement Community. She met with participants, listening to their stories and concerns and handing out PPE. Everyone had a wonderful time talking with Council Member Stevens and we were so happy she stopped in!



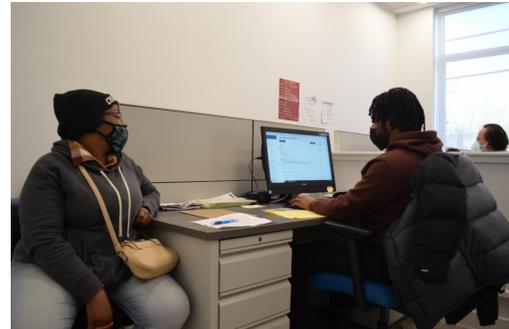
Bingo at Saint Mary's Park Cornerstone Community Center

The BronxWorks Saint Mary's Park Cornerstone Community Center started hosting Saturday Bingo for community residents. Neighbors from the surrounding community enjoyed light refreshments and had a chance to win fun prizes. Our Cornerstone Community Centers are once again hosting fun community events! Subscribe to BronxWorks social media to get program updates!



Learning About Different Types of Transportation

The BronxWorks Early Childhood Learning Center children at 1472 Montgomery Ave worked together with their parents to create models of different types of transportation, including cars, trains, buses, planes, trolleys, boats, and even rocketships! The students and families came together to learn about the different types of transportation they had created, and a "Transportation Museum" now lives in the classroom featuring all of their work.



BronxWorks SNAP-Ed At Belvis Black History Month Event

The BronxWorks SNAP Nutrition Education Program was invited to participate in a Black History Month celebration held at Belvis Health Center. The event featured a Black History presentation, music, dance, food and drink, and a fashion show. Staff from our SNAP-Ed Program (pictured above Emily Hespeler, Nutrition Educator, and Carolina Espinosa, Program Director) tabled and provided relevant health and nutrition information for patients and staff in attendance.

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 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!

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

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](#)
- Set up 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
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IRB NUMBER: 2021-12757
IRB APPROVAL DATE: 3/22/2021



Are you...

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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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