



The BronxWorks October 2022 Newsletter

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BronxWorks Family Shelters And The Newly-Opened Family Sanctuary

BronxWorks is known for being a trusted homeless service provider in the Bronx and New York City. A key part of our mission to address homelessness is our work with vulnerable families. Today, BronxWorks operates three Family Residences capable of housing 276 families at a time and recently opened a new emergency Family Sanctuary to assist the migrant families arriving in New York City.

This year marks thirty years of our work providing shelter for homeless families in the Bronx. The BronxWorks Nelson Avenue Family Residence (NAFR) first opened in 1992, followed by the Jackson Avenue Family Residence (JAFR) in 1995, and the Willow Avenue Family Residence (WAFR) in 2004. Today, NAFR can house up to

79 families and, with the largest units, can accommodate families of 6-8 people, while JAFR can house 95 families and WAFR can house 102 families at a time. Combined, the three BronxWorks Family Residences can work with and provide shelter for as many as 500 families in a given year.



End of the year celebration at the Nelson Avenue Family Residence.

Homeless families in New York City enter the shelter system through the Prevention Assistance and Temporary Housing Office (PATH), the citywide shelter intake center. Based on their intake assessment, families are matched with shelter units depending on their family size and composition and unit availability.

When families arrive at one of our sites, they are immediately assessed and matched with a team that includes a dedicated Case Manager, Housing Specialist, and Social Worker. Each site is also supported by Case Management Supervisors, a Social Services Director, childcare staff, after-school programming, and a robust maintenance and security staff. The teams work to address any family needs, including mental health, supporting children in their education, assistance with benefits, medical care, or legal services, while helping each family ultimately secure permanent housing.

For all families that enter BronxWorks Family Residences, the ultimate goal is to work toward attaining permanent housing. Once a housing package is completed, shelter staff assist each family with their housing interviews, accompany them in viewing potential apartments, and help families move out of the shelter and into their permanent homes. But the work doesn't just end there. Families are connected with after-care services through the BronxWorks Transform program and other community-based partners that provide long-term case management and engagement during and after their transition to permanent housing.

The BronxWorks Family Sanctuary

As a part of the New York City strategy to assist migrant families arriving from border states, BronxWorks opened a new Family Sanctuary in September. BronxWorks opened the Family Sanctuary in short order to provide shelter for almost 90 migrant families, many of whom are seeking asylum here in the United States.

Most families arrived at the Sanctuary overnight during the first weekend that the

site opened. Yevy Bednaya, Director of Social Services at the Nelson Avenue Family Residence, led the opening of the Family Sanctuary as the new Residence Director. It was a large collective effort supported by volunteers from programs throughout BronxWorks to ensure that the site was ready to welcome the families and adequately equipped to meet all of their basic needs.

“That first weekend we focused on getting as many intakes done as possible,” Yevy says, “making sure we understood all of the needs of our families, providing clothing and household items, connecting them to medical and legal services, enrolling the children in school, and ensuring that everyone feels welcome and safe here.”



The BronxWorks Family Sanctuary has one bedroom units each with a kitchenette and shared laundry facilities.

While the work at the Family Sanctuary is similar to the three other BronxWorks Family Residences, there are added challenges as a result of how the families arrived. Many of the families came with minimal belongings, and many have very young children. The families will need added care to adjust to life in the United States and in the Bronx, including assistance with their legal status, all in addition to securing permanent housing. “This process will take longer for us and for the families, and we’re asking them to be patient with us just as we are asking everyone who is here working to be patient with them.” Yevy, a Licensed Social Worker and multi-year veteran of the BronxWorks Family Shelter Department draws from her own experience coming to the U.S. as a refugee when she was child. Within just a few weeks, the BronxWorks Family Sanctuary already housed 84 families representing nearly 300 people, including 110 children.

Why This Work Matters

Marjorie Jeannot is the Department Director for the BronxWorks Family Shelter Department. She oversees the three Family Residences as well as the newly-opened Family Sanctuary. We asked Marjorie to put into perspective her twenty years working with homeless families. “It comes down to the work we do every single day,” Marjorie says. “It can be easy to get stuck on the numbers, whether it is the placement numbers, or the number of families in the system city-wide, but for

us, these are families with real people, real children, working to overcome real challenges to achieve their goals.”



Marjorie explains that as a shelter provider for homeless families, BronxWorks Family Residences are responsible for everything as it relates to the well-being of every family member, from their day-to-day needs to their long-term goals. That includes ensuring that the children have the resources needed to succeed in their education. That means making sure students are regularly attending school. That means making sure parents have everything they need to take care of themselves so that they can take care of their families.

“The impact we have is made through consistent incremental and daily progress. It is made through being here day in and day out for our families, and celebrating every small success in big ways.”

Marjorie says that at its core, the work isn’t about simply making housing placements, or getting families out of the shelter system. At its core, the work is about working to prepare families while they are with us to achieve a stable and healthier life once they have left.

As the families in the newly-opened BronxWorks Family Sanctuary get settled, Yevy says they are eager to pursue the lives they envisioned as they made the treacherous journey to come here. She says that the children are excited to start school and the parents are keen to find work or learn English.

There has been an outpouring of support from the community, including BronxWorks staff, partner organizations, local churches, and private donors and community members. As such, they have been able to give each family many of their basic household needs, such as clothing, toys, cookware and even groceries. “One of the biggest things that our families have wanted to do is cook their own food,” Yevy says. “When I walk through the halls it already smells great.”

Staff Profile: Yevy Bednaya, Residence Director

When Yevy came to the United States she was three and a half years old, and it was not safe at the time the Soviet Union was falling. Her grandmother had already left the Russia Federation for Brooklyn, and so Yevy and her mother made the journey – like so many others – as refugees, coming here to find a safer and better life.



“I don’t know how we did it, but we made it work.”

Yevy Bednaya,
Residence Director,
BronxWorks Family Sanctuary

We asked Yevy to describe her experience. “It was my mom always having to figure out how things work in the US,” she says, “It was having to learn English. It was getting hand me downs. We didn’t have an organization like BronxWorks to help show the way.”

Yevy and her family relied on connections they made within a Russian community in Brooklyn. Her mother found employment while she went back to school. She earned a degree from Brooklyn College as a Nutritionist. Back in Russia, she was a Neurologist. School of course became important for Yevy too.

After graduating high school, Yevy attended Hunter College, earning her Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology. She earned her Master’s Degree in Social Work from NYU and, in 2019, she joined BronxWorks at the Nelson Avenue Family Residence as a Client Care Coordinator. She worked at the Nelson Family Residence for over two years, was promoted from Client Care Coordinator to Case Manager Supervisor and then to Director of Social Services. In September 2022, Yevy became the Residence Director at the BronxWorks Family Sanctuary, a role for which she is uniquely suited.

“Many of the families here have arrived with just the clothes on their backs. They are so very much in need of assistance. But they are also amazingly positive. I’m inspired by their diligence and their eagerness.”

For Yevy, it has come full circle. Her mother, after going back to school to become a Nutritionist, now works for WIC. Yevy, after becoming a Social Worker, oversees a family sanctuary for refugees who have come here seeking a safer and better life. The stories we share with each other are more similar than they are different. Yevy draws from her own experience as an immigrant and refugee to the U.S. in how she approaches her work with these new families who have come here to seek the very same things that she and her mother did almost thirty years ago.

Outside of work, Yevy loves hiking, video games, and cats. She adopted a cat named Pluto from the backyard at the Nelson Family Residence. She likes to spend time with the people that are important to her, and focusing on self-care and art.

Did You Know? BronxWorks Is Celebrating Our 50th Anniversary!



This year, BronxWorks will celebrate our 50th year providing services in the Bronx. BronxWorks, originally founded as the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), opened our first office on December 10, 1972. To commemorate our 50 years of service to the Bronx, we are kicking off a year-long 50th Anniversary Campaign, beginning with a celebration on December 7 at the Hard Rock Cafe at Yankee Stadium and culminating with our Annual Gala in 2023. Stay tuned as we announce more details about how you can celebrate our 50th Anniversary with us.

Photo Essay



Macquarie Group Volunteers At Morris

Macquarie Group committed to volunteering with BronxWorks seniors through the end of the year. In September, volunteers from Macquarie, led by BronxWorks Board Member Mariano Agmi, helped with the weekly pantry, crafting jewelry, and served lunch to the seniors. BronxWorks truly appreciates our corporate partners and is excited to continue this initiative.



PwC Throws Halloween Party For BronxWorks Children

An incredible Halloween tradition returned at full strength to BronxWorks! PwC hosted their annual Halloween pizza party celebration this month for after-school students at the BronxWorks Carolyn McLaughlin Community Center. Children and adults alike dressed in Halloween costumes while enjoying pumpkin painting, face painting, and making each other into toilet paper mummies! BronxWorks sends a big thank you to our partners at PwC for their support and enthusiasm. To read more about this event, [click here](#).



Cops And Community Brunch

Seniors from the community met with local members of the police department at the BronxWorks Classic Cornerstone Community Center for brunch and a conversation. Our seniors had the ability to talk to their local police about community and quality of life issues they are experiencing. The police officers and seniors loved the chance to build companionship, a chance they don't always get in day-to-day life.



ACS Safe Sleep Event

The New York City Administration for Children's Services Safe Sleep Initiative hosted a Safe Sleep Awareness workshop and resource fair at the BronxWorks. The workshop directed at parents of infants taught the importance of putting small children on their backs when they sleep and other ways to prevent crib death and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Afterward, health organizations from across the City joined BronxWorks programs like HERO Dads out in front of the community center for a resource fair. Learn more about the Safe Sleep Initiative [here](#).



ESOL Students Visit Bronx Museum

Students from BronxWorks English for Speakers of Other Languages classes took a field trip to the Bronx Museum. Nine students from the ESOL class went to the Bronx Museum to practice and use the English-speaking skills they had learned together. Students got a chance to enjoy many Halloween-themed exhibits and enjoy time together outside the classroom. Learn more about BronxWorks ESOL Classes and other services offered to immigrant families [here](#).



Participatory Budget Idea Generation

BronxWorks hosted a number of Participatory Budgeting (PB) Community Engagement Idea Generation sessions in the Bronx. The sessions, held in partnership with the New York City Civic Engagement Commission, help identify community needs and brainstorming ideas for expense projects in all five boroughs. PB is a democratic process in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget. In the next few months, the City Council will use the ideas gathered and transform them into full proposals. [Learn more here.](#)



Padre Plaza Garden Harvest Day

BronxWorks SNAP-Ed and Padre Plaza Success Garden organized a special Harvest Day festival at the Mott Haven Farm Stand. Staff dressed up like farmers in their fall flannel and overalls, and sold mini pumpkins and marigold flowers. Sheila and Mike Young from Padre Plaza Success Garden have worked for years to bring healthy food resources to the Mott Haven Community. BronxWorks is proud to have partnered with them since 2016 to bring the Farm Stand and nutrition education to Mott Haven every summer and fall. BronxWorks also hosted a participatory budgeting community engagement event to inform community members on how they can take part in city-wide conversations to decide how to spend \$5 million in mayoral funds.



BronxWorks Board Retreat

In October, members of the BronxWorks Board of Directors and senior staff gathered at the BronxWorks Carolyn McLaughlin Community Center for the first in-person board retreat since 2019. Board members were given the chance to see CMCC Saturday programming in full swing and discussed the direction of BronxWorks as we approach 50 years supporting the community.

Announcements



OFFICIAL CHARITY PARTNER

TCS NEW YORK CITY MARATHON



BronxWorks is an official charity partner of the TCS New York City Marathon. Our amazing #TeamBronxWorks runners are supporting our Children & Youth programs this year! Click below to support our #TeamBronxWorks runners!

SUPPORT OUR RUNNERS

Help Support BronxWorks

The Bronx finds itself in the midst of a crisis helping to support the arrival of new migrants.

As the year-end giving season approaches, please consider a gift to the [BronxWorks Emergency Fund](#).



EMERGENCY FUND

Help BronxWorks Mobilize

and provide critical assistance to individuals and families in crisis.

<https://bronxworks.org/donate>

There are many other 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](#)

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