



50
YEARS



The
BronxWorks
April 2023
Newsletter



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FEATURED STORY

BronxWorks Walk-in and Referral Offices

There is perhaps no service more at the core of BronxWorks identity than our Walk-in and Referral services, dating back to the founding of BronxWorks (then the Citizens Advice Bureau) in 1972. As we approach the BronxWorks 50th Anniversary Gala, we take a look back at where it all started, in a two-person walk-in office that focused on helping seniors resolve housing matters and access entitlements. Now, fifty years later, BronxWorks Walk-in and Referral services operate out of twelve offices spread throughout many Bronx neighborhoods and communities.



For many Bronx residents, BronxWorks walk-in offices are the entry point to a wide network of programs. Staff at the offices assist both individuals and families navigate the services that are available, both within BronxWorks and our partners in the community, and for which they qualify. Seeking assistance for many of the issues that can arise in our lives can be a daunting task, and it is the goal of BronxWorks walk-in offices to meet clients where they are in their lives and their situations at any given time, without judgement, helping them respond to their needs.

“Walk-in services were important back then for the same reasons why they are important today.” - John Weed, Assistant Executive Director

Walk-in and Referral services have played an important role in the history of BronxWorks. “Since their opening, the programs have provided a wide range of assistance for many subsistence-type issues,” says John Weed, “While the population and demographics of the Bronx may have changed, many of the issues that we wanted to address still remain today.” Throughout the years, the offices have helped countless Bronx residents enroll and receive public assistance, like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or housing assistance, complete re-certifications, address any outstanding issues. As BronxWorks has expanded, staff have been able to connect households with more

resources and programming, like emergency food, immigration services, ESOL, eviction prevention, and more.



In many ways it was through the experience of the walk-in offices that helped guide the directions in which BronxWorks expanded its programming and services. It was a natural progression from our first walk-in offices to opening senior centers. So much of the traffic to the walk-in offices were seniors that it made sense to offer a more full-fledged programming for them. As other offices opened in different communities of the Bronx, the needs of these communities helped inform decisions to add offices, programs, and services over the years.



The walk-in office at 60 East Tremont Ave helps Bronx residents with a variety of needs.

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the department was integral in sharing crucial updates and safety information to our communities, and once available, helped connect thousands of Bronx residents to get vaccinated. Today, the department continues to expand where the needs are greatest. In addition to the twelve walk-in offices, BronxWorks Navigators are stationed at satellite offices with community partners throughout the Bronx to provide information and resources and help our neighbors access health insurance and other valuable benefits.



Program Specialist, Sharline Fontanez, assists a client at a BronxWorks walk-in office in West Farms.

Assistant Department Director of Access to Benefits and Eviction Prevention, Marisol Rosa-Saltares says, “Our goal is to provide community residents with the services they need at the moment they need them.” The department is working on more creative ways they can provide assistance to households, including virtual enrollments and online classes to teach people how to navigate the system and fill out applications on their own.

Every year, through a combined effort across the countless locations and events throughout the borough, the BronxWorks Access to Benefits Department assists tens of thousands of Bronx residents enroll in health insurance, SNAP and emergency food assistance, housing and eviction prevention services, and a multitude of other benefits and resources. As BronxWorks looks ahead to the next 50 years, we remain committed to the walk-in and referral services that started our journey providing in the Bronx.



STAFF PROFILE

Marisol Rosa-Saltares, Assistant Department Director, Access to Benefits/Homelessness Prevention Programs

For twenty years, early in her life Marisol lived in a building on St. Ann's Boulevard when the building was a part of the New York City Housing

Authority. Years later, Marisol finds that her story has come full circle, as the Assistant Department Director for Access to Benefits and Homelessness Prevention Programs at BronxWorks, the organization now providing transformative services in that same building on St. Ann's.



Marisol was born in Puerto Rico, came with her family to the Bronx when she was four years old, and has been living in the Bronx ever since. She attended the Theodore Roosevelt High School, earned her Associate's Degree from the Bronx Community College, her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Lehman College, and her Master's in Public Administration from the Metropolitan College of New York.

“As I started working at BronxWorks, I saw the huge need for walk-in services and assistance. I saw seniors who had difficulty completing paperwork or re-certifications to stay in their own apartments. It inspired me to continue on in this field.”

Marisol started working at BronxWorks in 1998 as a Family Childcare Specialist. Her job at that time was to enroll family childcare providers into a program to ensure that they were adequately resourced, trained, and had the necessary licenses and support to provide high-quality childcare to their communities. Shortly after joining the program, Marisol was promoted to Program Coordinator to build a cohesive network of family childcare providers. She would conduct home visits to the childcare providers, approve their home childcare setup, ensure they had the proper resources, and help make referrals to members of the network.

After two years, Marisol was promoted to Program Director of the Avenue St. John and Townsend Walk-in Offices, and a few years after that, she was again promoted to the Assistant Department Director overseeing all four of the walk-in and referral offices at the time. Since then, Marisol has helped oversee the growth of the department for over twenty years.

“As BronxWorks has grown and added so many different programs, the department has grown with it. Because BronxWorks is so broad and offers so many services, we are able to make a lot of referrals within the agency, and getting people assistance quickly and efficiently.”

Outside of work, Marisol loves to spend time with her family and watch movies with her husband and her daughter. She and her eight sisters and five brothers love to get together at the park and spend holidays together as a family.



DID YOU KNOW

BronxWorks SNAP-Ed Program Works to Promote Healthy Retail in the Bronx



The BronxWorks SNAP-Ed Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Program works with local Bronx vendors and markets to promote healthy food retail by working with store owners to add signage and promotions for fruits and vegetables, providing onsite cooking demos and nutrition education, and spreading awareness by organizing discussions with community partners throughout the Bronx.

CBS New York and Univision Noticias recently visited BronxWorks SNAP-Ed team to see some their healthy retail work. You can watch of the SNAP-Ed team in action by clicking below.

[CBS New York](#)
[Univision Noticias](#)



PHOTO ESSAY



BronxWorks and Executive Director Eileen Torres Honored by New York Knicks and Sweetwater Film

BronxWorks and Executive Director Eileen Torres received the Nat "Sweetwater" Clifton City Spirit Award in late March at Madison Square Garden! The award, named after one of the first African-American players in the NBA, recognizes local people and organizations who have made a significant difference in the lives of others. Eileen was recognized during the home game played on the Knicks Hispanic Heritage Day. The Knicks and HUB International presented BronxWorks with a generous \$10,000 donation, and actors from the new movie *Sweetwater* also presented BronxWorks with a \$5,000 check! Councilman Rafael Salamanca, Jr. and Knicks legend John Starks were also on hand to honor Eileen and BronxWorks. Thank you to the New York Knicks, HUB International, and cast of *Sweetwater*.

Press Coverage:

[Bronx Times](#)

[AM970 The Answer](#) (segment starts at 34:50)



BronxWorks on ABC7 New York's "Tiempo"

BronxWorks celebrated our 50-year anniversary on ABC7 New York's "Tiempo" program with host Joe Torres (left). BronxWorks Executive Director Eileen Torres (center) spoke about the programming we offer, our 50th Anniversary Gala, and what she had learned over her 30+ years with the agency. BronxWorks Nutrition Assistant Crisbelly Contreras (right) spoke about the Shop Healthy initiative as well as her time as a youth participant at BronxWorks. [Watch the full appearance here.](#)

You can also learn more about Crisbelly Contreras and her experience with BronxWorks [here.](#)



Intergenerational Earth Day Event at E. Roberts Moore

Elementary school-age students from BronxWorks Saint Mary's Park Cornerstone Community Center After-School Program and seniors from BronxWorks E. Roberts Moore Older Adult Center continued their weekly intergenerational programming this month. With warmer temperatures finally upon us, children and seniors together learned how to plant seeds for flowers and fruit. Once the seeds have sprouted they will be planted out in front of the E. Roberts Moore Older Adult Center in their garden. Starting the garden at E. Roberts Moore is one of the most-looked forward to events of the year!



BronxWorks Continued NYC Free Tax Prep Program

BronxWorks continued its free tax preparation services for low-income New Yorkers during tax season. The [BronxWorks VITA](#) program started in 2007 and assists over 6,000 clients per year. All VITA staff are IRS-certified tax preparers and help eligible clients apply for the Child Tax Credit and the Earned Income Tax Credit. The VITA program is an extension of our Financial Empowerment Center, which helps NYC residents with a litany of financial services, including student and other loan management, debt reduction, balancing a budget, and strengthening credit scores. [News 12 Story](#)

BronxWorks Cornerstones Recognized

The BronxWorks Betances, Classic, and Saint Mary's Park Cornerstone Community Centers were honored by the Relief Access Program for The Bronx (RAP4Bronx). Staff from our Cornerstones attended an appreciation dinner and were recognized for their work disseminating prepared meals to NYCHA residents and the surrounding communities through a program funded by RAP4Bronx. Our Cornerstone Community Centers are embedded in NYCHA housing complexes and provided a multitude of services to the residents there, including programs for Children & Youth.



MSTI Career Awareness Day

Middle school students from BronxWorks adolescent programs got the opportunity to speak to local professionals in various fields, including youth counseling, fashion design, and photography. Students prepared and asked questions about career paths and different challenges the guest speakers encountered along their ways. The program was offered by the BronxWorks Middle School-To-High School Transfer Initiative, a program intended to ease the transition to high school for Bronx middle schoolers.



After-School Professionals Appreciation Week

April 24 - April 28 is After-School Professionals Appreciation Week, and we want to thank all our BronxWorks after-school professionals for providing quality programs that make a difference in the lives of our Bronx youth! The week celebrates you--the Heart Of After-School!



WAYS TO SUPPORT



Support the BronxWorks 50th Anniversary Gala!



It's Not Too Late To Join Us!

50
YEARS

The BronxWorks 50th Anniversary Gala
May 18, 2023 at The New York Botanical Garden

Honoring:



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**Sponsor our 50th Anniversary
Gala!**

Thank You To Our Sponsors!

BronxWorks sincerely thanks the following donors for their generous and continued support of our mission for the BronxWorks 50th Anniversary Gala.

as of April 27, 2023

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There are many other ways you can support BronxWorks.

- Make a contribution. [Donate Now!](#)
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