Creating a Path Out of Homelessness







Biennial Review 2013 and 2014



TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Message from Our President and Chief Executive Officer	1
At a Glance	2
Adult Education and Services	4
Early Childhood Education	8
K–12 Programs	12
Prospect Family Support Center and Milk from the Heart	16
Homes for the Homeless Summer Camps	19
Awards and Mentions	20
HFH Supporters	22

On the cover:

Pictured in the upper right corner, students in our after-school programs at Saratoga Family Inn participate in a science project about volcanoes; center, students graduate from our Early Childhood Education Center's pre-K program; bottom right corner, a student in our after-school programs learns about nutrition.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dear Friends of Homes for the Homeless,

Homes for the Homeless has served New York City's needlest families since 1986. At no time since our founding has New York City witnessed such a crisis of family homelessness.

Throughout the years, we have gained insight into the factors that lead to families becoming homeless and the practices that can help them attain stable employment and permanent housing. Through experience and collaboration with the communities surrounding our four American Family Inns—the Clinton, the Williamsbridge, the Prospect, and the Saratoga—we have developed programming and support systems to provide families with the tools to ensure that their children thrive.

Homes for the Homeless has assisted more than 47,000 families and 80,000 children by providing shelter, education on subjects from parenting to job-seeking skills, case management, child care, and health care services because we know that ending the cycle of family homelessness calls for more than a housing-only response. Our Early Childhood Education Centers have evolved to offer a creative, comprehensive education-based program—including universal pre-K—through EarlyLearn NYC, and our after-school programs and summer camps provide children with educational enrichment year-round. Parents in our shelters have more opportunities than ever to take part in workshops on parenting, conflict resolution, job seeking, and healthy living for themselves and their children. Our newly created Family Works internship program provides graduates with a path to employment through on-the-job training in our facilities, mock interviews, resume building, and other career assistance.

The opportunities provided by our shelters have helped thousands of parents and their children attain a brighter future.

We will continue to build on our proven practices while seeking out new ways to assist families and children. The strides we made in Fiscal Years 2013 and 2014 are highlighted in this Biennial Review. We encourage you to keep up with the latest on Homes for the Homeless by visiting our website at www.hfhnyc.org or following us on Twitter and Facebook. Thank you for your continued support.



Ralph da Costa Nunez, PhD



12,000

Number of volunteer hours at all four sites



2013 AND 2014 AT A GLANCE

Established in 1986, Homes for the Homeless operates four American Family Inns in the Bronx, Manhattan, and Queens. These community residential resource centers serve both homeless families and the surrounding communities, through a family-based, child-centered, and education-focused approach.

103

Number of early education and child care slots available at our American Family Inns



982

Number of children who attended Camps Lanowa and Wakonda





966

Number of volunteers at all four sites

2,520

Number of learning hours during after-school programming



ADULT EDUCATION AND SERVICES

We believe that time spent in shelter should be enriching for both the adults and children we serve. That is why our adult education and services focus on more than simply helping residents obtain housing. We want them to have the best possible chance of remaining permanently housed in the community. Our services for adults in 2013, made possible through new and continuing collaborations with partner organizations, focused on parenting, conflict resolution, financial management, and job readiness and placement.

Adults at all of the American Family Inns began benefiting from a new program in September of 2012: Family Works. For shelter residents who meet a set of basic criteria (most have no previous employment experience), internships are available in security/safety, child care, housekeeping, and maintenance. The program pays interns a stipend while they gain valuable on-the-job experience they can put on their resumes. The program also includes workshops on team building, scheduling, communicating in the workplace, and job-seeking tactics. In addition to reporting to a supervisor, interns are paired with mentors. Graduates of the three-month internship are encouraged to make step-by-step goals, such as aiming for full-time employment that can sustain their households, then finding permanent housing, and perhaps pursuing further education.

40

Number of workshops provided for adults

Pictured to the right and below, clients focus on learning financial literacy with instructors from Credit Advocates Counseling Corp. so they can make informed decisions about their finances and save for the future.







ADULT EDUCATION AND SERVICES

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2013:

- Multi-session financial literacy workshops held by Credit Advocates Counseling Corp. gave clients hands-on tasks in a friendly and interactive environment.
- The CUNY Creative Arts Team engaged parents in role-playing based on a variety of common parenting scenarios, allowing them to use the art of performance to improve their skills.
- Established free legal clinics to assist clients at all four Inns through partnerships with the City Bar Justice Center-Legal Clinic for the Homeless and New York Legal Assistance Group's Mobile Legal Help Center.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2014:

- 150 percent increase in the number of Family Works graduates from 2013 to 2014.
- The hiring of a full-time employment specialist to build relationships with potential employers and to assist Family Works participants with their job searches.

Opposite page, an intern graduates from our Family Works program. Below, one of our Family Works graduates is now employed as a full-time security guard at the Saratoga Family Inn.



69

Number of Family Works interns who graduated from the program to date

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Children's early life experiences have profound impacts over the course of their lives, with homeless children exhibiting attention problems at higher rates and scoring lower on cognitive-development tests than their peers. Homes for the Homeless operates four comprehensive early childhood education and care programs so that children who are temporarily living in our lnns have the best chance of success in school. In addition, when homeless parents know that their children are in a safe and caring environment, they can focus on their education, job, and housing priorities.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2013:

- Building on the foundation of the early childhood learning centers established in 2012 and the receipt of a multiyear grant from the NYC Administration for Children's Services, we continued to expand our EarlyLearn program to include children ages 2.6 to 5 years old from our Family Inns and the surrounding communities. This was also the first year that we incorporated half-day universal pre-K into our programs.
- We are one of only three homeless services providers to run EarlyLearn programs. Approximately 60 percent of the children who participate in our EarlyLearn program live in shelters and 40 percent are drawn from the surrounding neighborhoods so that we serve as a resource to both homeless families and those in the local area.

Opposite page, students from one of our Early Childhood Education Centers enjoy an outing to pick pumpkins at a farm on Long Island. The field trip gave the children a lesson about where their food comes from in addition to exposing them to a new environment. Below, one of our students from the Early Childhood Education Center at a sports-related field trip.

10

Number of educational and cultural field trips delighting young minds







EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2014:

- At the Prospect and Saratoga, the Parent Action Committee, or PAC—a required component of the EarlyLearn NYC program—has taken an active role in shaping their children's education. Parents also attend workshops on child development and dental and general health and other events that allow them to actively contribute to their children's well-being. Parents are encouraged to volunteer and spend time in the classroom.
- The EarlyLearn program also sparked the creation of the Health Services Advisory Committee, comprised of local community health professionals, volunteers, program parents, and staff. Members of the committee provide support and guidance to the program as we seek to further educate parents about the importance of child health and development.

Opposite page, students and staff from the Early Childhood Education Center at the Prospect Family Inn pose for a class photo. Below, a parent and child in the Saratoga Early Childhood Education Center play during a family fun day, during which parents helped their sons and daughters work on motor and social skills and engaged in other aspects of their children's education.



45

Number of hours of professional development workshops and trainings for early education staff

K-12 PROGRAMS

Homes for the Homeless' American Family Inns are a stabilizing force in the lives of youngsters. Our K–12 staff not only focus on enrichment activities after school, on the weekends, and in the summertime; they also work with liaisons from the NYC Department of Education to ensure that children are attending school, guarantee that students have the supplies they need, and help parents get involved in their children's education. Too many statistics point to the obstacles that homeless students face. Our programs help them overcome these obstacles and thrive.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2013:

- With help from the Advantage After School Program Grant from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, programs for K–12 at the Prospect focused on increased leadership training, pregnancy prevention, and guidance for college and job planning. The Chess Team was a particular standout, garnering several awards in citywide tournaments held by Chess-in-the-Schools.
- Recreation activities are an important component of our K–12 programming. Children need to learn, but they also need to build their skills by just being kids. Helping them to do both is the mission of one of our partners, KidCare, who sponsored our First Annual BBall & Burgers Tournament at the Saratoga Family Inn. This event brought together children and young adults from the Saratoga, the Prospect, and the Williamsbridge for a day of old-fashioned on-the-court competition, with the youngsters competing both with and against staff and KidCare volunteers. The day started with a techniques

clinic to practice basketball skills and ended with trophies, prizes, and a barbecue provided by KidCare collaborator Schweid & Sons.

Below, children from Prospect and Saratoga compete in the annual KidCare-sponsored BBall & Burgers Tournament. On the opposite page, students on the Prospect Chess Team practice their moves together.

38

Number of field trips taken adding recreation and experiential learning







K-12 PROGRAMS

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2014:

- Our K–12 programs continue beyond the school year to help students overcome learning loss over the summer. At the Saratoga Family Inn's FutureLink Summer Day Camp, students ages 11–16 participated in a writers-in-residence program with Writopia. This multi-week session allowed day campers to improve their writing through techniques that included performing their work aloud.
- We are able to enrich our programming and the cultural experiences of the children we serve through volunteers and partners. That is how our children get to participate for the first time in activities such as ice skating or attend professional baseball games. For two years in a row, Barclays has sponsored field trips to the Ice Skating Rink at Bryant Park, where volunteers pair up with our children to learn a new skill. Teens from Changing the Odds, a positive youth development project at the Morris Heights Health Center in the Bronx, are always a hit when they come to our Inns as part of their service to the community. These teens plan and run events from "make your own ice cream," in which the children learn about the science behind this treat to Halloween festivals.

Opposite page, students at the Saratoga Family Inn work on their writing with instructors from the Writopia program. Below, children in the Saratoga's after-school program work on masks inspired by the Dr. Seuss book The Lorax after reading the book together as part of Dr. Seuss Day.



190

Number of children who benefited from after-school programming at Prospect and Saratoga Family Inns in 2014

PROSPECT FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

The Prospect Family Support Center (PFSC) continues to provide critical services to families during times of crisis, as well as workshops and support throughout the year. Respite care is available for New York City children up to the age of six, for up to 72 hours, 24 hours a day. In addition to emergency services, the PFSC offers parents a 12-week workshop three times a year that covers the skills necessary for positive parenting and creating a strong family unit.

MILK FROM THE HEART

Our Milk from the Heart program provides milk to low-income families in New York City from mobile distribution centers in the Bronx. The program emphasizes the importance of providing children with the proper nutrition to grow up strong and healthy, while helping low-income families meet these nutrition requirements. Research shows that in addition to improving health, having milk with breakfast can help children perform better academically.

14,750

Number of servings of milk that made their way into the hands of families living in food desert neighborhoods Opposite page, our mascot for Milk from the Heart, Becky Moo-Moo, helps hand out milk at one of our pick-up locations. Below, the Prospect Family Support Center's bright, child-friendly space offers emergency care 24 hours a day, seven days a week for children up to the age of six.







HOMES FOR THE HOMELESS SUMMER CAMPS

For low-income families, the summer can be a challenging time. The structured learning and schedule of school are on hiatus, and parents are left seeking a way for their children to remain safe during the day and avoid the "summer slip" that can happen when children do not have the classroom to engage their minds. Homes for the Homeless Summer Camps, nationally accredited by the American Camps Association, is located in Harriman State Park in Upstate New York and offers approximately 600 children the chance to explore nature while learning during three 16-day sessions.

In 2012 the new Teen Leaders program brought exceptional former campers—those who had aged out of the program—back to Camp Wakonda and Camp Lanowa to assist counselors. The teens stay for the whole summer program to demonstrate leadership skills and provide the younger children with role models who share their background. This successful program continued to grow in 2013–14.

Opposite page, a group of Teen Leaders is pictured. The Teen Leaders, former summer campers who have aged out of the program, return to assist counselors and act as role models for the young campers. Below, campers play a lively game of dodgeball, one of many outdoor activities they enjoy during the two-week session.



15

Tripled the number of Teen Leaders from 5 to 15



STUDENT CHESS TEAM AT PROSPECT FAMILY INN

Received too many individual and team medals to mention as they competed citywide in the Chess-in-the-Schools tournaments

AWARDS & MENTIONS 2013 AND 2014

Homes for the Homeless as a whole, as well as members of the HFH family—from staff and volunteers to children living in our Inns—are the recipients of many awards and honorable mentions. We have highlighted a few in this section.



KIDCARE

Received the "Beyond Housing" Award from the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness for their ongoing commitment to volunteering, donating, and making a difference in the lives of children and youth in HFH Inns



CLAIRE KOEPPEL

Received the "Above and Beyond" Award for shelter volunteers from the organization Information for Families

HOMES FOR THE HOMELESS

Received the EmblemHealth "Commitment to Care" Award for serving homeless families





SARATOGA EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTER

Rated 4 out of 5 stars in New York
State's Quality Stars ratings for
child care and education

SPECIAL THANKS

Homes for the Homeless and all of its programs benefit tremendously from the support of donors, community organizations, and volunteers from across the city and the United States. This biennial review recognizes the generosity of those who provided vital support to the families and children during Fiscal Years 2013–14, which ran from July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2014. Every effort has been made to provide an accurate listing. We apologize in advance for any inadvertent error or omission.

PROGRAM PARTNERS AND VOLUNTEERS

Individuals

Abigail Titus Aditya Bhagirath Ahmednur Ahmed Alexander DeMarchena Alexis Muir Alyshia Williams Amy King Andrea Leiva Angie Varriale Annina Foran Annmarie O'Brien Antonett Salmon Arlynn Shimizu Ashley Grey Avery Stern Barb Korman Barbara Lyons Bershan Shaw Bridget Murphy Brigid Martin Brittany Agne Brittany Perotti Brittnie Berenguer Brooke Pearson Caitlin Stehling Cara Devins

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to Homes for the Homeless. Avery celebrated her Bat Mitzvah in Fall 2012, and spent time volunteering at our Clinton Family Inn, working with toddlers and young children. She also generously donated her Bat Mitzvah gifts to Homes for the Homeless to help support our programs for children and families.

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