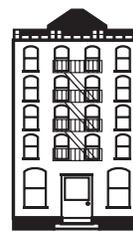


THE LATEST FROM

Housing Conservation Coordinators



FALL 2010

HCC: Greening the West Side

HCC's Weatherization Assistance Program is cutting monthly energy costs for tenants on the West Side of Manhattan and helping them to reduce their carbon footprint.

During the fiscal year ending June 2010, 216 apartments participated in the HCC Weatherization Assistance Program, allowing low-income families to live in energy efficient housing and improved living conditions.

Energy specialists identified energy waste and inefficiency in a total of five buildings, including 410 Cathedral Parkway in Manhattan Valley. As a result, 216 apartments benefited from the use of compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL) and new low-flow showerheads.

Our program also installed roof insulation, changed ventilation fans, provided duct cleaning, fixed and replaced antiquated heating systems, and inserted hardwire

lighting and new fixtures. Some units also qualified for replacement refrigerators with highly efficient Energy Star ratings. The household energy use reduction and resultant energy cost savings as a result of the program were significant.

Educating our community

"Most tenants want to see new cabinets as part of the improvement in their homes, but they don't see energy improvement as an essential part of their lives," says Karen Jackson Campbell, Director of Weatherization Services at Housing Conservation Coordinators. "That's where we are taking an important and vital role in educating our community and teaching them how to be a better utility consumer."

According to Jackson Campbell,

over the last fiscal year the Weatherization program surpassed the initial goal of 181 apartments, reaching 216 units in Manhattan Valley. For the fiscal year 2011, which began in July, the Weatherization Assistance Program is projected to weatherize 196 more units.

Building owners are prohibited from demanding rent increases for improvements completed through the Weatherization Assistance Program, which is sponsored by federal and state funds.

Since 1979, HCC has weatherized thousands of apartments in the Hell's Kitchen, Chelsea, Manhattan Valley, and Upper West Side neighborhoods of Manhattan.

From 2006 to 2010 alone, HCC worked with 907 apartments in 13 buildings by replacing windows, heating systems and installing energy saving lighting and roof insulation. ■

TIPS ON SAVE ENERGY

- Move your refrigerator if it's near the stove, dishwasher or heat vents.
- Use compact fluorescent light bulbs with the Energy Star label.
- Turn off your computer and monitor when not in use.
- Every appliance has two price tags: the purchase price and the operating cost. Consider both when buying a new appliance.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy



"At HCC, we reaffirm our commitment to helping tenants in our neighborhood learn ways to have an eco-friendly lifestyle," says Karen Jackson Campbell.



■ Monica Morante, Intake Coordinator at HCC.

Helping Senior Citizens

The elderly learn about their housing rights and how to protect themselves against identity theft

On June 23rd, the Clinton Cares Coalition, together with HCC and several other non-profit organizations, organized a community health fair for senior citizens struggling to pay their monthly rent and medical bills.

More than 100 seniors attended the Encore Community Services fair located at 239 West 49th Street in order to learn valuable information from HCC including lessons on how to freeze their rent, gain referrals for senior housing, and avoid identity theft.

As Monica Morante, an Intake Coordinator from HCC explained, “we are committed to serving our community, especially our seniors who are facing tremendous challenges with their housing issues.” Seniors also learned from other

members of the coalition about how to gain affordable health insurance, benefits, and entitlements like Medicare Part D, Epic, and SCRIE.

The elders at the Encore Community Services fair also received blood pressure exams and weight screenings.

Clinton Cares is a coalition of neighborhood-based organizations in the Clinton/Hell’s Kitchen community providing a comprehensive network of services for seniors to enable a healthy supportive community. The six member organizations include Encore Community Services, Hartley House, HCC, Project FIND, Ryan/Chelsea Clinton Community Health Center, and The Actors Fund. ■



■ Elected officials and community organizations, including HCC, attended the press conference to request Governor Patterson to sign the bill against illegal hotels. This event took place in City Hall on July 21. Days later, the Governor passed the bill. ■

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Neighbor:

I’m pleased to forward HCC’s Fall 2010 newsletter. It contains updates on program services, recent accomplishments, upcoming events and pieces of interest. It’s been a busy year for us. HCC staff saw an increase of more than 45% in residents seeking legal assistance compared to two years ago. Undoubtedly, the economic recession has been a tough time for our neighbors and for our community.



While the economic turmoil has overshadowed the past year, not all of the news has been bad. In fact, there have been a number of accomplishments over the past year that are worthy of celebration, including:

- ▶ The NYC Council approved a development between 44th-45th Streets that will include a brand new 630 seat PS51 facility, 600 units of housing permanently affordable to those of low, moderate and middle incomes with open space and an additional play area on the roof of the school.
- ▶ The NYS Governor signed the Illegal Hotel Bill, paving the way to end illegal hotel use in residential buildings.
- ▶ The proposed rezoning of 11th Avenue from 43rd -55th Streets is in its final planning stage, and will include a mechanism to create affordable housing, limit building heights and extend tenant protections against harassment.
- ▶ In-house at HCC, our immigration legal services expanded to weekly clinics and helped a record number of clients.

Of course, HCC’s work would not be possible without the generous donors, private foundations and public programs that support our work. HCC too, is feeling the impact of the recession; funding for our legal services program was cut more than 30%. If you have given recently to HCC, thank you for your help. If you think our work is valuable, I hope that you will fill out the donation portion of this newsletter and send it in with a contribution, or simply go to www.hcc-nyc.org and contribute on-line with a major credit card. With your support, we’ll be able to strengthen our services for the West Side residents who need them most.

As always, HCC remains a community effort. Thank you for being a member of the growing HCC community.

Kind regards,

Sarah Desmond
Executive Director

Vital Advocacy and Legal Services for Immigrants

HCC empowers immigrants by giving them essential legal advice



■ Shawn Blumberg, Staff Attorney at Housing Conservation Coordinators.

Immigrants have always been the life-blood of New York City's vibrant communities and so they remain. According to a 2010 report of the New York State Comptroller:

- ▶ Between 1970 and 2008, the foreign-born population in New York City more than doubled to 3 million, while the native-born population declined by more than 1 million.

- ▶ Immigrants represented 36.4% of the City's population in 2008 and 43% of the workforce.

- ▶ More than 1.9 million foreign-born workers are employed in New York City.

- ▶ In 2008, immigrants accounted for \$215 billion in economic activity in New York City, which represented about 32% of the gross city product.

- ▶ The 10 neighborhoods with the highest concentration of foreign-born residents had stronger economic growth than the rest of New York City

INTAKE HOURS

HCC provides free immigration legal services, but you must live on the West Side of Manhattan between Canal Street and 110th Street and be income eligible for our services. Spanish translation is provided. Call for an appointment. Our upcoming clinics will be held:

- October 12th & October 26
- November 9 & November 22
- December 14 & December 28

For more information about HCC's services contact us at (212) 541-5996 or visit us at 777 Tenth Avenue, 10019.

between 2000 and 2007

- ▶ Foreign-born workers make up 72% of nursing, psychiatric, and home health aids; more than half of licensed practical, vocational, and re-

gistered nurses; 46% of physicians and surgeons; 40% of accountants and auditors; 27% of chief executives; and 21% of elementary and middle school teachers.

Yet as we are reminded by the Manhattan District Attorney's recent indictments of an individual posing as an immigration attorney and another impersonating an Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent and simultaneously purporting to provide legal services, recent immigrants continue to be exploited as relentlessly as ever.

Our Commitment

As newcomers to our city, filled with the unassailable hope and determination that got them here, immigrants are vulnerable to predatory forces ranged against them with motives as often financial as political and xenophobic.

New York City depends on its immigrants and Housing Conservation Coordinators provides them with vital advocacy and legal services. Misinformation abounds and some of the greatest risks to immigrants are posed by ill-advised and poorly prepared applications for immigration benefits.

Housing Conservation Coordinators empowers immigrants by giving them essential advice on the likely benefits and possible consequences entailed in a given application or legal strategy.

Immigrants with accurate legal information are thus inoculated against the myriad fraud and deceptive practices of the "notarios and criminals who prey on them with mis-advice at extortionate prices.

Housing Conservation Coordinators, a community-based organization that formed in 1972 to preserve safe, decent and affordable housing in Hell's Kitchen, also provides legal services to New York City's immigrants. In the last year HCC has helped clients with VAWA self-petitions and applications for Adjustment of Status, Naturalization, Temporary Protected Status, U-Visas, and various other immigration benefits. ■



Healthy Homes, Healthy Tenants

Housing Conservation Coordinators is reaffirming its commitment to our community by raising awareness about how to maintain a safe and clean environment at home. This fall we will be distributing our three new bilingual educational brochures about Asthma, Lead Paint and Indoor Air Pollution.

In the Lead Paint brochure, tenants learn how to identify if your home is at risk and what steps to take if your landlord does not fix this problem.

The Indoor Air Pollution brochure identifies potentially hazardous conditions in your home. Tenants also learn how to take action to avoid this silent problem. The Asthma material also provides vital information about how to avoid triggers.

If you would like to receive a copy of our brochure, please call 212-541-5996 or visit us at 777 Tenth Avenue, New York, 10019. ■

Free Legal Clinic

HCC offers a free legal clinic every Monday night (except on holidays) from at 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm. Visitors must call the front desk to reserve a spot. Only the first eight callers will be able to reserve an appointment. Those eight reserved spots will be seen on a first-come, first-served basis during the night of the clinic. The clinic is open to everyone regardless of income or location of residence. Call us at 212-541-5996. ■

Visit us online at: www.hcc-nyc.org



■ Event

6th Annual West Side Tenants' Conference

Hundreds of residents of the West Side gather every year to empower themselves by learning about their rights as tenants and educating themselves about laws governing foreclosure, as well as how to obtain affordable housing and prevent or treat bed bugs.

This year, the 6th Annual Tenant Conference, sponsored by Housing Conservation Coordinators, WSNA and housing organizations, took place on September 25th at the Fordham University, School of Law at Lincoln Center (140 W. 62nd St.).

Assembly Member Gottfried's Office provided advice on how to fill out SCRIE and DRIE applications. Housing Court Answers provided information on assistance with rental arrears and the HCA helped tenants with the applications to available programs.

The 6th Annual Tenant Conference was made possible by the generosity of Home Depot, who donated \$800 and provided reusable orange shopping bags to each participant, as well as compact fluorescent light bulbs and printed material on how to save energy and money at home. Assurance Wireless, a Virgin Mobile company, also participated, by donating lunch for the more than 300 in attendance. More details about the conference will be published in HCC's Winter newsletter. ■

■ HAP PROGRAM:

HCC's neighbor, Fordham Law School, has established the Housing Advocacy Project, a student run program through which law school students volunteer at participating organizations. The project is dedicated to providing services to low and moderate income clients facing housing issues. Through the HAP program HCC hosts several law student interns each



semester. These student interns provide valuable time, resources, and support to staff attorneys on all cases. ■

777 Tenth Avenue, New York