

THE

UNION SETTLEMENT

CHRONICLE



Helping New Immigrants Succeed

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Winter 2016 • Serving New Immigrants

A Message from the Executive Director



Dear Friends of Union Settlement:

East Harlem teems with the diverse cultures of its many new immigrant residents. Their dreams and vitality are wonderful and defining characteristics of this community. The challenge of starting a new life in a strange place brings them to Union Settlement for assistance and connections to the wider community.

Since opening our doors in 1895, Union Settlement has welcomed successive waves of new New Yorkers -- first Irish and German immigrants, then Eastern European Jews and Italians, more recently Latinos and African Americans, and now, the latest arrivals from Central and South America, West Africa, the Caribbean, South Asia and China. All are struggling to surmount language barriers, gain education, and enter the workforce in a city where everything is new to them.

Meeting the needs of new immigrants is at the heart of our mission, but with each new wave of arrivals we must listen, learn, and innovate. In these pages you will learn about the sensitivity and fresh approaches we are bringing to this work.

As this issue goes to print, the year 2016 has just begun. Many of you have made year-end contributions to support Union Settlement. Thank you so very much; your gifts are essential to strengthening and sustaining our vital work.

David Nocenti
Executive Director

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by the numbers

341 new immigrant families benefited from specialized case management to support stronger education outcomes for children and family well-being.

Helping New Immigrants Succeed

East Harlem has long been a portal community to successive waves of immigrant New Yorkers, and since 1895 Union Settlement has served many of the newest arrivals to our City. The services we offer value and support the cultures of people who are otherwise marginalized.

We have been able to meet the changing needs of each new generation through innovative programming and community partnerships. Last year 80% of our adult education students were born outside of the United States. We offer these students courses geared towards their need to learn English and build an educational foundation for employment. "There is an overwhelming communication barrier when I look for work here," said **Norlis Salina**, an adult education student.

In our early childhood and youth programs we serve children and their parents alike. Our multi-generational approach is central to the work we do with immigrant Mexican families through the East Harlem Neighborhood Network (EHNN) -- a collaboration between Union Settlement, Little Sisters of the Assump-

tion Family Health Service and the Boys' Club of New York funded by the Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation. The EHNN's services focus on literacy, including reading days in local book store La Casa Azul, creating cultural events, and engaging parents in their children's success.

The EHNN celebrates traditions and knowledge through programs such as the "Endangered Language Exchange." Participants who are fluent in indigenous languages (such as Mixteco and Maam) teach instructors from the CUNY Linguistics Program and the Endangered Language Alliance. The result of this collaboration is that children and parents are creating books filled with tri-lingual stories and helping academics to build a dictionary of endangered languages.

Our senior centers also assist large numbers of immigrants. Our services support healthy aging and independent living and are available in English and Spanish. In the Naturally Occurring Retirement Community at Franklin Plaza, we have full-time staff providing assistance in Spanish, English, Mandarin and Cantonese.

With each new generation in East Harlem, Union Settlement has been able to meet new needs and involve the newest New Yorkers in building our community.

310 students studied English and prepared for the high school equivalency in our adult education classes.

212 Spanish-dominant second grade students benefited from the *Photos & Me Program*. The program teaches literacy through photography and storytelling in ten after school programs.

The New LeRoy Neiman Art Studio



A joyous dedication ceremony, ribbon cutting and inaugural art class were part of the launch of the LeRoy Neiman Art Studio located at the Union Settlement Washington Community Center this past September. This renovation was made possible by the combined generosity and commitment of The LeRoy and Janet Byrne Neiman Foundation and the Good Tidings Foundation.

The ceremony featured the unveiling of a mural created by children under the direction of artist **Alice Mizrachi**. The students worked for three days to conceive, draw and paint this vibrant work of art.

At the very first class in the new LeRoy Neiman Art Studio classroom, guests and press watched Union Settlement teacher **Yvonne Lamar-Rogers** give a drawing lesson to a group of 8 to 12 year old students. Renowned artist/teacher, Alice Mizrachi and Harlem resident **Kate Shindle**, President of the Actors' Equity Association and Miss America 1998, participated with the students.

Mayor Bill de Blasio issued an official statement praising the work of the foundations and Union Settlement for, "helping our young residents channel their creative energy and become the next generation of talented artists."



Union Settlement at the Holidays

The week before Thanksgiving, Union Settlement distributed more than 400 turkeys and fixings to families in need as part of our Thanksgiving Food Drive. Turkeys and fixings were generously donated by Art of Men, Axiom, The Chapin School, Driscoll Foods, Fine Fare, Park Avenue Foods and the YES Network.

Volunteers and staff members gave out bags of Thanksgiving food to community members and program participants.

During December's Holiday Gift Drive, Union Settlement provided almost 2,000 gifts to participants in our Early Childhood Education, Youth and Senior programs.

Special thanks to our wonderful gift drive

Staff Spotlight: Lisbeth Torres



thinks of Union Settlement as a second home and has plans to enroll in a Master's program by the fall.

The staff at reception, "Take the time to listen to every client who comes through our door. We remember everyone's name and we know who they're going to see," she said of the mental health clients. After a few sessions she and her colleagues are familiar enough to keep up with clients and their families and even anticipate their needs.

"Many of our clients speak better Spanish than English and it's great to know that I can help them get the services they need," said Ms. Torres who is bilingual.

When she started working in our Mental Health Clinic in 2013, **Lisbeth Torres** was new to East Harlem and to Union Settlement. Thinking about our 120-year roots in the neighborhood, Ms. Torres realized, "I didn't know just how important this place is to this neighborhood until I started working here."

Now, nearly three years later, she has been promoted from reception to quality assurance,

supporters at AdRoll, Axiom, Bryan Cave, City University of New York, CORE, East Harlem Cafe, Finsbury, HBO, Mirada Building, Mount Sinai Department of Anesthesiology, New York Academy of Medicine, The Nightingale-Bamford School, and Proskauer Rose LLP for contributing gifts. Also many thanks to HBO and nycTIES for volunteering to wrap the large number of gifts.



Decorating a gift drive collection box

Partner Profile: nycTIES



Representatives from Union Settlement and nycTIES ring the opening bell, signaling the beginning of the day of trading, at the New York Stock Exchange on December 21

Union Settlement Association is proud to be the 2015 charity partner of nycTIES, an organization that connects young professionals with volunteer and networking opportunities throughout New York City. Founded in the spirit of philanthropy, nycTIES enables young professionals to engage with their community by donating their time and skills. Since February 2015, nycTIES members have volunteered with

our Meals on Wheels program, held mock job interviews with Adult Education students, and wrapped presents for our annual Gift Drive. Their annual gala raised \$10,000 to benefit our Reconnect and Rise program, which helps disconnected youth restart their educations and enter the world of work. We are grateful for all the hard work and support Union Settlement received from nycTIES members.

Debevoise Rocks!



For the second annual Law Rocks NYC, a battle of the bands event, The Plimptones (the Debevoise & Plimpton band) selected Union Settlement as their charity partner. We were honored to be a part of this epic concert and thank the twelve talented Plimptones as well as the firm for their support. Debevoise attorneys have served on Union Settlement's Board of Directors for more than forty years.



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Save The Date!
The Solutions Benefit
April 19, 2016