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CYPRESS HILLS

LOCAL
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION

ANNUAL REPORT | FISCAL YEAR 2020

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BUILDING COMMUNITY, GROWING LEADERS

WHAT WE DO

WITH COMMUNITY RESIDENTS LEADING THE WAY, THE MISSION OF CHLDC IS TO BUILD A STRONG, EQUITABLE EAST NEW YORK, WHERE YOUTH AND ADULTS ACHIEVE EDUCATIONAL AND ECONOMIC SUCCESS, SECURE AND PRESERVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING, AND DEVELOP LEADERSHIP SKILLS TO TRANSFORM THEIR LIVES AND COMMUNITY. WE ACTIVELY PROMOTE POLICIES THAT ADVANCE RACIAL EQUITY.

CAREER AND EDUCATION | COLLEGE SUCCESS | YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT | HOUSING COUNSELING



A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends:

We began last year incredibly excited about starting construction on more units of deeply affordable housing and our new community center at Chestnut Commons, leading the City's first basement legalization pilot program and expanding our youth development, college access and workforce development programs. And we did experience great successes in FY2020 but we could not imagine what lay ahead for us and the neighborhood with the global pandemic. It turned out to be one of our most challenging years ever.

East New York has been hit hard by the global pandemic and economic downturn. Over 5000 residents had tested positive for the virus by the end of June and 500 had died from COVID-19. One of our beloved board members, Onelia Torres passed away and countless other board members, staff and program participants suffered through the Coronavirus. On top of the illness and suffering, thousands lost their employment during the shutdown and many were not eligible for public benefits because of their immigration status.

The Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation (CHLDC) pivoted quickly to take all of our services to online platforms and to implement new emergency relief programs. We established an emergency hotline and compiled an emergency services guide which is updated weekly to connect residents to health resources, public benefits and vital information about workers', immigrants', renters' and homeowners' rights. CHLDC has been working tirelessly to address the needs of the hungry, unemployed and housing insecure in the community by providing emergency food, breaking down barriers to help residents secure public benefits and providing as much one on one advocacy and counseling as possible. We've added virtual job training programs in construction and health care and offered webinars about various housing related relief assistance. CHLDC is partnering with local food pantries to keep them stocked and with other community based organizations to coordinate efforts.

Simultaneously we fought back against unjust budget cuts to our essential services. CHLDC organized town hall meetings, call-in days and social media actions to educate elected and government representatives about the impact proposed budget cuts would have on East New Yorkers. We are incredibly grateful to all of the community members who stepped up, advocated with elected officials, testified at public hearings and mobilized their neighbors to get involved too. Despite this intense activism and mobilization, the cuts were still deep to our youth development programs and the Basement Apartment Conversion Pilot Program. Next year, we will need to turn away thousands of families who need our programs because of these cutbacks.

In the midst of the public health and economic crises, our organization and community united to protest the murder of George Floyd, police brutality and over-policing. The struggle for community recovery and budget justice are fundamentally tied to the on-going battle to dismantle systemic racism. We have seen more of our community awakening to fight for racial justice and respond to the racist acts of violence perpetrated by law enforcement. CHLDC remains committed to advancing racial equity in our organization, services and community and being part of a larger citywide and national movement for racial justice.

We know there is much work left to be done. Going forward, we continue to be grateful for the generous support from all of our donors, volunteers, and residents as we focus on fighting for a future where East New York receives equitable treatment and greater investments. We hope you enjoy reading about some of our work this year and our vision for a brighter future.

Sincerely,

Michelle Neugebauer

2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Harold Green, **President** | Michael Lawes, **Vice President** | Marisol Quiñones, **Secretary** | Gladys DeSantiago, **Treasurer**
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Mirian Rodriguez | Nicholas Russo | Alexis Sanchez | Amory Sanchez | Dr. Sylvia Stovall | George Torres

IN MEMORY OF ONELIA TORRES



On April 1, one of our most dedicated board members and longtime neighborhood homeowner, Onelia Torres, passed away from coronavirus. Just a few weeks before, Onelia was testifying at the Cease & Desist public hearing about her love of our community and how she was not going to let speculators drive her out of the neighborhood!

Onelia was a fierce advocate for senior citizens, affordable housing, and the Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation. She could be counted on to voice the concerns of our community at the State Capitol in Albany, City Hall, and outside of any institutions that were not doing the right thing by struggling community members. Onelia was also an active member at the Cypress Hills-Fulton Street Senior Center and with the Coalition for Community Advancement. She loved everyone on our Board of Directors and staff as we love and honor her.

We are so grateful to Onelia for her lifetime of service and activism.



Onelia Torres holds the OCC Rule change sign. Onelia was a fierce advocate for our community

CHLDC IN FY2020

79

participants gained an industry recognized credential

7,915

people served by youth and education programs at CHLDC

1,247

people served through Career & Education services

91

youth participating in youth leadership programming

2,490

people gained increased access to fresh/nutritious food

COVID RESPONSE

Helped address food insecurity with emergency cash grants, gift cards, and more.

Published and regularly updated an Emergency Services Resource Guide.

Worked and offered in person and remote programming.



Enough is Enough: A March AND Vigil in Defense of Black Lives

CHLDC along with the North Brooklyn YMCA, Coalition for Community Advancement, and United Community Centers helped to organize this march and vigil in early June in response to the racist acts of violence perpetrated by law enforcement. We are committed to continuing to fight for an end to racial inequity and violence and call for investment in the community.



CAREER AND EDUCATION



The Career and Education division provides programs and services that empower youth and adults to transform their lives and communities. East New York residents can access key career and education resources at CHLDC that help them develop and achieve their goals. As the COVID-19 pandemic spread in the City earlier this year, we were able to move all of our programs online.

This year, we conducted a pilot program with the 1199SEIU Training and Employment Funds to train young adults to become Certified Nurse Assistants, one of the most in-demand positions in NYC. In the coming year, we are expanding the pilot and launching Careers that Care, a new partnership with Kingsborough Community College and 1199 to provide training and employment for young people entering the health care sector. Successful young people will have access to benefits, union protections, and a robust career pathway.

We also launched Building ENY, a local hiring initiative in partnership with Laguardia Community College and local general contractors. Seventeen local residents were trained for the Site Safety Card issued by the Department of Buildings, a new entry-level standard for access to commercial construction sites in NYC. Participants were hired upon completion from the training program. This initiative will continue alongside Building Works, our long-standing partnership with the Carpenter's Union.

Cypress Hills Business Partners, our merchant's association, launched a planning process for transitioning to a Business Improvement District (BID). A BID would be a long-term sustainable funding mechanism whereby a board of local merchants and stakeholders would determine the vision for the commercial corridor in our community and the range of services provided to local merchants. Perch Advisors will be working with a steering committee of local merchants and other stakeholders to develop the BID over the next two years.

1,247

people served through Career and Education services

854

young people served with internships in the Summer Youth Employment Program Summer 2019

121

program participants who gained employment

91

program participants who will gain an industry-recognized credential

62

local businesses served by the merchant's association

YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

CHLDC is dedicated to supporting our students and their families every step of the way. Through Youth and Family Services, working parents can rely on free childcare to lift the burden of safety and supervision for their children after school. We provide elementary and middle school after school programming to over 1,700 students every weekday at 11 school sites throughout Cypress Hills/East New York, through which we have seen high participation levels and equally high academic achievement from our young people.

Our programs include high-quality literacy enrichment at seven elementary schools, where students build the necessary foundational skills to move from learning to read to reading to learn. Along with literacy, young people can participate in a multitude of engaging, educational activities, from homework help to science experiments.

Middle school students are actively engaged in STEM-focused and leadership development-driven activities along with projects that allow them to connect to our community and explore opportunities that will guide them toward a focused academic and career path. Mid-year, when our programming switched to remote learning and engagement, more than 500 students were able to continue to build their skills and knowledge and form lasting relationships with peers and staff in each of the core components of our after-school programs.

Our Middle School Success Center assisted 259 middle schoolers in the complicated application process for New York's public high schools. 81% of 8th graders who applied were matched with one of their top three high schools, and 87% of students were matched with schools with a 75% or higher graduation rate. 132 of our students will be attending very selective high-demand schools.

Our Beacon Community Centers provide recreational and educational activities for residents of all ages, serving a combined 2,700 community members in the fall and spring and over 500 in the summer. Programs operate afternoons, evenings, and Saturdays at two campuses, J.H.S 218 and P.S. 214. During evening programs, participants can explore their interests and talents in a variety of engaging art, STEM, music and sports activities. Our programs averaged 160 students a night.

When our families are in crisis or in need of support, our Beacon Family Place, located at J.H.S. 218, is there to work collaboratively with them and help them through difficult times. The Beacon Family Place is a supportive, caring environment where families can work together to improve their relationships and their lives. We provided comprehensive family counseling services to an average of 47 families per month this year.

7

elementary schools with
high-quality Literacy Enrichment Programs

81%

8th grade applicants were matched with
1 of their top 3 high schools

500+

students continued in after-school
programs remotely

47

families per month were provided with
comprehensive family counseling services



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Cypress Hills Youthmarket

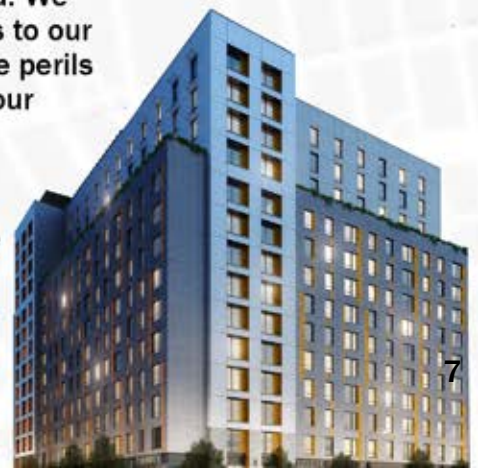
The Community Development division remains committed to expanding access to affordable housing while also building a healthier, more energy-efficient Easy New York. Construction on Chestnut Commons began in FY 2020, with CHLDC as a co-developer. Chestnut Commons will make available 274 additional units of permanent and deeply affordable housing in Cypress Hills while also adding a full-service community center and neighborhood retail space. The residential portion of the building will be built to Passive House energy efficiency standards.

CHLDC was also one of three citywide developers approved to develop deeply affordable shared housing as part of The Department of Housing Preservation and Development's ShareNYC initiative. We will renovate a building in East New York to establish affordable housing where individuals can live together while paying rent that is accessible for low-income households. We also launched an effort to organize a community land trust for East New York, which would help prevent displacement, establish and maintain affordable housing, and more.

We made significant progress on the Basement Apartment Conversion Pilot Program (BACPP), which assists homeowners in ENY to convert their basements into safe, legal, and affordable rental units. Nearly 900 homeowners expressed interest in this program, with hundreds going through the qualification process, and several approved for pre-development work. Unfortunately, the City proposed defunding the BACPP as part of their pandemic-related budget cuts and on June 30 did not restore funding, putting the future of this impactful program in jeopardy.

This year marked the ninth season of the Cypress Hills Youthmarket, through which we employed eight neighborhood youth and trained them in how to operate a small business while learning about food justice, urban agriculture, and customer service. Three of the youth were returning from previous years. We sold over 18,859 pounds of locally grown affordable produce and donated 1,399 pounds of produce to the local senior center to incorporate into their existing menu. Over 2,486 customers patronized the CHYM (Cypress Hills Youthmarket) in 2019 and also participated in one or more of the 77 onsite nutrition education workshops. Sales of this locally grown affordable produce were over \$31,306.62.

For the past two years, we have been bringing UnidosUs' Comprando Rico Y Sano (Buying Delicious and Healthy) program to the community, and over 500 people have participated. We presented and explored ways to prepare the most nutritious and delicious foods to our families with limited budgets. We led workshops on MyPlate, healthy eating, the perils of too much sugar, sodium and fats, and how to shop smart. We explored how our diet can contribute to certain chronic diseases and how a healthy diet and exercise can help manage them. We also led exercise sessions in yoga, chair aerobics, and more, and we explored how to grow our own food in the neighborhood through community gardening and backyard gardening. We have also connected 498 people with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits so far this year.



HOUSING COUNSELING

181

Help-Desk workshop & housing fair attendees

122

Tenants who received individual rental counseling

65

Homeowner Help-Desk Counseling one-on-one clients served

130

Financial Literacy Education workshop attendees

89

Owners who received Foreclosure Prevention Counseling

In FY2020, our Housing Counseling division helped protect homeowners from displacement, aided tenants in preventing or postponing evictions, provided financial literacy education, and more. Counselors in our Foreclosure Prevention Counseling Program worked with 89 owners confronting challenges with their mortgage payments.

We helped to modify loans and establish trial payment plans, and save homeowners from foreclosure.

122 tenants received individual Tenant Counseling, leading to outcomes such as securing Disabled Rent Increase Exemptions and Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemptions. Our financial literacy counseling and education programs offer guidance on managing personal finances. This year, workshops drew 125 attendees, and 63 people received individual counseling. The Homeowner Help Desk served 65 clients with one-on-one counseling, helping to remove NYC Department of Buildings violations, complete tax exemption applications, and submit home repair applications. We also remain committed to protecting seniors. This year, seniors made up about 35 percent of clients served at the Homeowner Help Desk and 43 percent of tenants who received individual counseling.

The Homeowner Help Desk connects neighborhood residents with important resources and makes it possible for them to address a variety of housing issues. For instance, Belen Jimenez, now 94, has lived in a two-unit house in Cypress Hills/ENY since the mid-1980s, when she and her husband Librado purchased the home. Ms. Jimenez still lives in the house with family today, but in the years since 1991, when Librado sadly passed away, the house has become difficult to maintain. Ms. Jimenez's son, Edward Jimenez, 51, realized that their roof would need comprehensive remodeling after having problems with it for years, and came to Cypress Hills. CHLDC had worked with Ms. Jimenez in the past, and Mr. Jimenez said the Help Desk connected his family with resources they would not have known about otherwise. Ultimately, they secured an affordable loan for the roof repairs, which took place in the fall, and also worked with CHLDC on other applications, including for the senior property tax exemptions. Although there is work left to be done on the house, Mr. Jimenez noted CHLDC's importance to the neighborhood and community and emphasized his family's commitment to staying. "Staying in the neighborhood (is) important because it's been home," Mr. Jimenez said.



COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

As a leading voice in the Coalition for Community Advancement, CHLDC remains committed to standing up for and mobilizing the community. This year, the Coalition continued to advocate for tenants and homeowners in East New York (ENY) against predatory practices and unfair policies. The Coalition announced the Homeowner Bill of Rights Campaign in November alongside other City-wide housing organizations. The Campaign advocates for the State Legislature to pass a package of bills to end scams and real estate speculation, provide access to credit and financing, create a fairer tax system for long-time and low-income homeowners, support senior homeowners, and expand affordable homeownership opportunities.

In January, the Coalition kicked off the year with more than 100 ENY residents. Community members were encouraged to join the Coalition in action by becoming part of a campaign to confront real estate speculation and protect small homes and tenants of small homes, create more real affordable commercial and residential tenancy in ENY, or demand accountability and transparency in economic development in the Industrial Business Zone of ENY.

In February, the Coalition bused up to Albany with around 35 ENY homeowners and tenants of small homes to meet with State Senate and Assembly members and advocate for the Small Homes Anti-Speculation Act for Lobby Day. ENY residents shared stories about topics including flippers targeting elderly homeowners and those in foreclosure, homeowner harassment, and aggressive real estate solicitations. In March, the Coalition collaborated with Senator Julia Salazar's office to organize a hearing with the Department of State. At the hearing, attended by over 100 ENY residents and featuring 40 testimonies from homeowners, we aimed to win a Cease and Desist Zone: a do not solicit registry for small homeowners to protect ENY against speculation. It was an empowering moment and strong display of community unity.

In response to the devastating impacts of COVID on ENY residents, the Coalition has worked since April to plan a Just Transition platform and campaign to lay out the most urgent steps towards reparative relief and protections for economic and housing justice in ENY. We don't want to go back to the inequities and injustice that existed before COVID – we want to imagine and advocate for a new, just future.

Advocacy for the Homeowner Bill of Rights



COLLEGE SUCCESS

CHLDC's College Success Programs work with young adults throughout their high school and college experiences, from providing academic services, mental health support, student leadership and organizing, as well as the college application and financial aid process, and continued guidance through college graduation/degree attainment. With services ranging from high school recruitment to college persistence support, we are ready to help students plan for and succeed in college.

The Franklin K. Lane Campus also hosts our three community schools. Our Community Schools programs at Cypress Hills Preparatory School, Brooklyn Laboratory High School, and Multicultural High School supports students, families, and healthy communities by focusing on attendance and academics services, mental health staff, and enrichment opportunities. Future of Tomorrow, a youth organizing program led by students from the Lane Campus high schools, is also critical to students' high school experiences. FOT is currently advocating for positive discipline programs at the Lane Campus in the form of student peer mediation, professional development for teachers in restorative justice, and youth development practices implemented in collaboration with school safety agents.

This year, 86% of graduated seniors across nine schools where our Student Success Centers operate were accepted to college. The Student Success Centers, located on local high school campuses Franklin K. Lane and Thomas Jefferson, make available college access education and counseling. High school students can also be trained as peer counselors and educators and work as Youth Leaders at the SSCs. The College STEPS program is another resource for both high school and college students, providing individual college access counseling and SAT prep classes, as well as supporting college students through course registration, academic and social adjustment, navigating the transfer process, and more. The six-year college graduation rate for Persistence Program students in the high school class of 2014 was 38 percent. Nationally, just 20 percent of first-generation students who began post-secondary education in the 2003-04 academic year attained a bachelor's degree within six years.* The first-generation population is comparable to our college persistence caseload. We served 896 students in college persistence this year.

*Source: RTI International. (2019). First Year Experience, Persistence, and Attainment of First-generation College Students. Washington, DC: NASPA. Retrieved from <https://firstgen.naspa.org/files/dmfile/FactSheet-02.pdf>.

86%

of seniors across 9 where our SSCs operate were accepted to college

896

students served in our college persistence program



CHLDC THANKS THE CORPORATIONS, FOUNDATIONS, AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES WHO PROVIDED SUPPORT TO OUR OPERATIONS THIS YEAR.

American Eagle Foundation * Association of Neighborhood and Housing Development * Bank of America
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Tiger Foundation * Unidos US * United Neighborhood Houses/Sirus Fund
United Way of New York City * Urban Youth Collaborative * Valley National Bank

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NYC Department of Small Business Services | NYS Attorney General | NYS Department of Education
NYS Division of Housing & Community Renewal | NYS Office of Children & Family Services
The New York State Energy Research & Development Authority | U.S. Department of Education
University Settlement Society

**THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF INDIVIDUAL DONORS ALSO MAKES
OUR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES POSSIBLE.**

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