



## Union Settlement Increases Child Care Services



In East Harlem there is an urgent need for low cost, culturally sensitive, and high quality early childhood education. Studies show that children who attend early childhood programs are significantly more likely to graduate from high school and 2.5 times more likely to continue to higher education. Therefore, Union Settlement is very pleased to be able to expand our early childhood education programs.

Adding a new childcare center this October, **Pequeño Souls Day Care Center** on East 122nd Street, and significant growth in our Family Child Care Network have enabled us to increase the number of children we serve. Pequeño Souls Day Care Center will provide 79 children ages 3-5 with a place to socialize, learn and grow. Our Family Child Care Network will support in-home childcare services for an additional 270 young children, ages two months to three years old. This brings the total number of children in our Family Child Care Network to over 400, and the total number of children in our Early Childhood Education programs to over 840.

Children in these programs learn big and small lessons, from how to participate in a classroom setting, to the alphabet, to how to write their names. Developing the joy of learning and confidence in themselves as learners is just as important as the actual content of their lessons. Children also benefit from nutritious meals, health and dental screenings and, if needed, early intervention. After attending our early childhood programs children are well prepared for kindergarten and ready to succeed in school.

Our high quality childcare programs benefit parents, enabling them to work or train for the workplace. Our family workers assist parents with a wide range of family and health needs. For



*“My child is really benefiting from this program and I know that she is in a safe environment.”*

*– Nancy Torres, Childcare Parent*

example, our asthma education and tracking program supports parents with asthmatic children, reducing absences from school and hospitalizations. The centers offer additional resources to parents, from English language learning groups to referrals to health and employment services. By supporting children and their families, our community grows stronger and our children thrive.

Programs for young children have been at the heart of Union Settlement’s work since it was founded in 1895. A kindergarten, a top priority for the new immigrant community in East Harlem, was founded within a few months and early childhood programs have continued for over a century. In addition, Union Settlement became one of the first Head Start sites in the nation during the program’s inaugural year, 1965. Our Head Start program has continued since then, and the quality of these programs has established Union Settlement as a leader in early childhood education.

With this expansion of our childcare centers and the Family Child Care Network, Union Settlement is now the tenth largest childcare provider in New York City. We take this responsibility very seriously and are proud that we can help so many children and their families build better lives.

## A Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends of Union Settlement:

I am writing this less than one week after the devastation that Hurricane Sandy caused here in New York City and throughout the East Coast. Undoubtedly you all have seen the heart-wrenching pictures of the destruction, and read the reports of the lives lost and the homes destroyed.

Historians will write a story about a single terrible event, of wind and rain and water. Lost will be the tens of thousands of smaller stories about compassion, selflessness and perseverance.

Here are two examples.

Every day, home health aides from Union Settlement Home Care travel to and from the apartments of over 250 homebound seniors, providing in-home care which includes bathing, feeding, and dispensing medications. Another 400 homebound elderly rely on our Union Settlement's Meals on Wheels program for their daily meals.

These two programs could not stop during the hurricane – and they didn't. So while most New Yorkers were trying to stay warm and dry in their own homes as the wind and rain struck, Union Settlement's home health aides and Meals on Wheels deliverers were braving the elements to ensure that these vital services continued.

Moreover, our home care patients are located in several boroughs, but the transit system stopped running Sunday evening, and no service was restored until Thursday. So we had to – and did – reassign our aides and have them care for the patients closest to their homes. This was a remarkable achievement, and a triumph of hard work and perseverance during a time of emergency.

No one here had to order that these extraordinary actions be taken. Our employees did this on their own, because they know their clients' needs, and knew they had to respond.

Client and family crises are not limited to weather emergencies, and instead happen on a regular basis in underserved communities like East Harlem. Union Settlement has been, is, and with your help will always be here, responding whenever the need arises. This is what we do, every day.

Thank you for your support,



— David Nocenti

## Union Settlement Home Care Will Close

After much deliberation, the Board of Directors of Union Settlement Home Care Services (USHCS) has decided to close operations effective December 31, 2012. The company has been losing money, and unfortunately all our efforts to turn this around have not been successful.

We commend our employees for their hard work and dedication. For over 40 years, USHCS has provided high quality care to ill and disabled individuals throughout New York City, but primarily here in East Harlem, Upper Manhattan and the South Bronx. Our employees have had a tremendously positive impact on the lives of literally thousands of individuals, and they have always ensured that all patients are treated with care, compassion and respect. They can and should be proud of the work they have done.

We expect to transfer all of our patients to other agencies, and to make the transfers as seamless as possible for the patients. We are also making every effort to transfer home health aides along with their patients. Given the high demand for home care, we expect our employees to continue with their current patients or find new employment quickly.

USHCS is a separately incorporated entity, and thus its closure will not have an adverse impact on Union Settlement Association's finances or operations.



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[@UnionSettlement](https://twitter.com/UnionSettlement)

## Staff Spotlight: Latreece Robinson



At the ripe age of 3 years old, **Latreece Robinson** entered Union Settlement's Head Start Program. After the Head Start, she continued with other programs at Union Settlement. Throughout her high school years, she volunteered with Union Settlement by picking up students from their schools and escorting them to our after-school program. She was also active as a vice president and treasurer of the youth credit union. Looking back, she wonders how she was able to commute to school every day, volunteer at Union Settlement, and make time for rehearsals of her musical group, Fe'niq. Nevertheless, she did it all.

After completing her associates degree, Latreece found employment at Union Settlement. She worked for four years with middle school students, where she taught dance and song writing, and also helped with academics and other activities. Then she changed positions to work with high school students, most of whom attend Park East High School. She is a Leadership Advocate and often uses the arts, dancing and singing as a starting place from which to teach leadership.

Latreece is passionate about her work with young people and helping them to succeed in school and in life. By sharing her talents as a dancer and vocalist, she inspires students and helps them stay focused on what is important.

Latreece's commitment is part of a wonderful family tradition. Her mother, brothers and aunts, **Paulette Bryant, Tyrone Bryant, Jerome Bryant, Linda Bryant, and Barbara Hernandez-Bryant**, all work at Union Settlement.

"Union Settlement is a second family for me. I really grew up here."

## Encouraging First Time Voters

In a time of information overload, debates, and opinions galore, what is a new voter to do? **Meldric Palacios** and **Raymond "Teddy" Guzman** who are enrolled in Union Settlement's program for young men who have not finished high school and are unemployed, were determined to have their voices heard this year.

After 2008's massive turnout of young voters, many political analysts wondered if that would hold this year. When asked if his peers were going to go out a vote this year Meldric, 20, stated, "I am the only one of my friends voting. My friends are talking like it is nonsense. That it doesn't matter." In response to a question about why he will be voting, he said, "If you don't, you're just going to be a statistic."

Teddy, 18, voted with his mother, one of those that motivated him to register. "Most of my family vote and I've been watching. Now I can vote."

While researching candidates, both have focused on the most relevant topics. They cite the state governmental programs and healthcare reform as two things particularly relevant to their situations. While that is important to Teddy, he would also like support candidates who are out to help "everybody, not just one type of people."



*Meldric Palacios, Timothy Roulhac, Raymond "Teddy" Guzman*

Youth Advocate **Timothy Roulhac** was supportive of his students involvement. He described voting as a realization of "the value of being a citizen... Seeing your brother, mother, grandmother, struggle, many young people develop a nasty habit of living under a rock."

Thanks to Youth Advocates like Timothy, Meldric and Teddy gained the confidence to ensure their voices were heard in this election.

# Spotlight on Wellness



An increase in public health initiatives has put East Harlem in the spotlight. Many in the community struggle with diabetes and obesity. At Union Settlement we are addressing this crisis by offering free and low cost exercise classes, free nutrition workshops and even turning our attention to employee wellness.

At Union Settlement, we believe that you should enjoy exercising! We offer Zumba classes, where individuals can improve their health by dancing to infectious beats.

Many of the participants in the class are seniors who live on fixed incomes. **Nilda Moreno**, who has been going to the class since June, likes it because, “Zumba keeps you active, busy, and helps you lose weight!”

Nilda has lost an amazing 55 pounds since starting, and made some new friends. She has become close friends with **Maribel Cruz**, who, after joining Zumba, can breathe more deeply; no longer does she “huff and puff” when climbing the steps of the subway. Zumba may seem intimidating at first, Maribel notes, but “everyone can do it! If you try the class, you will start coming religiously too.”

Union Settlement’s class meets twice a week in the gym on 237 E 104th Street, Tuesday from 9am-10pm and Thursdays from 9:30-10:30 am. The suggested donation is \$3 for adults and \$1 for seniors.

Union Settlement is also encouraging healthy cooking and eating by integrating nutrition workshops into our programs. Volunteers with a background in nutrition are working with participants in our programs to teach youngsters and adult education students about MyPlate, portion control, the effects of sugar, and more. All workshops are interactive to remind our participants that learning about healthy eating is fun.

Employees are working to improve their health as well. A steady stream of employees attended a recent wellness fair, where they were able to check their blood pressure, receive information on

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*“Zumba keeps you active, busy, and helps you lose weight!”*

*– Nilda Moreno*

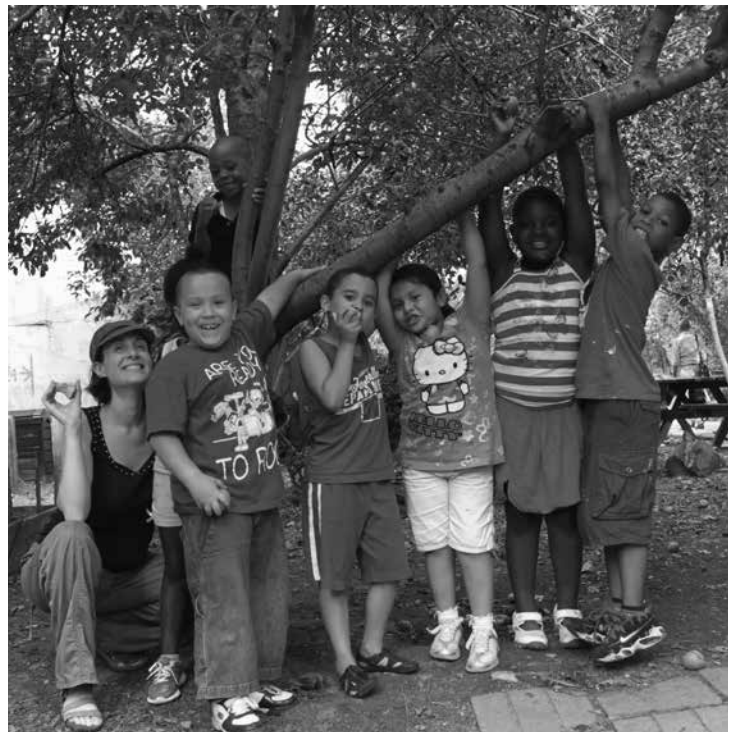
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oral hygiene, learn about reducing stress and enjoy back massages.

Human Resources Manager **Shabana Master** coordinated the fair to address the needs of the employees. “Health and wellness programming can be brought to employees in a variety of ways,” she said. “This was the first step in Union Settlement’s efforts to focus on the overall well being of our employees.”

Union Settlement has always been at the forefront of helping East Harlem residents lead healthier lives. We opened one of the city’s first birth control clinics in 1932, founded Settlement Health, now an independent primary health care provider, and have partnered with the New York Academy of Medicine and Mount Sinai Medical Centers on numerous research and community health projects. And, of course we continue to serve over 2,000 healthy meals a day, host a farmer’s market, and help families gain access to healthy foods. This health crisis is a real threat to our community, and Union Settlement is dedicated to overcoming it.

*Are you a nutritionist that would like to volunteer to teach workshops in East Harlem? Email Alexis Feinberg, [afeinberg@union-settlement.org](mailto:afeinberg@union-settlement.org).*





Scenes from  
Union Settlement's Annual  
**Day of the Dead**  
Thursday, November 1<sup>st</sup>



**update** Legendary Knicks Player **John Starks** and a wonderful crew of Madison Square Garden staff members held a basketball clinic with students in our afterschool programs. They came to recognize and celebrate the children who created a replica of the Knicks basketball court at Madison Square Garden as their summer camp theme teams project.



**update** Six new VISTA volunteers, **Jordan Boone, Giovanni Classen, Sara Drazba, Heather Dumorne, Alexis Feinberg** and **Adriane Underwood** joined Union Settlement. Over the next year they will strengthen our Adult Education department, enhance nutrition education in our programs, conduct outreach to parents in our youth program, build capacity in our Mental Health Services office, build on our efforts to establish a network of "alumni"—people who we have helped get into college or in other life shaping ways, develop internship opportunities for young people in our programs, and help to diversify our funding streams.

**update** Although the New York City Marathon was cancelled, we thank **Will Buford, Edna Leiva-Ortiz, James Lynch, Rachel Oppenheimer** and **Patrick Sullivan** for dedicating their planned 2012 marathon runs to Union Settlement. We look forward to cheering them on in 2013. Our runners have raised over \$10,000 collectively to support Union Settlement's work in East Harlem.

**update** The **Young Friends of Union Settlement** are now teaching basic computer classes to adult education students. *For information about joining the Young Friends, please contact email Ari Briski: [abriski@unionsettlement.org](mailto:abriski@unionsettlement.org).*

## Spotlight: Reginald E. Harwell



At its June meeting, the Union Settlement Board of Directors elected **Reginald E. Harwell** as the new Chair. "I am honored to assume the position of Board Chair of Union Settlement Association, one of East Harlem's – and New York City's – finest social services institutions," said Mr. Harwell as he accepted the position from **Maxine L. Rockoff, Ph.D.**, who has served as Chair for the last four years. Mr. Harwell is a Financial Professional at AXA Advisors, the 28th Chair since Union Settlement's founding in 1895, and the organization's first African American Chair.

Reggie joined the board in 2006 and has been an active board member, volunteer and supporter of the organization. Born and raised in Louisville, KY, Reggie has been a Harlem resident for over 10 years. Reggie has an MBA from UNC's Kenan-Flagler Business School and has studied at the Wharton School and at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa.

"Reggie Harwell's commitment, energy and ability to inspire exemplify what Union Settlement Association is all about," said **David Nocenti**, Executive Director. "Reggie is a true leader in the community and we are fortunate that he has agreed to serve as our Board Chair. I would also like to express our deepest gratitude to Maxine Rockoff for her dedication to the settlement house movement and for her tremendous leadership of our Board of Directors."

## Donor Profile: Stella and Charles Guttman Foundation

This summer the Stella and Charles Guttman Foundation awarded Union Settlement a \$50,000 renewal grant to support our college transition program for a second year. The Program Alumni College Transition (PACT) initiative was launched in 2011 to provide enhanced support and services to young people who have completed our College Readiness program and have been identified as being at risk of dropping out of college. In its first year the PACT program supported 59 college freshmen, all of whom are still enrolled in college -- a remarkable outcome considering that nationally students from homes where neither

parent has a bachelors degree are twice as likely to drop out before their second year of college.

"We are very pleased to support Union Settlement's work in this area," says Elizabeth Olofson, Executive Director of the Stella and Charles Guttman Foundation. "This grant is part of the Foundation's recent decision to make a substantial investment to support college success for New York City public school students."

For almost half a century, Union Settlement has operated a College Readiness Program which provides tutoring, mentoring, academic and college counseling, leadership development, test preparation, parent programs, and college and career exploration to low-income, minority students ages 12 to 18. The vast majority of these young people are the first members of their families to attend college.

## Toasting Union Settlement



On Wednesday October 17, Union Settlement held a lively fundraising reception to celebrate our work in East Harlem. We particularly want to thank our Diamond Sponsor – **RLM Finsbury**, which also contributed the audio visual equipment for the evening, and Gold Sponsors **AARP** and **Popular Community Bank**, which, along with the over 150 supporters that attended, made this our most successful fall fundraiser to date. Supporters gathered at Vermilion Restaurant to enjoy global food, custom cocktails, and good company. Among the highlights of the evening were comments from Adult Education student **Mariam Abdul**, who described how she came to the U.S. at the age of sixteen from the West African country of Ivory Coast. At Union Settlement she learned English, trained to become a Home Health Aide, and is now preparing to take the GED in English. With this credential, she plans to continue her education in the health field.

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## *The Holidays are Around the Corner!*



Each year, over 1,000 children and seniors turn to Union Settlement for holiday cheer, meals and gifts!

We can't do it alone, so please lend your support by donating, volunteering or collecting gifts at your office or place of worship.

Visit [www.unionsettlement.org/holidays](http://www.unionsettlement.org/holidays) for more information.