

UNION SETTLEMENT

ANNUAL OUTCOMES REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2015

Each year, Union Settlement provides vital education, wellness, and community building services and programs to 10,000 underserved residents of East Harlem, one of New York City's poorest immigrant and minority communities. Four hundred full- and part-time employees, along with hundreds of volunteers, touch the lives of neighborhood residents throughout their lives, from infancy to old age. While we are immensely pleased with the accomplishments of these 800 individuals, we do not stand alone, nor would we want to; the Union Settlement family extends beyond our own employees and volunteers, encompassing a wide and deep network of partners and collaborators across the community and the city at large. We are as proud of these partnerships as we are proud of what they help us achieve each year, and a huge share of the credit for the outcomes listed throughout this document goes to our rich network of stalwart partners, who help us to implement small projects, agency-wide initiatives, and everything in between.

Here are just a few recent examples of how innovative partnerships have helped us to launch programs, secure funding and build our capacity:

Our colleagues at **Teachers College, Columbia University** were instrumental in our pursuit and award of a planning grant, and then a much larger implementation grant, from the Brooke Astor Fund for New York City Education. Their evidence-based *Photos and Me* curriculum, coupled with our deep community roots and expertise in education, youth development and large-scale program implementation, is bringing cutting-edge literacy programs to hundreds of East Harlem children who speak Spanish at homes.

Along with **Asphalt Green**, a nearby nonprofit that provides high-quality sports, swim and fitness instruction and programs, and the **John McEnroe Tennis Academy**, we will provide compelling alternatives to the gang culture that proliferates many low-income neighborhoods like ours. Starting this summer, our new *Saturday Night Lights* program, funded by the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, will provide approximately 160 youth with high-quality basketball, tennis and dance activities, along with comprehensive academic and support services

Our partnership with the **Boys' Club of New York** and **Little Sisters of the Assumption Family Health Service** has allowed us to launch the *East Harlem Neighborhood Network*, funded by a generous grant from the Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation. A smaller grant supported the partners through a three-month planning process, which led to the creation of an implementation proposal that was accepted by the Foundation. The Network is providing educational supports and wraparound services to the many Mexican and Mexican-American children and families in our community, helping to ensure their success in school.

Our Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC) Supportive Services Program has just completed its first successful year. This program, in particular, is a wonderful example of how we can design and implement programs with a diverse coalition of partners, including **Franklin Plaza Apartments, Metropolitan Hospital Center, HHC Health & Home Care, the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College, the CUNY School of Public Health** and the **New York Academy of Medicine**.

In the pages that follow is a selection of our accomplishments from the last year, including more detail on many of the programs listed above. Again and again, you will find evidence of deep collaboration at work.

Early Childhood Education

Union Settlement is the tenth largest provider of early childhood education services in New York City, serving over 740 children each year with a well-rounded program focused on cognitive, social, emotional, creative and physical development. Our overall enrollment remains strong as six of our seven sites are now fully-enrolled, we have added an additional Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) classroom serving 18 four-year-olds, and our Family Child Care Network has expanded. We are a trusted provider of the highest quality early childhood education, enabling families to work, seek employment or care for loved ones. We serve approximately 65 homeless families, providing crucial socialization and stability for their children, and allowing parents time to seek housing and work. This year, we switched from the HighScope early childhood curriculum to Teaching Strategies' evidence-based Creative Curriculum, which is more in line with federal Head Start performance standards and the new Common Core standards.

- Our pioneering *Family Child Care Network* trains qualified neighborhood residents to set up their own home-based childcare centers, alleviating East Harlem's childcare shortage and fostering financial self-sufficiency for the new providers. Currently, over 65 providers care for approximately 300 infants and toddlers. All children are given healthy meals throughout the day; we provide oversight and administrative support for all sites within the Network and an additional 15 independent providers through our Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) contract.
- Union Settlement developed the model for childhood asthma tracking and training activities in New York City, working to combat high rates of pediatric asthma in early childhood education facilities throughout East and Central Harlem. In FY 2015 we enrolled 4,928 children and provided asthma awareness training to 325 staff members and parents at 87 centers.
- In 2014, a grant from the Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation has allowed us, along with partners The Boys' Club of New York and Little Sisters of the Assumption Family Health Service, to launch the *East Harlem Neighborhood Network*. The Network serves the community's Mexican and Mexican-American children and their families by providing educational supports and wraparound services. We are approaching the close of our second year, and there have been several successful events throughout this past program year. Large events included a Mexican Independence Day celebration in the fall, a holiday party in December, and a Cinco de Mayo celebration in May. All of these activities included opportunities for families to connect with community resources such as Legal Aid, health and nutrition service partners and local job opportunities. One of the main goals of this Network is to engage parents to develop stronger educational outcomes for their children.
- *Play at the Core*, a partnership between *Right to Play* and the NYC Department of Education, supports teachers in developing and implementing Common Core aligned learning experiences that provide children with a strong foundation of critical thinking, problem-solving, and language and literacy skills. When children are actively engaged in play, they are learning, exploring and growing in every respect: intellectually, physically, emotionally and socially. Union Johnson has participated in this innovative program since October 2013. The participation has expanded and

staff from our Pequeños Souls, Union Washington, Leggett Memorial, and Union Carver centers will complete the professional development training this year.

- *Cool Culture* is a membership-based program in which five of our sites participate. Center families are provided a membership card that allows them to visit museums and cultural events throughout New York City for free.
- The Diller-Quaile School of Music offers free professional development classes for educators in New York City Early Childhood programs. We were fortunate to have had four teachers complete this training, and they are now implementing music and movement education programs in their classrooms. We look forward to the possibility of sending more teaching staff in the fall.

Youth Services: In-School Programs

Our Youth Services division provides robust afterschool and summer education, arts and recreation programs for children from kindergarten through high school. Through our programs, every year more than 1,750 eager and energetic children and teens actively seek and create opportunities to forge brighter futures. Many enter our elementary-age program and stay with us until they enter college. For them, we become a second family. This year we opened new middle school afterschool programs at three additional East Harlem schools.

- We enrolled 375 children ages five to 12 in our lively *Rising Stars* after-school program at two East Harlem elementary schools and two community center locations. Our program features year-round activities, including tutoring, computer instruction, visual and performing arts projects, recreation and a summer day camp. We also offer unique programs such as our popular circus arts programming (offered in conjunction with the Big Apple Circus), and the Concrete Safaris Explorers Program – a fitness and wilderness education activity that includes local hiking and cultivating a garden and mini-farm at our community center. We also offer enriching arts programs, including a weekly arts program taught by our own Art Specialist, where children create projects across all kinds of media. In the summer of 2014, we engaged the *Rising Stars* children in our highly successful literacy-building *Theme Teams* program—multi-week learning projects organized around a specific theme.
- Our *Bridges* middle school program has expanded into three additional schools this year, for a total of four sites, increasing our enrollment from 120 to 413. We serve our committed students with academic, personal and cultural enrichment, as well as two specialized programs: *Healing Our Problems Early* (HOPE), which focuses on sexual literacy and personal development, and our year-round *Middle School College Preparation Program*, designed to help students in East Harlem's middle schools gain admission to competitive high schools that will set them on the path to higher education. In addition, we partnered with Alvin Ailey Dance Theatre, Animation Project, Shakespeare Society and Roundabout Theatre (at one site) to offer high quality dance, computer technology and drama activities during afterschool programming. We also offered Leadership Development and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) curricula, encouraging our students to develop key leadership skills through public speaking, critical thinking, debate and research in topics such as social injustice, environmental changes, community development, and political awareness. Finally, we offered an Advocacy and Civic Engagement curriculum to our *Bridges* students for a second year, focused on food security and access. The work with our students is centered on the *Lunch 4 Learning* program, a coalition-based campaign that is working to make free and healthy school meals available to all New York City public school students, regardless of income.

- We continued our successful *Intergenerational Tutoring* program, which provides one-on-one literacy support to at-risk elementary school children, grades K – 4, who have been identified by their schools as needing help developing reading and writing skills. This is a critical age for literacy development, as students’ success in reading throughout their academic career is often essentially determined by the fourth grade. This year 95 students in six East Harlem elementary schools were tutored by 60 older adults from the community, trained to help build the children’s reading skills, self-esteem and positive attitudes towards learning. An additional 15 students were tutored during the summer. In our most recent evaluation survey, teachers reported that 90% of students showed improvement in their attitudes towards reading/language arts and 90% showed improvement in academic performance and participation in class. All of the school principals found the program to be a positive addition to their school, and they all requested more tutors, citing the progress students in the program had made. Additionally, 70% of the students in the program—referred because of their at-risk reading levels—advanced more than one grade level after one year of tutoring, with many approaching or reaching their benchmark reading levels.
- In partnership with Teachers College at Columbia University, we received a large planning grant from the Brooke Astor Fund for New York City Education and the New York Community Trust to pilot and test the *Photos and Me Program* (PMP), which we successfully offered to a total of 84 students, grades one through four, at four East Harlem elementary schools. PMP is an evidence-based, school-based afterschool program that provides literacy enrichment and English Language Arts skill development for Spanish-speaking English Language Learners utilizing photography and other technologies to foster higher-order critical thinking and reading skills in students who are in the process of acquiring English. We are thrilled to report that we have been awarded an implementation grant of \$441,000, which will allow us to bring the program to 195 to 245 children at 10 sites across East Harlem.
- The *East Harlem Teen Health Project* (THP), a State Department of Health-supported initiative to promote sexual literacy and prevent early pregnancy, is in its fourth successful year. From January to December 2014 (the most recently completed full year of the program), 172 adolescents age 11 to 19 attended our workshops. Participants attended financial literacy, self-esteem and college/scholarship workshops. Parents of participants were included in workshops and conversations about what their children have learned, and provided with tools and resources to speak with their children about sex. We also conducted a campaign to bring awareness to National HIV Youth Testing Day by offering testing to residents of East Harlem and neighboring communities.
- Our *Healing Our Problems Early* (HOPE) program, funded in part by the Washington Square Fund, provided sexual literacy programming to 120 middle school students, with 55 participants taking part in more comprehensive services, including our parental simulation module, role-playing activities and Life Skills Workshops. Since launching the program in 2004, participants have avoided pregnancy, improved their self-image, gained better self-control and remained in school. Thanks to our program, 91% of young men and 87% of young women reported having conversations with their parents about sex and 90% total reported feeling more comfortable dealing with peer pressure around sex.
- The *Union East* program provides college preparation, work readiness, and follow-up services to almost 90 high school juniors and seniors and recent high school graduates. Juniors and seniors explore various careers (including required education and certifications), develop résumés and

cover letters, and prepare for job applications and interviews. Participants also research colleges, learn about the application and financial aid processes, and go on campus visits; this year participants visited Stony Brook University, College of Staten Island, Baruch College and Binghamton University. *Union East* also provides tutoring, mentoring, and rotating service projects. A high point of *Union East* is the summer employment program, where participants intern at worksites in the community. Students first attend a series of work readiness workshops and take a financial literacy workshop, where they learn money management skills in preparation for summer employment. The internships often lead to employment, with past participants finding jobs at local businesses including Housing Works Thrift Shop and the Urban Garden Center. This year, 100% of seniors attained their high school diploma or High School Equivalency degree, and 20 were either placed in jobs or accepted to college while the others are awaiting response.

Youth Services: Out-of-School Programs

Among our older youth, we face a growing crisis: many of New York City's young people ages 16-24 are neither attending school nor participating in the labor force. Conditions are particularly dire in communities such as ours. We serve approximately 650 out-of-school youth, almost exclusively African-American and Latino, who are more than twice as likely to be "disconnected" as white youth. Poverty, parenting responsibilities, low education levels and lack of job experience also play key roles. It is vitally important to reach out to these young people and provide early intervention before the cycle of unemployment, underemployment and, most of all, hopelessness continues. In recent years, both our Youth Services and Adult Education programs have witnessed an influx of young people ages 16 to 24 who have dropped out or been pushed out of school. Facing low literacy, low self-esteem, learning disabilities and other obstacles, these young people sorely need help to build their futures. Our programs provide just this kind of help, and over time we have expanded our offerings to provide targeted services to at-risk and court involved youth.

- We continue to make a difference among this high-risk, difficult-to-serve population through *Reconnect and Rise*, a rigorous program of educational, vocational and support services designed to help young men and women ages 16 to 24 who have left or been pushed out of school and are struggling in the job market. The program, which is funded by the New York City State Office of Children and Family Services and the New York City Council, provides disconnected youth ages 16 to 24 with a range of services, including high school equivalency (HSE) classes, workshops, tutoring and college and career exploration. The young men and women worked well together as a new coed cohort. Most students enter the program performing below a ninth grade reading and/or math level and must pass through remedial instruction in order to enter HSE preparation. We served 68 disconnected youth with pre-HSE/HSE classes, most of whom struggle with issues of consistency and focus. Of these, 15 consistently attended the pre-HSE class and 15 consistently attended the HSE class. Ten of these students were able to successfully transfer from pre-HSE to HSE over the course of the year. This year the old GED was replaced by the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) exam, which is a much more rigorous and demanding test. We were able to prepare nine students for the test this year. Four have passed and we await the results for the others.
- One hundred twenty noncustodial fathers ages 16 to 24—up from 80 last year—participated in our *Fatherhood* program, which provides individual and family counseling, parent skills workshops, job readiness training and placement, visitation assistance/court advocacy, mentoring, conflict resolution training and life skills workshops. Thanks to our services, 85% of participants—up from 50% last year—now have contact with their children at least two to three times a week, and 70% are able to provide consistent financial support for their children. We also

continued to provide supplemental services such as a pantry for fathers and recreational trips for fathers and their children. The program has consistently provided weekly MetroCards to participants; this is a critical support service, as most enter the program unemployed or working minimum wage, part-time jobs, and the cost of subway fare can serve as an impediment to attendance.

- Union Settlement has expanded employment services with the creation of Career Academy, now in its second year of operation and funded through a grant from Robin Hood. The Academy functions as both a training resource for job seekers and as a “no fee” talent acquisition service for employers. Supporting young adults ages 17 to 24 that are neither in school nor employed, and in many instances coping with complex barriers to employment, the goal of the Academy is to enhance a candidate’s competitive positioning to enter the employment market and stay employed. This is accomplished by delivering a targeted, effective and cutting edge two-week workshop driven by ten mission critical employment disciplines, coupled with individual strategies that support placement and effect retention, wage gain and career advancement, followed by two weeks of intensive follow-up and placement services. As of June 1, 2015 the Academy has provided high quality work readiness training to 205 participants and has placed 98 individuals in gainful employment. Our overall average wage is \$10.25—17% higher than NYS’s minimum wage—and 72% of our overall placements (71 participants) have reached three-month retention and 65% of our full time placements have benefits. In addition, year two has also seen a significant increase in the quality of placements and employer partnerships, as well as a more robust and diverse portfolio of positions and sectors, including Financial Services and Technology.
- The fourth and final year of our *Choices: Alternatives to Detention* program, offered in partnership with the Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES), served 88 youth ages 12 through 17 with mentoring, supervision, and after school activities in lieu of juvenile detention while their cases are pending in Family Court. The program provided case management, educational support, counseling, and extracurricular activities with the goal of helping youth avoid further involvement in the criminal justice system. Participants take pregnancy, drug and gang prevention workshops, receive tutoring, and go on team-building recreational field trips.
- Through a contract with the New York City Department of Probation (DOP), we continue to offer the *Advocacy, Intervene, Mentor* (AIM) program. This program, launched in fall 2012, provides a minimum of 15 hours of one-on-one mentoring per week to youth who are on probation and referred by DOP. Services include counseling, case management, home visits and life skills development. Each participant also attends monthly (or more, as needed) family team meetings with the program director, mentor and primary caregiver. We served eleven participants this past year.
- Youth gang involvement and gang violence remains a significant issue in East Harlem, with multiple gangs concentrated within different NYCHA developments. Across our Youth programs, we address this issue in many ways, including through outreach, education, prevention, engagement and counseling. Starting this summer, we will provide comprehensive academic and support services coupled with high quality basketball, tennis and dance programming to approximately 160 students as part of a *Saturday Night Lights* program funded by the Manhattan District Attorney’s office. We will partner with Asphalt Green and the John McEnroe Tennis Academy to provide high quality youth focused sporting activities including basketball and tennis, respectively, and our successful and popular *See the Lite* dance program. Each activity is

offered twice per week; academic and wraparound services will be offered more frequently. Support from NYCHA also allowed us to offer daily (seven nights per week) sports, arts and life skills programming at our Gaylord White Community Center last summer.

College Readiness

In its 50-year history, our College Readiness program has provided over 20,000 low-income students with guidance and encouragement to pursue higher learning. This past year we provided college and financial aid counseling to more than 1,400 (which overlaps those counted in the previous two sections) low-income students in four public high schools and four middle schools in East and Central Harlem and the Upper West Side, the majority of whom are prospective first-generation college students. Other services include tutoring, SAT prep, college trips, summer enrichment programs and a large national Talent Search Program, which helps low-income, prospective first-generation college students complete high school and enroll in college. This year, we provided services to 301 high school seniors, helping them graduate on time and navigate the college selection, admissions and financial aid processes. Students received acceptances from such prestigious schools as Cornell University, Macaulay Honors College at the City University of New York, Howard University, St. John's University, Fordham University, University at Albany, SUNY New Paltz and SUNY Fredonia. In the spring of 2014 (the last date for which we have complete data) we provided services to 301 seniors, 290 (97%) of whom graduated, and 230 (77%) of whom entered college in the fall.

- We offered the fourth year of our successful *Program Alumni College Transition (PACT)* program, designed to guide graduates of our *College Readiness* program through the difficult transition to college. We have become increasingly concerned with how many of our most promising young people head off to college ready to take on the world, only to find themselves intimidated by campus life, unprepared for first-year demands and generally isolated from support systems. Nationally, college retention rates among low-income, minority students remain a major struggle; students whose parents never attended or completed college are twice as likely to leave before their second year. The PACT program provides crucial academic, social, and emotional support and links participants to on-campus support services and activities. Campus "Captains," who are students at key colleges, provide supportive mentoring to other students, and gain leadership experience guiding younger students through the college transition. In 2014-15 we provided intensive transition services to 50 students as they entered college, and are thrilled to report that 49 have completed their first year of college. Of the 50 students we served beginning in 2013-2014, 49 have now completed their second year. Of the 50 students from our second PACT cohort (2012-2013), 38 have completed their third year of college, and four attained two-year degrees. From our first cohort in 2011-2012, 47 of our 59 students have now finished their four-year degrees, and 10 have two-year degrees.
- We offered students their first exposure to higher education through visits to the campuses of City College's Grove School of Engineering, Franklin & Marshall College, Dickinson College,, Binghamton University, Drew University, Brooklyn College, Syracuse University, the University of Connecticut, Rutgers University, Temple University, Stony Brook University and more.
- Fifty-nine students participated in our summer enrichment programs. Twenty completed our Summer Writing and Theater Program, developing writing and communication skills, studying drama and spending a week on campus at our Summer College at Drew University. The program also focused on writing résumés and college admissions essays. Twenty-eight students participated in our Science and Technology Entry Program, hosted by City College's Grove School of Engineering, studying pre-calculus and chemistry, conducting lab experiments,

attending college workshops, and listening to guest speakers in the science and technology fields. An additional 11 students participated in a Summer SAT prep class. Of the above, 48 students took part in our Summer College Experience, a week-long trip to Drew University.

- This year, we continued to offer a wide range of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) -focused activities. Eighteen students participated in the Engineering Day at the Grove School of Engineering, where they worked with college students to build model buildings and bridges based on engineering concepts, and 35 students attended lab demonstrations at City College, participating in hands-on experiments in robotics and chemistry.

Adult Education

Union Settlement has served wave after wave of immigrants that have made East Harlem one of New York's "portal communities," from the Irish, Eastern European and Italian populations of a century ago, to large numbers of immigrants from Puerto Rico and Mexico, and the latest arrivals from Central and South America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East. In East Harlem, 11% of adults have less than a ninth grade education, 26% of adults did not graduate from high school, only 31% have a four-year college degree. Many residents are illiterate, including immigrants who lack literacy even in their native language; 20% of residents do not speak English "very well." One of the area's largest adult education providers, we are committed to helping our neighbors overcome these obstacles and take vital steps toward achieving their educational and career goals.

- Last year, we assisted almost 600 students through a menu of 20 educational classes including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), basic literacy, High School Equivalency (HSE) preparation in English and Spanish, and computer skills. We also offer our students education counseling in English and Spanish, and free tax preparation services. We provide referrals to other Union Settlement, community and city services for more than 100 additional individuals each year.
- Our innovative *Home Health Aide Training Program* helped area residents begin careers in home care. Students attend four weeks of job readiness training, health literacy and English skills development, including a minimum of 60 hours of instruction and tutoring, followed by four weeks of full-day Home Health Aide Training at the SKILL Center, Progressive Home Care, Partners in Care, or Self Help. Upon successful completion of the program, students are placed in employment. To date, we have had 569 students complete the job-readiness training component of the program. Of those who moved on to the Home Health Aide Training component, 212 are working in Home Health Aide positions, and many more are employed in other fields.
- For the past 23 years, we have collaborated with the prestigious 92nd Street Y on our *Writing Through Reading* program, which this year helped nearly 200 ESOL and High School Equivalency students learn English and improve their reading and writing skills by reading contemporary literature, enjoying visits from renowned authors and producing their own creative writing. Visiting authors for the 2014-2015 season included writers Rivka Gatchen, TJ Jarrett, James Marlon and Jacqueline Woodson. The program culminated with the annual Student Reading on June 4th.

Senior Services

Since its inception, Union Settlement has worked to enhance the physical and emotional well being of area residents, for whom access to affordable, quality care and services has been a perpetual

problem. Services for seniors have always been a critical priority—we have been providing services targeted directly to older East Harlem residents since 1942, and Meals on Wheels for about 40 years. Economically struggling and often living alone, our community’s senior population relies heavily on Union Settlement to help meet their everyday needs and ward off feelings of isolation. We provide a wide range of services to more than 1,500 older adults each year. Our four *Senior Centers* offer daily group meals (about 60,000 in total this year), a variety of evidence-based exercise activities, benefits assistance counseling, nutrition classes, health and wellness programs, computer classes, games, and arts and cultural activities to 725 seniors every year.

- Thanks to a new contract with the NYC Department for the Aging, in July 2014 Union Settlement began providing supportive services in a Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC) at the Franklin Plaza Apartments, a 14-building, 1,632-unit Mitchell-Lama cooperative housing complex in East Harlem. Almost 49% of Franklin Plaza’s residential units are home to at least one senior, and there are 1,059 senior residents of the complex. There are five key elements to our NORC SSP design: (1) *Case Management/ Assistance*; (2) *Health Management/Assistance*; (3) *Disease Management/Prevention*; (4) *Socialization, Education and Recreation*; and (4) *Volunteerism*. Our strong partnership with Franklin Plaza Apartments, Metropolitan Hospital Center, HHC Health & Home Care, the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College, the CUNY School of Public Health and the New York Academy of Medicine enhances the levels of professionalism of the NORC and engages significant community partners. During this first year of operation we brought on a full staff including the NORC Director, three full-time case managers and a part-time community health nurse. In addition, we hosted four social work interns from the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College. The staff conducted a health indicator needs assessment survey developed by United Hospital Fund and the NYC Department for the Aging. Responses to the survey from the 200 Franklin Plaza senior residents will help to guide and shape the services offered both now and in the future. A total of 270 clients have been registered for services through the NORC, which also offers eight regularly-scheduled education, recreation and health promotion activities every week and frequent trips and social celebrations.
- Our Meals on Wheels program is currently serving approximately 450 homebound seniors each day, and last year we provided 166,239 meals to homebound seniors. This year we took delivery on three new vans specially equipped for meal delivery, bringing our fleet to four – the highest number we’ve ever had. These new vehicles make our current fleet the newest (with an average age of 3.2 years) we have ever had. We have also updated our meal delivery routing, which increases our efficiency by holding a larger number of meals at the correct temperatures (hot and cold) for longer.
- Our much loved and sorely needed *Dinner Project*, which provides a supplemental sandwich to our Meals on Wheels clients, was reduced in scope from five to three days a week this year due to low funding levels. The shortfall was due in large part to the increase in the numbers of clients served by this program over previous years. This program, unlike much of what we do, is supported entirely through private gifts and grants rather than by government funding. Many of the clients who receive the sandwiches have reported to us in past years that without the sandwich, they would often be forced to subsist on one meal a day. Over the last year, we stretched the budget to deliver over 90,000 sandwiches.
- The Senior Services Health Coordinator, supported by a grant from the Isaac H Tuttle Fund, continues to implement evidence-based exercise and health-and-wellness classes for seniors in all our centers. We continued our partnership with Asphalt Green Fitness Center, a not-for-profit

dedicated to assisting individuals of all ages achieve health through sports and fitness; towards the end of the fiscal year we began a pilot implementation of DFTA's evidence-based *Stay Well* exercise program at our Jefferson Senior Center. Asphalt Green is providing a credentialed fitness instructor to facilitate the program and has helped us acquire free weights and stretching bands. We take full advantage of the "Senior Splash" at Jefferson Pool, sponsored by the New York Academy of Medicine and the NYC Parks Department, logging the participation of all senior center members. During the fall and winter months, we offered other seasonally appropriate activities including a walking group (supported by New York Road Runners Club) and Tai Chi classes, both of which have a dedicated base of participants. This year, 10 to 12 seniors took tennis lessons at the John McEnroe Tennis Academy on Randall's Island. The program started small, but grew throughout the year through wonderfully positive word of mouth among our seniors.

- Our city-contracted *Senior Transportation Program* provided approximately eight trips for about 29 East Harlem seniors every weekday to such places as the pharmacy, the bank, or the Social Security office, and group excursions to sites like City Island, the Botanical Garden and museums. The program also enhances many aspects of our senior center programming, enabling us to take an average of 30 seniors twice a week to Asphalt Green for exercise, about 12 seniors three times weekly to participate in the NYRR-supported Walking Club, another 10 to play tennis on Randall's Island, five or six seniors to their employment or volunteer work sites, 100 seniors to the Farmer's Market over the course of the summer, scores of seniors to computer classes at our Corsi computer lab, and many more seniors on shopping trips for necessities and food each month. The program serves about 250 seniors and 15 senior centers in East Harlem and Central Harlem, including our four senior centers; many of the seniors using the program are Senior Center members, and we serve an additional 100 unduplicated seniors in this program. Our seniors and those we serve from other centers love and rely on our Transportation program. They go shopping, to the theatre, concerts and other cultural events, to exercise, out to lunch, to play, to visit sick friends, to dance and eat some more, to look, listen and learn, to demonstrate for better communities and services for themselves and their peers, to pick pumpkins, apples and strawberries, to mourn the loss of a friend, and more. By keeping them mobile and social, we fend off the isolation and inactivity that seniors so often face.
- Our *Seniors United to Serve* volunteer program has remained an important part of our seniors' lives. Approximately 50 seniors volunteer up to 25 hours a week across our four centers, packing sandwiches, setting tables for lunch, serving light breakfast, planning trips and parties, refreshing center bathrooms, calling bingo numbers, and assisting in arts and crafts and other activities. Perhaps most importantly, they are visiting and calling our homebound and ill clients, providing a vital lifeline to the outside world. Our volunteers are extraordinarily committed to the seniors and centers they serve; one of our current Friendly Visiting Volunteers suffered a stroke a few years ago and is fearful of being out in very hot weather, as that was the environment when she had her stroke. Yet her dedication to her clients supersedes her anxiety, and she regularly makes her visits even in hot humid weather.
- Three of our four Senior Centers participated this year in a pilot program with the Mt. Sinai Hospital Geriatric Emergency Department, designed to both lower overall health care costs and improve the health outcomes of participating seniors. Academic hospitals (including Mt. Sinai) have reported in many previous studies that a large percentage of the seniors treated in their emergency departments do not require significant medical intervention, but would benefit from socialization, exercise and other activities that Senior Centers typically provide. The small pilot was sufficiently successful in both linking the Mt. Sinai Emergency Department to neighborhood

Senior Centers and re-training physicians to “prescribe” Senior Center participation, and Mt. Sinai will be submitting a proposal for a much larger and longer study to the National Institutes of Health this coming year.

Mental Health Services

East Harlem has the city’s highest rate of hospitalizations due to mental illness. Poverty substantially increases the emotional burdens many of our residents shoulder, as do the high rates of violence, substance abuse, child abuse, trauma, mental illness and AIDS and HIV infection. Union Settlement’s Mental Health Services Program, which has been in existence for more than 60 years, addresses these disparities by providing a range of mental health counseling services. Every year, we keep families together, minimize psychiatric hospitalizations, keep community members out of institutions (including prisons), help clients maintain sobriety, and literally save lives. According to Medicaid encounter data, in calendar year 2014 we significantly outperformed other behavioral health providers in New York City on important indicators. Of clients who had previously been admitted to the hospital for behavioral health treatment, 15.9% of our clients were readmitted within 45 days, while the City-wide rate is 24.84%. Of all of our clients, 0.91% were hospitalized for behavioral health issues three times or more; across the city, the rate was 1.25%. Of all our clients, 0.16% had three or more behavioral health ER visits in the year; the average rate for all providers in the region was 1.03%.

- The *Johnson Counseling Center*, our licensed mental health clinic, provides assistance to the residents of East Harlem through individual, family, group and couples therapy, crisis intervention, psychological/psychiatric evaluation, medication management, advocacy and other services. All services except psychological evaluations are available in both English and Spanish. This past year we served 1,204 individuals. Twenty-one percent of our clients are ages 12 and under, with another 18% ages 13 to 20. Approximately 17% are over age 55. This past year, we offered therapeutic groups focused on topics such as: *Women With Depression/Parenting, Health Education for People Living with HIV/AIDS* and *People Living with HIV/AIDS Who are Suffering from Depression*. We are also providing a group for transitional age youth to assist them in making adaptive life decisions.
- This year, we launched a new a Dialectic Behavioral Therapy (DBT) program. This is an evidence-based treatment that helps clients manage extreme emotional deregulation. The DBT protocol is a highly compassionate and comprehensive treatment that has been shown to be effective in helping severe, multiply-disordered clients in reducing harmful behaviors and in improving relationships and overall quality of life. Individual therapy is provided in conjunction with group therapy (to enhance client capabilities by teaching them behavioral skills) and phone coaching) to assist in implementing skills when needed in real life situations).
- We provided 136 emotionally disturbed children and adolescents with mental-health-focused case management services through our *Children’s Blended Case Management* program. We helped to ensure that these children, who have serious emotional issues, are receiving all the mental health, educational, medical and social services that they need to remain with their families and out of institutions. We provide two different developmentally-sensitive specialized intervention services to children who have been impacted by trauma: for children under five, we use Child-Parent Psychotherapy, and for those over five, we offer Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.
- Our Mental Health Services program operates satellite clinics at three East Harlem public schools (PS 72, PS 102 and PS 146). Our clinical staff provides individual, group and family therapy to approximately 97 students, along with their parents and teachers, at these clinics. Additionally,

our full-time therapist at Settlement Health's pediatric clinic provides individual services, including trauma intervention, to 57 children and their families.

Community and Small Business Development

Union Settlement's mission is to empower the East Harlem community, and that mission extends to nurturing and developing the community's small businesses and entrepreneurs. We seek to connect businesses with each other as well as help incubate local businesses of all sizes, thereby keeping employers and employees in our neighborhood. To achieve these goals, we have created two programs designed to help support the East Harlem business community: the *East Harlem Community Alliance* and the *Union Settlement Business Development Center*.

- In early 2012 Union Settlement spearheaded the creation of the *East Harlem Community Alliance*, which is a consortium of local businesses, non-profits, religious and governmental entities seeking to address the problems faced by this community. As the organizing force behind the Alliance, Union Settlement serves as a community "quarterback" for East Harlem, working to unify all sectors with the common goal of creating opportunity and wellness throughout the community. The East Harlem Community Alliance currently has over 100 members including major institutions such as Mt. Sinai Hospital, Metropolitan Hospital, the New York Academy of Medicine, STRIVE, El Museo del Barrio, NYCHA, Hope Community and the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College. The Alliance meets quarterly and currently is focused on four major initiatives: (1) *Hire East Harlem*, which works to reduce local unemployment by connecting East Harlem job seekers with local employers and workforce development organizations; (2) *Buy East Harlem*, which strives to increase local economic activity by creating an online searchable website of goods and services available in East Harlem, and encouraging local organizations to first look to make purchases locally; (3) *Serve East Harlem*, which seeks to connect local residents in need of social services with the many non-profits in East Harlem that provide those services; and (4) *Promote East Harlem*, which promotes East Harlem as a destination to visit, eat, shop and live.
- We have also established the *Union Settlement Business Development Center (USBDC)* to assist new entrepreneurs and existing small businesses, many of which are struggling, which has adverse effects on their employees and the community. It is vitally important that entrepreneurs – both new and experienced – have the appropriate understanding and capacity for launching and maintaining a successful business. To that end, the Business Development Center – with an English/Spanish bilingual staff – provides business education, technology training and technical assistance. We also assist qualified businesses in securing vetted loans for start-up costs, equipment purchases or operating expenses. The Business Development Center provides a wide range of free or low-cost technology and business education services. Classes are catered to beginner and intermediate skill levels, and most are offered in both English and Spanish.

Policy & Advocacy

Union Settlement was originally conceived to highlight, address and reform the social injustices experienced by new immigrants by providing residents of our community with the tools they needed to reach their educational goals, achieve economic stability, and live full, healthy lives. The community building and advocacy initiatives we undertake with program participants, staff and colleague agencies in pursuit of systemic reforms are as essential as the direct services we provide. It is clear to us that more concerted strategies are necessary to ensure the ongoing availability of essential programs, to design and establish new publicly-funded initiatives that will create real opportunities for low income residents to

achieve economic security, and to promote economic equity across the city, state and nation. We are pursuing several key advocacy and organizing projects:

- We are working to address key inequities and inadequacies in New York City’s Early Childhood Education (ECE) system, including the most recent expansion of the Universal Pre-Kindergarten program under Mayor Bill de Blasio. We began by holding a set of listening sessions with our staff to identify the issues that are most pressing and ascertain how staff and parents can advocate for these concerns. We have conducted professional development sessions around base building and leadership, and participatory research work with staff to develop surveys administered to their colleagues and parents to learn more about how they have been impacted by the current system. Our objectives are to build solidarity among providers at ECE centers both within and without the Union Settlement network and to amplify the voices of parents and educators in ECE debates. Our key partners in this set of initiatives have included the Day Care Council of New York, the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA), Henry Street Settlement, Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation, and the Brooklyn Kindergarten Society.
- We launched a Civic Engagement component in our *Bridges* program for middle school students, focused on food security and access, funded through the Levitt Foundation. The work with our students is centered on the *Lunch 4 Learning* program, a coalition-based campaign that is working to make free and healthy school meals available to all New York City public school students, regardless of income. We achieved a portion of our goal in 2014—all standalone middle schools in New York City now offer free school lunch. We continue to work with students to improve the appeal of school lunch, and to collaborate on the campaign to extend universal free school lunch to all the public schools across the city. Our students have become a key voice in the campaign, and our program is considered by campaign members as a model for increasing community engagement through other afterschool programs across the city.
- We have developed and piloted a civic engagement curriculum with students in our Adult Education program, as part of their preparation for the High School Equivalency exam. We are an active member of the New York City Coalition for Adult Literacy, working with other providers and advocates to educate elected officials regarding the need and value of public investments in adult education.
- We have implemented a senior volunteer-driven leadership development program centered on increasing access to healthy food for residents of all ages across East Harlem. We were selected as one of five programs across the city to pilot a three-year project designed to increase the engagement of seniors in developing and implementing solutions to pressing community problems.

KEY OBJECTIVES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016

1. Community Leadership on Rezoning in East Harlem

Mayor Bill de Blasio has identified a handful of neighborhoods across the city for significant rezoning, and East Harlem (Community District 11) is one of the first neighborhoods that will be rezoned. Attention will, most likely, be focused on First, Second, Third and Lexington Avenues and the commercial corridors on 106th, 116th and 125th Streets. The City most likely is looking to “upzone”—to set the stage for bigger projects that will include additional housing stock and retail/commercial space.

This rezoning will have a major impact on the future of East Harlem. It will change not just the number of people who live in the neighborhood, but also where they live, the cost of housing and where they shop. The rezoning will also have a major impact on local small businesses and the utilization of local schools, parks and social services.

In order to best prepare for the rezoning process, City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito (who represents East Harlem) has established a steering committee and a network of subgroups. These committees are charged with working with the community in a series of visioning sessions that will develop a set of recommendations to the Department of City Planning. The steering committee's scope of work is defined as:

Develop a community-based Neighborhood Plan for East Harlem that addresses the needs of existing residents and informs the neighborhood rezoning proposal. The Neighborhood Plan will consider anticipated future growth, but will utilize a broad community development framework that goes beyond plans for the built environment, and also addresses the development of human capital and enhances quality of life. The ultimate plan should include an expression of values and priorities as well as concrete recommendations; it should balance community input with statistical background information, and target different ideas and concepts at particular entities and agencies that might have the power and the resources to fulfill them.

Because the rezoning will affect so many aspects of the lives of East Harlem residents—and because Union Settlement has deep expertise in many areas, a great deal of cultural competency and we touch the lives of thousands of community members each year—we have decided that we must become deeply involved in the rezoning process, to help ensure that the interests of the low-income residents we serve are protected.

In particular, Union Settlement staff is filling the following roles:

- David Nocenti, Executive Director, is serving on the Steering Committee and is the Chair of the Economic Development, Small Business & Workforce Development subgroup.
- Sandra Morales-DeLeon, Deputy Director of the Union Settlement Business Development Center, is on the Steering Committee.
- Ms. Morales-DeLeon and Edwin Nieves, Senior Director of the Union Settlement Business Development Center, are members of the Economic Development, Small Business & Workforce Development subgroup.
- Michelle Paige and Steven Portericker, Directors of Early Childhood Education and Youth Services, respectively, are on the Afterschool, Pre-K and Daycare subgroup.
- Maria Alejandro, Director of Senior Services, is part of the Health and Seniors subgroup.

Our goal is to amplify the voices of low-income community members, to ensure that they are heard, and to influence the process on their behalf. We will circulate information to our participants about the visioning sessions, and encourage them to become a part of the process. We will measure our success by our ability to:

- Ensure that any low-income housing created by the rezoning process is truly affordable, not simply “below market rate.”
- Ensure that local residents are able to be trained for and fill both the construction jobs that will be created, as well as the permanent jobs that will be added.
- Make sure that East Harlem's commercial corridors will remain friendly to small businesses, and will not become dominated by large chains.

- Work to design a plan that avoids the displacement of low-income residents, and addresses potential increases in demand for local schools and social services.

2. Charting a Course for Our Mental Health Program

Providing high-quality, affordable mental health services to our community is one of the cornerstones of our mission. This past year we served 1,204 individuals in our licensed Article 31 clinic with individual, family, group and couples therapy, crisis intervention, psychological/psychiatric evaluation, medication management, advocacy and other services. Yet our clinic is running at a significant deficit. We ran surpluses up until FY2013, but we ended FY2014 with a deficit of \$366,000 and FY2015 with a deficit of \$273,000, which the agency absorbed.

Most of this deficit is due to changes in the reimbursement landscape, including decreases in the reimbursement rate paid for Medicaid clients. Until 2010 we were paid a rate per service, plus an add-on rate, which helped us fund services for uninsured clients. Since 2010, however, the reimbursement plan has been restructured four times, each iteration reducing our overall rate. Further changes are on the horizon—as billing goes through Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) rather than Medicaid, we will need to contract directly through various managed care corporations, most of which are for-profit entities that will reimburse at rates that could potentially be still lower. For the first two years of this new system, New York State will hold the MCOs to reimbursing at the old Medicaid rate. After that initial period, clinics will need to negotiate rates on the open market.

At the same time, our operating costs have continued to increase. It is no surprise that decreasing income and increasing expenses leads to financial strain, and a significant number of clinics have closed and many are operating with deficits. If our circumstances do not change, and we do not mitigate or eliminate our deficit, we will be unable to maintain a program. We therefore need to take steps now to ensure that our clinic is sustainable, and that we can continue to provide a vital community resource.

We are in the midst of a program-wide reevaluation and reimagining of our mental health program, so that we can continue to move forward through uncertain times. This entails work in three overlapping areas:

- Changes to Services: First, we are no longer accepting commercial (private) insurance plans, as these plans reimburse for services at a much lower rate than Medicaid. We are also increasing our capacity to provide, evidence-based services, such as Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, Parent-Child Psychotherapy and Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, in an effort not only to provide best-practice treatment models to our clients, but also to demonstrate to managed care companies that we provide proven, cost-effective treatments that improve quality of life.
- Technical Assistance: We are receiving assistance from the Community Technical Assistance Center (CTAC), a mental health consultancy program funded by the New York State Office of Mental Health, the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, and the New York State Health Foundation. CTAC will help us prepare to navigate the transition to managed care by performing an analysis of clinic structure, operations and productivity, including our intake protocol, our scheduling system, our no-show rates, our mix of services, and our billing and collection systems in order to find and implement efficiencies. They will help us answer questions such as whether it would be advantageous to provide more therapeutic groups and/or whether these groups should be larger, how we can decrease our no-show rates, and whether there are other ways we can change our practices that would be positive or neutral clinically and would have positive financial effects. We have also made arrangements for KPMG to review our financials and billing practices with an eye towards enhancing revenue.

- Quality Improvement Project: Finally, we are engaging in an effort to make better use of data and analytical tools to help measure our effectiveness and guide our treatment. We will be using Medicaid encounter data to provide more detailed feedback to our clinicians to help them make changes in practice and achieve improved patient outcomes, including decreased hospitalizations and improved adherence to medications and services. We will assess which parts of our practice are working at maximum efficiency and which are not, so that we can adjust our services accordingly.

We will measure our success in all these efforts by charting our ability to collect and use new kind of data, and to devise and begin implementing an actionable plan for clinic sustainability.

3. Wage Equity for Our Early Childhood Education Workers

Our largest program, by far, is our Early Childhood Education (ECE) program, which accounts for 40% of our agency budget. We are the tenth-largest provider of ECE services in New York City, serving over 740 children each year at seven sites and in our Family Child Care Network. This program serves not only the children of East Harlem, but the adults as well; we provide stable employment, with good benefits, to dozens of community residents as administrators, teachers, aides, cooks, custodians and more. The role of classroom teacher, in particular, is more than just a job: it is a unionized career path that provides opportunities to advance both education and career.

Unfortunately, our teachers are grossly underpaid, especially in comparison to the ECE teachers at Department of Education (DOE) sites who are performing precisely the same jobs. Our ECE staff members have not received a raise since 2006, 61% have household incomes below 200% of the federal poverty line and 17% are enrolled in food stamp programs. Though we are their employer, we cannot negotiate with the unions or give raises, because 100% of their salaries are paid with New York State funding and the City must first agree to fund any salary increases. The City's failure to address the salary inequities has kept staff wages unduly low, which has an adverse impact on staff recruitment, retention and program quality.

Compounding the situation are two factors: (1) traditionally, the City negotiates with the municipal unions first, before considering raises for City-funded workers employed by non-profits; and (2) in most cases, the City practices "pattern bargaining," establishing a general rate of increase and then applying that rate to all contract negotiations. The first means that our employees have to wait for years before seeing their contract renegotiated and updated; the second means that, even when a raise comes, it will still leave them far behind their colleagues at DOE sites.

To address these adverse circumstances, we are advocating on behalf of our staff and working with the unions to pressure the City to increase wages. This comes down to two basic demands, in line with the obstacles described above. First, the City should renegotiate the contract now, not later, and second, our employees should not be subjected to the "pattern," as they are so far behind that they need an extra increase to approach parity with their DOE colleagues. We are taking a leadership role in a coalition of other providers, staff and parents to lobby the City to negotiate and sign a contract that provides wage increases, and to do so in a timely manner.