

Inside: Gerri's Journey at Geffner House / Supportive Housing Data / Board Member Shams DaBaron / Bedford Green House Ribbon-Cutting



Renewing lives. Reclaiming hope.

MATTERS



PLANTING ROOTS AT BEDFORD GREEN HOUSE

During her year-long stay at a Bronx family shelter, Alexis routinely walked by the construction site for Bedford Green House, Project Renewal's newest affordable and supportive housing development. She dreamed of living in the new building with her five-year-old son, Cairo. Today, Alexis' dream is a reality. In February 2022, she and Cairo were among Bedford Green House's first tenants to move in, and they have flourished ever since.

"Moving here is one of the best things that ever happened to me," says Alexis. "I've never felt such stability and happiness as I do at Bedford Green House."

With the help of Project Renewal's mental health and occupational therapy programming, Alexis is working through past traumas. She enjoys participating in on-site art, music, and mindfulness groups. At Bedford Green House's rooftop greenhouse and aquaponics farm, she grows vegetables and herbs that she uses to create healthy meals in her own kitchen.

As Cairo begins kindergarten, he is thriving. "He has his own bedroom, comes to the group activities with me, and can't get enough of the playground in the front courtyard," Alexis shares.

From Project Renewal's case managers and therapists, to the building's maintenance workers and fellow residents, Alexis and Cairo have built a strong community. Thanks to the stability of their home, Alexis is now able to pursue her goal of becoming a nurse. "Bedford Green House has changed my life." ■

☒ Alexis and NYC Mayor Eric Adams in front of Bedford Green House

FROM OUR PRESIDENT & CEO

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING OFFERS A SOLUTION TO HOMELESSNESS



Dear Friends,

There are tens of thousands of people sleeping in shelters each night and an increasing number of New Yorkers experiencing street homelessness. On the streets of New York City, it is clear that individuals with mental

health concerns and substance use disorders need our help.

Unfortunately, these New Yorkers face tremendous challenges to housing stability. But we have a solution — supportive housing, which breaks down those barriers.

At Project Renewal, residents of our four supportive housing developments have an affordable home of their own and receive the health, employment, and social services they need to thrive. This is effective in the long-term: 95% of new supportive housing residents remain housed for at least one year.

Our newly-opened Bedford Green House supportive housing development is a LEED-certified building that provides 117 units of housing to formerly homeless individuals and families. Families like Alexis' (see cover story) are already benefiting from the development's innovative amenities and services, including its rooftop garden.

Your support of Project Renewal helps to create new housing for those in need, ensuring New Yorkers have access to affordable homes and secure futures.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Eric Rosenbaum
President & CEO



BOARD MEMBER Q&A

ADVOCATE SHAMS DABARON JOINS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Project Renewal is proud to welcome Shams DaBaron, also known as “Da Homeless Hero,” to the Board of Trustees. His journey with Project Renewal started when he was a client at The Recovery Center at Third Street. During the pandemic, Shams was a champion for his fellow Third Street residents when they moved into the Lucerne Hotel, articulating their humanity in the face of community opposition.

Why was it important for you to become a Project Renewal Trustee?

“By electing me to the Board, Project Renewal is ensuring that New Yorkers with lived experience have a voice in the discussion, a seat at the table, and a hand in the decision-making.”

What is the biggest key to solving New York City’s homelessness crisis?

“The underpinnings of our city’s homelessness crisis are complex and deeply rooted in systemic racism. But housing can be a path forward. Supportive housing in particular is essential, and I’m glad it is central to Project Renewal’s programs. When I first started my advocacy, I was focused on improving shelter conditions, but especially now that I have an apartment of my own, I see that housing is an imperative to addressing homelessness.”

What is your advice to people who want to help?

“All New Yorkers have a part to play. None of us should be comfortable with people being unhoused. Consider supporting organizations that are working to alleviate issues, like Project Renewal. You can lend your time, skills, or financial support. Together we can be the solution and create opportunities for people to obtain decent housing.” ■



“THE UNDERPINNINGS OF OUR CITY’S HOMELESSNESS CRISIS ARE COMPLEX AND DEEPLY ROOTED IN SYSTEMIC RACISM.”

Shams DaBaron



“I REALIZED THERE WERE THINGS TO SMILE ABOUT AGAIN.”

Gerri

A STORY OF SUCCESS

GERRI’S JOURNEY

ON PAPER, GERRI HAD IT ALL. SHE WAS AN EXECUTIVE AT A GLOBAL INVESTMENT BANK, LIVING IN A HIGH-RISE APARTMENT AND TRAVELING INTERNATIONALLY.

But the stress of her job, coupled with the death of her parents, led to mental health challenges. To cope, Gerri turned to alcohol and her life started to unravel. She lost her job, her apartment, and everything she owned. She eventually entered a homeless shelter. “I didn’t know life could be that low,” she says.

In 2007, after receiving support through detox programs and Alcoholics Anonymous, she secured an apartment at Project Renewal’s Geffner House supportive housing residence. Gerri has now been stably

housed at Geffner for 15 years. She meets regularly with her case worker, who helps her arrange doctor appointments, manage her medication needs, and set healthy goals. She has also found community and a social life through Helping Older People Engage (HOPE), Project Renewal’s on-site occupational therapy group.

“As I was coming out of shelter, I was just trying to survive,” recalls Gerri. “When I got to Geffner, I slowly got comfortable, and I realized there were things to smile about again.” ■

GEFFNER HOUSE: A SUCCESSFUL HOTEL-TO-HOUSING CONVERSION

As New York City’s homelessness crisis has worsened, Project Renewal has been a leading advocate for the conversion of underutilized hotels into much-needed affordable and supportive housing. In fact, Project Renewal has been at the forefront of this approach for decades.

In 1993, Project Renewal acquired the bankrupt Holland Hotel, renovating it and reopening it in 1995 as Holland House, a visionary supportive housing facility for 300 formerly homeless and low-income New Yorkers. In 2018, we invested in extensive renovations and renamed it Geffner House, after former Project Renewal president and CEO Ed Geffner. Today, we continue to call on leaders in government to help facilitate new hotel conversions as a common-sense — and potentially transformative — step to reduce homelessness and increase housing affordability.

GET THE FACTS



4

supportive housing developments are operated by Project Renewal: Geffner House, Villa Avenue, St. Nicholas Residence, and the newly-opened Bedford Green House.

557

residents are served through our programs, offering them stable and affordable housing with on-site health, social, and other supportive services.

66%

of residents of Project Renewal supportive housing have been living in their home for over five years.

95%

of people newly-admitted to Project Renewal supportive housing remain stably housed for at least one year.

97%

of Geffner House residents engage with on-site occupational therapy services through group and individual sessions, health escorts, and community events.



SNAPSHOTS OF RENEWAL



Supporters and elected officials, including NYC Mayor Eric Adams, cut the ribbon to mark the official opening of Project Renewal's Bedford Green House in the Bronx.

We held a Back to School Drive to ensure children living in shelter, supportive, and transitional housing have the supplies they need this fall. Thanks to all who donated!



Families, friends, and mentors gathered to celebrate the graduation of our 105th Culinary Arts Training Program cohort. Graduates gained the skills and experience needed to launch careers in the food industry.

SAVE THE DATE

RENEWAL FOR NEW YORK

PROJECT RENEWAL'S BENEFIT AND AUCTION

WEDNESDAY, MAY 10TH, 2023
6-10PM, PIER SIXTY, NEW YORK CITY

Help homeless New Yorkers renew their lives
with health, homes, and jobs



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