



Dear Friends and Supporters,

Spring 2016 Newsletter & Donor Appeal

The cold winter months are almost over, and we couldn't have made it through them without you, our donors and volunteers. You gave your time and your money to make sure your neighbors in need had a warm meal and a roof over their heads. But as you'll read in this newsletter, CHiPS is about more than getting people through hard times; it's about setting them up with everything they need to help themselves, now and in the future. And as we enter the spring, there is no better metaphor for the new life and renewed sense of optimism your support gives our residents and guests. In the spirit of spring cleaning, we're doing a little renovation ourselves, starting with the bathrooms and kitchens in our Frances Residence, which houses eight formerly homeless moms and their babies, and the house mother. These spaces have endured the wear and tear of many years of use and are in need of updating. While we are so excited to have reached our fundraising goal of \$50,000 at our First Annual Gala, thanks to our supporters who were in attendance or made donations in honor of the event, and several local corporate sponsors, much of that money will go toward day-to-day operating expenses, so we still need your help in making these renovations happen. Without you, our community of supporters, nothing that we do would be possible. Thank you for helping us make a difference.



CHiPS held its 1st Annual Gala, which honored Council Member Brad Lander, on April 6. Thank you to everyone who helped us reach our fundraising goal of \$50,000!



Mikael Levin

Denise Scaravella

Mikael Levin,
Board President

Denise Scaravella,
Executive Director

How does CHiPS feed 150 people a day?

Janice Lebbly remembers her first day at CHiPS as though it were yesterday. "It was extremely hard work. Some of the guests were very demanding. I wondered if I'd ever come back."



Looking at her now, it's hard to imagine anything ruffling her. "Toward the end of lunch I was serving a man, and he said, 'Thank you, I really appreciate it. I was so hungry. I'll see you tomorrow, right?'"

And I thought, I have to come back and make sure he eats!" She never looked back.

Not a job for the fainthearted

While it might be rewarding, it's not easy. On a typical day, Janice arrives around 8:15 am. "In the morning, it's usually just me steaming the pancakes, cutting pastries, and boiling eggs." Everything has to be out by 9:00 am. If there are no volunteers, Janice serves breakfast, too. At the same time, she cleans up, chats with guests, and never stops running. CHiPS only began its breakfast pro-gram in March 2014, but it's become very popular. It has grown from serving around 15 guests a day to more than 50. "Times are tough," Janice sighs. "Last week, I realized there's a man who works, but he doesn't have enough money for breakfast. So he comes here for his breakfast then goes to work."



Experiencing homelessness first hand Janice can relate to the guests because she too has lived through tough times. When her two oldest children were infants, a building fire left her and her family without a home. It was two years before they could move in again, after going from shelter to shelter.



"I really know the depth of how our guests feel, what it is to be displaced. It's a very hard thing." That frightening experience also helps her empathize with the mothers being housed in the Frances Residence

upstairs. When the young women first arrive, Janice tells them her story and that they are lucky because they have a stable room for a year. She explains how she was shuttled from place to place. "I say, I'm not talking to you because I know better than you, I'm talking to you because I was you."

A family affair

Where possible, Janice tries to get her own family involved in the work at CHiPS. In December, her older daughter came to the Christmas party and handed out donated toys to disadvantaged children. From that and other experiences, her older daughter now wants to run a soup kitchen when she grows up. Janice's son also gets in on the action and comes every day after school. He too has learned the importance of a place like CHiPS. "He understands that some of the people

who come here don't have a home. He appreciates the value of the food here, and that people come here because they're hungry."



Read the full interview online <http://chipsonline.org/2016/04/15/feeding-150-hungry-neighbors-a-day/>

The Frances Residence: providing more than just a home

"I'm in awe that there's a place like CHiPS. When I came, I thought, I could live here!" Three months into her new job as the director of CHiPS's Frances Residence, Sharon Lewis is still marveling at her good luck. Before CHiPS, Sharon was the deputy administrator at Homes for the Homeless, a city-subsidized organization that provides rooms for hundreds of families. But 30 years ago, like the young mothers at the Frances Residence, she was a struggling single mother herself, trying to get a better life for her child.

From struggling single parent to success



"It's a funny story," she smiles. "I was making minimum wage and living with my parents. Guys from Homes for the Homeless would come in to buy supplies at the store where I worked. I was always trying to find a better job, so I got them to give me an application to work there." She got the job and quickly worked her way up. But working in such a grim

environment took its toll. "The shelters are the pits." She heaves a deep sigh. "At homes for homeless, maybe 80% of the people there are hardcore, meaning they have been in the shelters second and third generation. It's difficult to motivate them to leave because they have a sense of entitlement that's hard to overcome. After 28 years of it, I was tired."



A different kind of shelter

CHiPS is different. "It's not a typical agency – it's a buffer. A woman just comes here for a little while. It's a safe, clean, drama-free environment where she can have her baby, get help with resources, go back to work, find daycare and housing leads, and then she's on her way." At CHiPS, Sharon sees the results of her efforts, versus the vicious cycle of homelessness she witnessed at other shelters. "If you're born into a family who's been getting public assistance all their lives and there's always food on the table, most of the time you end up with that sense of entitlement. You wonder how you can change that thought process. You can't reach the adults; they're already gone. So the only way to change that cycle is to get to the children. And it's through education and exposure, so they can see there's another way." Helping the moms at the Frances Residence get back on their feet is the first step. Under her watch, Sharon hopes that the only sense of entitlement these babies will have is what everyone in this country deserves to have – life, liberty, and a permanent roof over their heads.

Read the full interview online <http://chipsonline.org/2016/04/15/thefrancesresidenceproviding-morethanjustahome/>

Upcoming Events

CHiPS Mother's Day Pop-Up Restaurant
Sunday, May 8

Bring your mom to enjoy "grandma-style" cuisine: all proceeds benefit the women and babies of the Frances Residence.

Get your tickets at <http://chipspopup.eventbrite.com>

CHiPS Night Out
Tuesday, June 7

Get the date in your diary: some of Brooklyn's best restaurants will be donating 15% of their dinner checks to CHiPS. Doing good never tasted this delicious!

5K Fun Run/Walk
Saturday, November 5

On your marks, get set, go! It's our third fun run/walk at Prospect Park to raise money for CHiPS. Check our website in the coming months for details.

How Can You Help?

Donate

Thanks to our team of volunteers and local businesses that help us cover expenses like this newsletter, we're able to keep our administrative costs extremely low. Which means donations you make go where they are most needed: \$50 will help us feed 30 people; \$350 will provide one month's shelter for a mom and her baby. Donations can be made through our website or attached mail-in form.

Volunteer

We are an almost exclusively volunteer-led organization, and rely on you, our local community, to help us run our programs. Interested in getting involved? Come to one of our orientation sessions. We run them on the second Thursday of every month at 9am and the last Thursday of the month at 6pm. No need to book – just show up. Hope to see you there!

The CHiPS Team

OUR STAFF

Denise Scaravella, Executive Director
Laura Goldberg, Executive Assistant
Janice Lebby, Director of Food Services
Sharon Lewis, Director of Residence Services
Pepe Dbayan, Director of Finance
Juan Inoa, Maintenance
Pat Hannan, House Mother

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Direct my donation to (select):

Soup Kitchen Frances Residence

Name: _____

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Card type (select): *Visa MasterCard Amex*

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