Creating a Healthier, Violence-Free NYC

Over the holidays CAMBA was proud to host the Theater of War Productions for a presentation of Hercules in East New York at the Louis H. Pink Houses CAMBA Cornerstone Community Center.

The evening included a dramatic performance of the classic Greek tragedy “The Madness of Hercules” by Euripides, a play that speaks to the impact of violence on a community. The performance was followed by a panel discussion, leading into a thoughtful and moving group discussion of the impact of gun violence in communities.

The performance is an example of the intentional integration of our work to combat violence and to provide high quality programming for our families and children through our community centers in a variety of neighborhoods across Brooklyn. As part of the Cure Violence (CV) initiative, CAMBA’s Brownsville In Violence Out (BIVO) program focuses on the Brownsville neighborhood of Brooklyn. BIVO is a fall 2017 recipient of one of The Brooklyn Community Foundation’s Youth Justice grants of $25,000 which will support our BIVO participants in sharing their stories of the challenges they have faced and how they are working to overcome them.

BIVO is also part of NYC’s Crisis Management System, which includes 18 Cure Violence sites throughout the City. In East New York, Man Up! is CAMBA’s partner site that BIVO closely collaborates with and they were integrated into this special evening.

From the President and CEO

At November’s gala, CAMBA celebrated its 40th Anniversary by reflecting on its decades-long history of stabilizing the lives of New Yorkers in need.

We also focused on new solutions for today’s challenges. As the cost of housing in New York City continues on a steep upward trajectory, many in our communities have difficulty making ends meet.

With thanks to the Robin Hood Foundation, we’ve expanded the mobile unit of our HomeBase program and retrofitted a second You Can Van to cover Southern Brooklyn and Staten Island. I am pleased to report that results from the You Can Van continue to be amazing – with over 90 percent of high-risk families being able to remain in their homes and out of shelter.

It is hard for anyone who has not encountered homelessness to understand just how destabilizing it can be. In this newsletter, we share Trina’s story about gaining permanent housing and moving towards a career in social services. The numbers show that affordable and supportive housing like Trina’s saves taxpayers nearly $40,000 a year.

If you own or work at a Brooklyn-based company and have the capacity to mentor high school students, please reach out to us.

One investment that is longer term, but equally vital, involves employment for young people through CAMBA’s Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), an initiative that will give them employment skills they will use for a lifetime. If you own or work at a Brooklyn-based company and...
LETTER FROM PRESIDENT
CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE
have the capacity to mentor high school students, please reach out to us.
As spring approaches, funding for afterschool programs has yet to be allocated for 2019, potentially impacting over 630,000 children and their parents who count on these programs while they are at work. Please visit www.afterschoolalliance.org to advocate for reinstating this funding.
Your investment in the safety and future employment of young people in East New York also brought about incredible outcomes this winter when a troop of actors visited a NYC public housing development and performed an ancient play that explored the societal consequences of violence.
This work promises to be furthered in its reach thanks to Brooklyn Community Foundation’s $25,000 grant for our Brownsville In Violence Out program. Most of us take summer camp, youth employment opportunities and stable housing for granted. Thank you for leveling the playing field for your fellow New Yorkers in need, so they can create a brighter future for themselves and their families.
With your help, CAMBA will continue to offer holistic services that change lives. Please join us in the three-pronged approach to building a more inclusive New York City through our 2020 Vision.
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CREATING A HEALTHIER, VIOLENCE-FREE NYC.
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Community members, anti-violence leaders, actors and CAMBA's staff all participated in a reading discussion in East New York in December.
The panel discussion included Andre T. Mitchell, Founder of Man Up!, Dr. Divine Pryor, the Executive Director of the Center for NuLeadership on Urban Solutions, Tyris Sylvester, a member of the Cornerstone's Youth Council and Marcus Scurry, CAMBA's Director of the Pink Houses Cornerstone Community Center. Actors in attendance were Frankie Faison, Glenn Davis and Chinasa Ogwuaga.
The audience was comprised of teens, grandparents, mothers, fathers, community partners, BIVO, ManUp!, CAMBA staff and members of the New York City Police Department. The night's performance and discussion particularly resonated as a local store owner had been recently killed. @
Frankie Faison, who starred in Coming to America and The Wire, said:
“We care about this community. We care about the path they're on, we care about the plight they have to endure. We are here to pick them up when they fall and push them forward even as they are walking tall.”

From Shelter to Stability
Trina Corley entered Park Slope Women’s Shelter in 2014 after her landlord’s home was lost to foreclosure and she could not afford to pay market rent. With no choice but to go into shelter, Ms. Corley says that she became very depressed at the outset of her stay at Park Slope Women’s Shelter, but that she fought against it. “I knew there was hope,” she said.
As Ms. Corley spent time with staff members and her case manager at the shelter, she said that she “learned that it was OK to dream.” Her work with CAMBA’s shelter staff taught her that even though she was set back at the moment, she would not be set back forever, and “that I could go ahead and set my goals to be ready when I left the shelter.”
Her goals included going back to school, getting a job and getting back on her feet and having more self-confidence. Ms. Corley said that while spending time in a shelter was a test of her resilience, she is now well on her way to completing the goals she made while at Park Slope Women’s Shelter. “They kept my head up, they kept me grounded, all of them,” she said of the staff at the shelter. She is happy to report that in late 2016, she settled into her own apartment in one of CAMBA’s supportive and affordable developments in Brooklyn.

Keeping New Yorkers House’d
Trina’s story of being forced into the shelter system is one of many stories we hear at CAMBA and we are focused on changing this narrative. Building on the success of CAMBA’s first You Can Van, we are pleased to announce that we will be launching a second van to provide homelessness prevention services. Thanks to a grant from the Robin Hood Foundation, CAMBA’s HomeBase team will now be able to further their reach and keep more New Yorkers in their homes, dramatically reducing the number of people entering the City’s shelter system. Like the first You Can Van, the second van will also use data to target tenants who are at risk of eviction, this time in Staten Island, Sunset Park and Coney Island.

Last year, CAMBA also opened a second HomeBase office in Staten Island, its fifth location to date, and it is already having an impact. From April to the end of 2017, over 250 families were kept in their homes, saving tax payers almost $10 million dollars that would have been spent on sheltering them. Now, with the arrival of the second van, CAMBA’s HomeBase program will be able to use its direct services approach to reach high need residents of Staten Island who are often far removed from housing services, including those who would prevent them from entering shelter.

40 CAMBA YEARS Building an Inclusive NYC
CAMBA is a non-profit agency that provides services that connect people with opportunities to enhance their quality of life.
“ADVOCACY ALERT” CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

arrived at the state capitol ready to articulate their points to elected officials and had nominated one member of their contingent, Anastayjah Jupiter, to lead their presentation. The students met with State Senator Jesse Hamilton and State Assemblyman Nick Perry to pose their “ask”: For New York State to invest an additional $4 million of funding in the SYEP program.

Teresa Yi, who coordinates CAMBA’s Collegiate Express program and attended the lobbying day, said the students were deeply engaged in the entire day of meetings and rallies throughout the Capitol. “Just traveling out of Brooklyn is a good thing for our young people because it helps them see the bigger world, and have an experience outside the neighborhood they grew up in. For many of the students, this was their first time in Albany,” Ms. Yi said. “I was proud of them for being able to share a part of their personal story with confidence.” By the end of their time in Albany, the students were delighted to learn that both Assemblyman Perry and Senator Hamilton had agreed to support the additional $4 million in funding for SYEP. The students returned home to Brooklyn that night having seen their State Capitol, met with their Senator and Assemblyman and learned about civic advocacy.

All-Star Student Corner

Fun and enriching summer learning plays a critical role in the educational outcomes of young people from low-income neighborhoods. Last summer, CAMBA engaged in a partnership with Girls Who Code who made it possible for underserved students to receive much sought-after lessons over the summer. In a few short weeks, one stellar high school student, Shamima Sharmin, gained both a Girls Who Code summer internship at JP Morgan, and a deep love of coding.

Shamima excelled in the internship and at the end of it she built her own website which promoted the use of solar panels and demonstrated how a consumer could go about installing them. Late last year, Shamima was invited to give a presentation on her experience in the program at the Summit on Summer learning hosted by New York State Network for Youth Success.

Among the many revelations from her summer internship, Shamima said the experience taught her to be brave, take chances and to be creative. As she researches colleges she’d like to apply to, Shamima, who is currently a sophomore, says that while she plans to pursue computer science, she’s not worried about picking out a college just yet. “For me, the best way of learning code is by exploring and experimenting,” she said. “By coding, you can teach girls to be brave because it is mostly trial and error.”