A message from our new executive director

I’m thrilled to share my first newsletter as New Destiny’s new Executive Director. It’s an honor to join such a ground-breaking organization, currently in the midst of enormous growth. Over the next year we will complete projects in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens, doubling the number of units we have for domestic violence survivors and low-income families; ramp up our permanent housing placements through HousingLink, our HUD-funded Rapid Rehousing program; and amplify our advocacy efforts to expand housing availability for families experiencing the double trauma of homelessness and domestic violence.

I look forward to continuing the legacy of my predecessor, Carol Corden, New Destiny’s Executive Director for 23 years. I could not be more grateful for her exceptional leadership, building a staff and Board of Directors that are as passionate, creative and dedicated as she is. Thanks to Carol, thousands of survivors have found safe, permanent and affordable housing to call home. We wish her all the best in her much-deserved retirement.

Never has the right to a safe, affordable home been more obvious than during this pandemic. Initial reports show that the number of calls for help to flee domestic violence are increasing by 50%, 100% and more. I enter into this work with great respect for all that has been done to elevate the need for more housing for survivors of domestic violence, and with an unyielding optimism that together with our government, foundation and development partners, we’ll find the creative solutions to meet this need.

Nicole Branca, Executive Director

A Milestone – Topping Off The Bryant

In July we “topped off” The Bryant — our 62-unit service-enriched affordable project under development in the Bronx — when construction reached the eighth floor. Construction now turns to the interior including partitioning and framing out the apartments and installing kitchen and bathroom fixtures.

Thirty-seven apartments at The Bryant will be set aside for homeless domestic violence survivors coming from domestic violence shelters.

When completed in August 2021, The Bryant will have offices for our Family Support Program staff who provide a wide range of on-site services including safety planning, job readiness assistance, financial planning and children and family activities. Communal spaces will also include a large room for group activities, a children’s room, and secure outdoor space that includes a play area for younger children.

Architect: Magnusson Architecture & Planning
Contractor: DP Group General Contractors

Rendering of The Bryant.

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Rendering of The Bryant.
New Destiny News

New Staff

New Destiny welcomes our first Senior Director of Real Estate, Dick Conley, who has more than 30 years' experience in real estate finance, government programs, and affordable housing lending programs. Dick will oversee asset and property management and lead our exceptional development team in expanding our development portfolio.

We are also pleased to welcome Lorna Lim and Maria Ramos Currah who are joining the HousingLink team as Coordinators.

Meeting the Housing Needs of Survivors

On August 21, the NYC Continuum of Care (CoC) approved the creation of a committee specifically dedicated to domestic violence.

The committee’s mission: To ensure that the housing needs of homeless domestic violence survivors, who comprise the third largest homeless subpopulation in the City’s annual homeless count, are adequately recognized and used to inform, the funding and evaluation decisions of the NYC CoC.

Membership will be inclusive, with a focus on CoC-contracted domestic violence providers, persons with lived experience, government partners, advocacy organizations and mainstream housing providers. New Destiny looks forward to working with our fellow committee members on the successful rollout of this committee.

Assistance During COVID-19

Finding a Home

Throughout the pandemic, HousingLink has continued to assist domestic violence survivors in their search for permanent housing, placing five survivors in homes since June 1.

Andrea had made several attempts to flee her abuser but always ended up back with him because she couldn’t afford an apartment on her own. HousingLink had just started working with her when COVID-19 stay-at-home protocols began. Due to the pandemic, she lost an expected job and unfortunately, her current income was too low for many apartments, but too high for her to qualify for a housing voucher.

After discussing budgeting with the HousingLink Coordinator, Andrea reduced her expenses and created an emergency savings fund. With the Coordinator, she identified her strengths and the type of housing that fit her budget. Because Andrea had previously lost an apartment due to credit issues, they reviewed the various credit reports, highlighting positive aspects that she could present. During the housing search process, Andrea learned how to assure landlords that with several years’ experience in her field and pending completion of her bachelor’s degree, she has a high earning potential. The Coordinator also provided an advocacy letter describing Andrea’s strengths to give to landlords.

With this assistance, Andrea found an apartment she could afford. Feeling safe for the first time in years, she can focus on her future. And with the short-term rental assistance provided by HousingLink, she will be able to finish college and find a higher paying job before taking on paying the full rent.

Supporting Tenants

Despite the crushing effect of the pandemic on low income families, on-site services at our buildings provided through our Family Support Program have helped survivors to pay their rent and ensure that they have access to food, medication and other necessities. Our Tenant Emergency Assistance Fund (TEAF), supported by hundreds of individual donors, enables us to cover new expenses due to COVID-19 as this story shows:

In July, William, a 75-year-old tenant, contacted his building’s Tenant Support Coordinator for help completing an application for the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) to get an air conditioner. As a senior with pre-existing health conditions, William was concerned about an upcoming heat wave that could affect his health and did not feel safe going to a cooling center due to COVID-19. The Coordinator called the HEAP program and was told that the application takes two weeks to process and then three weeks for the tenant to receive the air conditioner — too long to wait. Through our TEAF, New Destiny was able to purchase an air conditioner for William. Nine days after reaching out to the Coordinator, William’s new air conditioner was delivered to his apartment and installed by the superintendent.