The need for affordable housing is an increasingly critical issue in our communities, and much in the current news. Mayor de Blasio’s housing plan will create or preserve 200,000 units of housing over the next ten years, addressing a range of affordability, from low to middle incomes. NEBHDCo is playing its part, with both new construction and preservation projects in development or in progress. In Brownsville, our Park Monroe II in-place rehab of 7 buildings with 214 units of occupied housing is now underway. With MDG Design and Construction LLC as contractor, residents will receive new kitchens and baths; entry ways and public spaces will be upgraded. This renovation and refinancing will preserve not only the physical properties for years to come, but also the affordability of the rents. Maintaining our existing affordable housing stock and thus preserving the homes of low- and moderate-income New Yorkers is central to NEBHDCo’s mission.

Jeffrey Dunston, CEO

Legislative Breakfast Highlights Food Access Issues

Bed-Stuy may be gentrifying for some, but many are still in poverty – with related high rates of obesity and diet-related disease. Affordable food access and the lack of healthy food options remains a critical issue in our community.

On Thursday May 14th, 2015 NEBHDCo held its first Annual Legislative Breakfast. Invited public officials, private funders, community members and other supporters came together to talk about how public and private resources can all work to address these important issues.

The event was held at our Golden Harvest Client-Choice Food Pantry at 376 Throop Avenue. Guests were given a tour of our beautiful new choice pantry, with a supermarket-style shopping floor at ground level and a demonstration kitchen and classroom on the second floor. A delicious, healthy breakfast was prepared by one of our Community Chefs, Janelle Nicol Galvez of Jin’s Journey. NEBHDCo’s Communities for Healthy Food Bed-Stuy initiative to expand healthy, affordable food options, food-related employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, youth food justice programming, urban farming efforts and more, was highlighted as well.
Communities for Healthy Food Bed-Stuy means real jobs in the business of food, it means options for buying good food on our ‘hood budgets, it means we gather to build community spaces to produce, cook, share, and eat food. It means that we grow stronger together as we reclaim our right to great tasting, high quality, and sustainable food.

Hit us up for more information and to RSVP to any of the programs! Anise Hines at 718-453-9490 x230 or shines@nebhdc.org
Visit us online at www.nebhdc.org

Here’s a report from the field and some of what’s happening this summer...

The Bed-Stuy Cooperative Business Project: A Report-Back

From March – May, NEBHDCo and The Working World joined to offer a 10-week course in Cooperative Food Business Development. This course provided our 46 participants, all mostly residents of Bed-Stuy, with the basics on business planning and cooperative governance. Creating worker cooperatives distributes wealth directly to those workers who run the business and those residents who live in the neighborhood. Worker cooperatives, also known as worker-owned businesses, represent an innovative and creative alternative to more traditional business structures. All members of a cooperatively-run business share the labor, decisions, profits, responsibilities, and ownership shares. We’re still meeting regularly to workshop business ideas. To plug-in to the work, get in touch!

Here’s a report-back from one our participants from our first Bed-Stuy Cooperative Academy...

Why a Worker Coop by Naceo Giles

Like many Americans, after retirement I need to continue to work in order to have a comfortable life. A working lifetime spent in college administration, building maintenance, and pest control has provoked me to seek an alternative to traditional employment. Instead of working in the area of management where one often has to compel workers to perform work that is in their job description, or as a worker taking orders from ineffective or politically motivated managers, I prefer to organize a worker-owned cooperative in a field where I have a great deal of experience both as a worker and a manager.

Pest control is an ideal sector for organizing a worker cooperative. Many technicians working for large companies also have official or unofficial personal accounts which they service, giving them some experience in operating their own business. Such technicians would be good candidates for a worker cooperative pest control company. I am interested in building such a company and I decided to take the ten-week course on how to start a cooperative in order to learn how to start my business.

I have 25 years of experience in pest control. Until 18 months ago I worked full time in maintenance in a small residential building and part-time with a friend who owns Thoroughbred Pest Control. We have a small number of accounts but have determined to increase the number of accounts and increase staff as necessary. The course has provided me with some insights into the organizational issues that must be examined, clarified and clearly stated in order to have a successful cooperative business.

The most important things I have learned include: identification of fixed and variable costs, calculation of prices that can reasonably be charged for service and at the same time would cover total expenses and provide a margin of profit, how to make decisions democratically, and sources of funding for cooperatives.

I have also learned that every talent required to organize and operate a cooperative can’t be found in an individual. It requires a team. Management can be a challenge. But, when it’s shared among a group of people – the same people who will also do the everyday work for the business – it can really build teamwork and leadership in our workplaces.

Cooperative Business Course participants gather to learn to create economic democracy here in Bed-Stuy.
Senior Cooking Workshops Are Back This Summer!

Calling all Seniors! Join Chef Jin of Jin's Journey (www.jinsjourney.com) this summer for a cooking workshop series. Workshop dates: August 21st and 28th from 4-6:30pm.

Where: The Demonstration Kitchen @ 376 Throop Avenue.

To register, call or email Anise!

TurnUp Youth Intern Nevaeh Brown Gives a Garden Update!

It all started in March in my science class, when we were learning about varieties of plant life. My teacher supplied us with basic knowledge about plants, like the different parts, how the plant produces food, germination, etc. After many lessons, I always left the class wondering more about how I could increase my knowledge on planting different things and just plants in general. Soon enough, in mid-March, the Turn Up Garden Internship application form was handed to me by my teacher. I took this as a great opportunity to increase my knowledge. This was perfect timing for me to apply to the program, not only to put my newly learned skills to the test, but to spend time helping my community while benefiting from building skills such as teamwork and patience, and job skills such as people skills, professionalism, and resume building.

To fast-forward, TurnUp Garden has helped me learn about how small things such as a community garden could make a huge impact on the health of the surrounding community, while also teaching others about healthy eating choices and how you could produce your own produce! Ha! Get it? Anyway, such things as mentioned have brought out many positive qualities about me that I’ve uncovered but not used. For example, I’ve always liked to help others which makes me feel good but now, I can actually see my results from what I did like from planting the seeds to harvesting the plant, then watching community members come into the pantry and enjoy the great selection of fresh produce grown right in their backyard -- literally! This makes me feel grateful that I have an opportunity to do a job like this. I see that I can help others and that some are actually appreciative of the things that I come and do every week, especially when I strive for the produce to be as good looking and tasting as possible, and looks like something I would want to purchase, take home, and cook.

Moreover, I can use these experiences to influence others to follow the same methods and teaching styles, to inform the rest of the community of different ideas related to the garden. This can also influence what is sold in our neighborhood and the health state of the neighborhood as a whole.

Year 2: Marcy Park Farmer’s Market

Beginning July 9th and running through November 19th, the Marcy Park Farmer’s Market will open on the corner of Marcy and Myrtle Avenues, every Thursday from 8am - 4pm.

The market is a great addition to the good food available in Bed-Stuy - with over 60 different fruit and vegetable varieties on sale throughout the season! Better still is that this market is affordable and many forms of payment are accepted. You can use: WIC/FMNP Coupons, Senior FMNP Coupons, Health Bucks, SNAP, (EBT), Debit and Credit.

NEBHDCo’s Community Chefs will join the farmers on several dates throughout the season to demonstrate simple and fun recipes to make with the food available at the market.

Come to the market and use the coupon below with any vendor now until the market season ends on November 19th!

Want fresh, local produce now? From July 9th - November 19th, Clip this coupon for $4 off at the Marcy Park Farmers’ Market.

*While supplies last Limit one per customer.
A flower bed grows in Brooklyn, with a growing group of community admirers. The corner of Throop and Lafayette Avenues is the site of a true community flower garden. The front flower beds at Throop Court, NEBHDCo’s property at 378 Throop Avenue, are planted and maintained by Throop Court tenants, community residents and NEBHDCo staff. The garden has developed quite a following, with passersby asking each spring about planting time. The garden’s ‘signature plant’ is the French marigold, with bright yellow and orange shades that can be seen a block away. Other annuals and perennials include dark red coleus, Autumn Joy sedum, bright yellow-green Creeping Jenny, ground geranium, red sedum and sweet woodruff. Flowers bring beauty to the hard-edged city; the local community at Throop Court brings this beauty to their corner in Brooklyn.

Flowers and Community at Throop Court

Food Bank’s TEN Program at the Golden Harvest Food Pantry

Our Golden Harvest Client Choice Pantry provides a range of healthy food options, including a growing array of fresh produce from local farms and our own gardens. We will continue to increase our food selections, but with our new pantry space open for one year, we have also begun to expand our offering of social services and public benefits. As a participant in the Food Bank for New York City’s TEN Program, we are able to provide an increasing number of referral services. “TEN” stands for Tiered Engagement Network. Food Bank has developed a robust array of social service organizations to provide services for clients referred by member food pantries. NEBHDCo is part of the North Brooklyn Network, a group of over 30 agencies providing supports to residents of this area. Services include SNAP, employment, education, immigration, legal services, financial services, health services and health insurance. NEBHDCo also directly provides tax preparation services, and will soon also begin providing SNAP enrollment services at our pantry site.

Referral services are available to pantry clients during distribution hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am to 12pm, and at other times by appointment. To learn more about the services offered, call the pantry at 718-453-9490 x224.

We’d like to thank all of our funders, for making this work possible: