From the Desk of the Executive Director

They say spring is a time to begin anew and for Unique People Services (UPS), that belief certainly holds true.

A few weeks ago, we closed on a property that’s soon to become our new headquarters here in the Bronx. It will be comprised of more administrative office space, retail and residential. As we begin preparing for our move, I can’t help but marvel at the continued growth this agency has achieved.

Last month, we opened a new community residence in Queens, where several developmentally disabled individuals have a new place to call home. Administratively, we recently welcomed two new faces to our Executive Team: Everson Gibson, Administrative Director of Quality Assurance and Human Resources, and Bill Velasquez, our new Director of Human Resources. With a combined six decades of experience, we’re thrilled to have these dedicated individuals onboard. I’d also like to extend heartfelt congratulations to Lorna Thompson, who moved into the role of Associate Executive Director.

Together, our staff remains committed to helping the Bronx Borough President’s Office achieve its goal of #Not62, a borough-wide call-to-action to improve health outcomes in the Bronx by 2020. In June, we’ll be presenting our first Trauma Informed Care training conference and panel discussion, advising on best practices to assist victims of violence, substance abuse and other traumas, to ensure optimal recovery.

The event is being organized by our Mental Health Division, which is currently preparing for another milestone – the 20th Anniversary of Haven Apartments, UPS’ groundbreaking mental health program that has helped hundreds of New Yorkers get back on their feet through safe, supportive housing. The program will celebrate two decades of service with a joyous showcase of art, poetry and song, as residents display their passion and the skills they’ve cultivated at UPS.

Finally, our busy summer will set the stage for a momentous fall as we prepare to open our first affordable housing complex, Lynn’s Place. After five years in the making, we’re more excited than ever to transform the lives of dozens of low income New Yorkers, as well as individuals with mental health challenges.

Through Lynn’s Place and the multitude of services we provide, UPS remains committed to helping New Yorkers in need and changing the face of the Bronx. Many thanks to my outstanding team for helping to make a difference in so many lives.

Sincerely,
Yvette Brissett-Andre

Yvette Brissett-Andre

UPS Staff Put Their Best Feet Forward

On May 21, 2017, staff, families and other supporters laced up for AIDS Walk New York 2017 in Central Park, joining thousands of New Yorkers in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Unique People Services (UPS) has been participating in the event for nearly a decade, helping to raise money for a cause that’s at the heart of UPS’ mission to provide high quality, compassionate care for individuals with HIV/AIDS.

UPS Care Coordination Program (CCP) Director Michael Ealy led the agency’s fundraising efforts, as UPS strived to surpass their $5,000 fundraising goal. CCP has served more than 1,000 individuals with HIV/AIDS within the past 5 years. Vital services include case management, medical referrals, support groups and Food Panty services.

All proceeds from AIDS Walk New York will benefit the Gay Men’s Health Crisis (GMHC) and HIV/AIDS service organizations across the tri-state area.

Thanks to everyone who donated and participated in this year’s Walk!
Unique People Services (UPS) recently expanded its executive team, naming Everson Gibson Administrative Director of Quality Assurance and Human Resources, and appointing Bill Velasquez as the agency’s Director of Human Resources. Mr. Velasquez replaces Roberta Farrar, who retired earlier this year.

Both men joined the agency in March, and will be instrumental in ensuring seamless functionality and the continuation of high quality services to individuals with developmental disabilities, HIV/AIDS and mental health challenges.

Mr. Gibson brings more than 30 years of nonprofit managerial experience, having previously worked for a $35 million agency overseeing its Foster Care Division, OPWDD, Preventive, and Domestic Violence Units and the Quality Assurance Department. As UPS’ Administrative Director of Quality Assurance and Human Resources. Mr. Gibson is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the quality of UPS’ programs and services, as well as conducting strategic plan analysis, incident risk assessments and audit implementation. He also serves as UPS’ Corporate Compliance Officer and HIPAA Security and Privacy Officer.

Mr. Velasquez brings nearly 30 years of experience to his role and a specialization in business, compliance, operations, management and client services. Before joining UPS, Mr. Velasquez worked for a large Wall Street Bank where he managed a team of client service representatives and oversaw business and product development worth an estimated $21mm in annual revenue. He also served as the bank’s Operations Manager overseeing the settlement and processing of more than $100 billion in short-term funding by financial and manufacturing companies.

As UPS’ Human Resources Director, Mr. Velasquez is responsible for administering HR policies, advising on employee benefit plans, coordinating job postings and helping to formulate and update personnel policies and procedures to comply with industry standards and regulations.

Mr. Gibson and Mr. Velasquez are looking forward to contributing to the agency’s growth and success, and through their many decades of experience, we’re certain that they will be valuable assets to the organization!

Yvette Brissett-Andre Wins Best of the Bronx Award

Unique People Services (UPS) Executive Director Yvette Brissett-Andre is the recipient of the Bronx Chamber of Commerce’s Best of the Bronx Award. The prestigious award recognizes Yvette’s continued dedication, commitment and exemplary contributions to the Bronx community. Yvette was presented with the award at the Bronx Chamber of Commerce’s golf outing and evening reception at Trump Golf Links at Ferry Point on June 8th.

Since taking the helm at UPS in 2008, Yvette has impacted the lives of hundreds of New Yorkers in need, ensuring the highest quality care for individuals with HIV/AIDS, developmental disabilities and mental health challenges. Under her leadership, UPS has executed major fundraising campaigns, enabling the agency to expand its reach and touch more lives in the Bronx and across the city.

The agency opened four new community residences for developmental disabilities within the past year, while its supportive housing programs have been instrumental in the city’s fight to reduce homelessness. By providing warm, nurturing environments, each UPS program fosters increased independence, socialization and community inclusion.

In September, Yvette will lead UPS in an exciting new chapter: the opening of its first affordable housing complex, Lynn’s Place, giving dozens of low income Bronx residents a place to call home.

Yvette is a longtime advocate for all things Bronx, and her honor is truly well deserved!

Read more about Yvette’s outstanding contributions to Bronx communities in this News 12 interview.
Those Who Stay Together, Read Together!

On Thursdays, UPS’ Bronx Gentlemen’s Book Club meets at Barnes & Noble, where staff and individuals enjoy quality reading time and mingling with others in the community. Many individuals have become fixtures at the store – on a given Thursday, you may find them reading a book in one of their favorite aisles, or gathered around a table sharing stories with staff!

Meanwhile, in Brooklyn...

Birthday celebrations and trips to the arcade are among the many fun activities our individuals have been enjoying!

You Gotta Have Art!

UPS’ community of budding artists has expanded! Residential Habilitation Specialist Natania Jackson has launched a Bronx Art Group at the agency, giving individuals a chance to hone their skills and showcase their lovely works of art. The group meets on the last Saturday of each month at a UPS community residence, where their art teacher, Monique, leads an engaging workshop themed around monthly holidays and events. In February, individuals created hearts and collages to commemorate Valentine’s Day and Black History Month.

After each session, individuals have the opportunity to provide comments and feedback, which Monique integrates into her art lessons. She’s already planning many fun projects for the summer.

We can’t wait to see what our individuals will create next!
UPS Holds First Annual Shoe Drive

Throughout the spring, UPS has been collecting new and gently worn shoes from individuals and businesses across the New York City area to raise funds to support the agency’s programs and services. The initiative is being held in conjunction with Funds2Orgs, who purchases the donated footwear and redistributes them to a network of microenterprise partners in developing nations.

Proceeds from the shoe drive are based on the total weight of the shoes collected. UPS’ goal is to collect approximately 300 bags of shoes. For more information, contact Constance Brown-Bellamy, UPS’ Head of Corporate Relations, at ConstanceB@uniquepeopleservices.org.

Thanks to all who have contributed!

Upcoming Events:

SAVE THE DATE!
Friday, June 30th

Trauma Informed Care Conference

Join us for a half-day conference & panel discussion on trauma informed care in underserved communities featuring renowned advocate and speaker Tonier Cain.

Highlights include a panel discussion and screening of the award-winning film “Healing Neen”.

10:00am – Check-In and Continental Breakfast
10:30am – Welcome and Opening Remarks
10:40am – Film Screening “Healing Neen”
11:45am – Keynote Address and Training
12:45pm – Panel Discussion “Trauma Informed Care in Underserved Communities”
1:00pm - #Not62 Update
2:00pm – Closing Remarks/Wrap-Up

Community awards and dinner immediately following the program

Tonier Cain
Trauma Expert, Author and National Speaker

The Bronx Museum of the Arts
1040 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10456

For more information or to RSVP, contact Constance at ConstanceB@Uniquepeopleservices.org.

Visit UPS at: uniquepeopleservices.org

COMING SOON!

Lynn’s Place Grand Opening
1060 REV. JAMES A. POLITE AVENUE, BRONX, NY 10459
SEPTEMBER 2017

More details to come!

For more information about the opening of UPS’ first affordable housing complex, contact Constance at ConstanceB@uniquepeopleservices.org.
A Warm Welcome to Our New Hires

The following employees joined the UPS team during the 1st quarter of 2017.

JANUARY:

Diane Louard-Michel – Senior Director of Real Estate and Development

Georgia Herbin – Residence Manager (220th Street)

Steven Harris – On-Call Direct Support Professional (Sheridan Avenue)

Sherrail Robeson – On-Call Direct Support Professional (Lacombe Avenue)

Abdul Marah – On-Call Direct Support Professional (Day Hab Services)

Elissa Lescay – Direct Support Professional I (Pre-Vocation)

Tracey Dutton – Direct Support Professional I (Pre-Vocation)

Chiwana Wright – Direct Support Professional I (Lacombe Avenue)

Robin Barnett – Peer Advocate (Supported Housing V)

Janae Brown – On-Call Direct Support Professional (Hughes Avenue)

Jazmin Shelton – Front Desk Receptionist (Haven Apartments)

Tyeaste Mitchell – Direct Support Professional I (Bright Harp)

MARCH:

Stephanie Sukhdeo – Direct Support Professional I (Day Hab Services)

Andrew Alleyne – On-Call Direct Support Professional (Crowley Place)

Princess Tyson – On-Call Direct Support Professional (Bright Harp)

Sheree Knight – On-Call Direct Support Professional (Bright Harp)

Jubenys Martinez – Medicaid Service Coordinator (112th Avenue)

Sharon Covert – Front Desk Receptionist (Haven Apartments)

Shokanji Charles – Direct Support Professional I (Vyse Avenue)

Lisa Singh – Direct Support Professional I (Sheridan Avenue)

Steven Noel – Direct Support Professional I (Sheridan Avenue)

Michael Emery – Direct Support Professional I (Pre-Vocation)

Shianna Fleming – Direct Support Professional I (Lacombe Avenue)

Katherine Workman – Direct Support Professional I (Bright Harp)

Rulyssa Ransom – Direct Support Professional I (Bright Harp)

Yolanda Arnette – Day Hab Specialist (Day Hab Services)

Everson Gibson – Senior Director of QA and HR (Administrative Office)

Sandra Walgern-Downer – Registered Nurse (Lacombe Avenue)

Yvette Critchlow – On-Call Direct Support Professional (Bright Harp)

Shakira Lettman – On-Call Direct Support Professional (220th Street)

Bill Velasquez – Director of Human Resources (Administrative Office)

Congratulations to all and welcome to the TEAM!