



HENRY STREET
SETTLEMENT

FALL 2019

news



Jobs Plus Surpasses Goal!

Kianna Flowers in a shower of flour after baking cookies with the boys at Kaplan House.

As a 10-year-old, Kianna Flowers took cooking lessons at Henry Street's Boys & Girls Republic youth community center. Now 27, she is the sole weekday chef at the Kaplan House residential treatment home, operated by the Jewish Board, where she cooks three meals a day for 45 boys ages 17 to 21.

It is the third job Flowers has secured through Jobs Plus, Henry Street's workforce-development program for people who live in or near the Jacob Riis II and Lillian Wald Houses.

"I have complete control over the menus, so I have the freedom to explore and experiment and to hone my skills," says Flowers, whose favorite meal to cook is breakfast, which typically includes a fruit spread, eggs, waffles, and chicken.

Flowers is among 610 workers that Jobs Plus has placed in positions over the past three years, surpassing its contracted goal of 560. Top occupations include building maintenance, human services, hospitality, construction, and retail—as well as a variety of positions at Henry Street Settlement itself.

Jobs Plus is a central component of the Settlement's employment services. Located at 24 Avenue D in the Jacob Riis II Houses, where Flowers grew up, it makes essential connections between those who wish to work (but may lack the skills or confidence to do so) and employers who are hiring.

Many of the program's participants face substantial barriers to employment—such as obtaining affordable child care, earning a high school equivalency diploma (HSE), addressing a past criminal record, securing stable housing, or having enough to eat.

That is where the "Plus" comes in, according to Program Director Connie Mendez. "In a supportive environment, our dedicated staff and close community partners work one-on-one with participants, providing job training, career counseling, educational opportunities such as HSE classes, help with financial literacy and tax prep, and connections to needed social services, as well as job placement."

To top its job-placement goal, Jobs Plus widened its reach. An outreach coordinator and two community coaches, all Lower East Siders, have been pounding the pavement—tabling, knocking on doors, and interfacing with other organizations—bringing the message of Jobs Plus directly to potential members and listening to their needs.

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Remembering Richard Abrons 1926-2019



Henry Street Settlement deeply mourns our beloved friend, board member of 52 years, and fierce champion of our mission, Richard Abrons, who, with his family, made transformative contributions to the Settlement and to New York City.

The story of Richard Abrons and his extended family is inextricably woven into the fabric of our community. Richard's parents, Louis Abrons and Anne Schroeder, met at a Henry Street dance in 1905. Eight years earlier, our founder, Lillian Wald had helped Anne's impoverished widowed mother by hiring her to sew nurses' uniforms so she could support her family. Remarkably, Richard, who met Lillian Wald in fifth grade, was the only person to have known all of Henry Street's executive directors through David Garza.

Richard started as a volunteer counselor and swimming teacher at Camp Henry in the 1940s and became a member of our board in

1967. He founded First Manhattan Company, an investment firm, in 1964, but started a second career in midlife, earning his MFA and publishing some 20 short stories—one of which won a prestigious National Magazine Fiction Award.

Richard dedicated his life to social justice, bringing critical services, cultural programs, and vibrant green spaces to New York City's underserved communities, particularly through support of settlement houses.

With his wife of 31 years, Iris, and family foundations, Richard became our greatest individual financial supporter. He helped secure a founding gift from his beloved sister, Rita Aranow, to create Henry Street's

Workforce Development Center, and under his leadership Henry Street also expanded its homeless service programs, acquired the Boys & Girls Republic youth center, and worked to transform two vacant lots next to 265 Henry Street into Martin Luther King Jr. Park.

Richard's special love was the Settlement's Abrons Arts Center, named after his family. And he inspired the next generation of the family, who honored him and his late siblings, Herbert and Rita, by establishing the Abrons-Aranow Scholarship Fund to help Henry Street youth attend college.

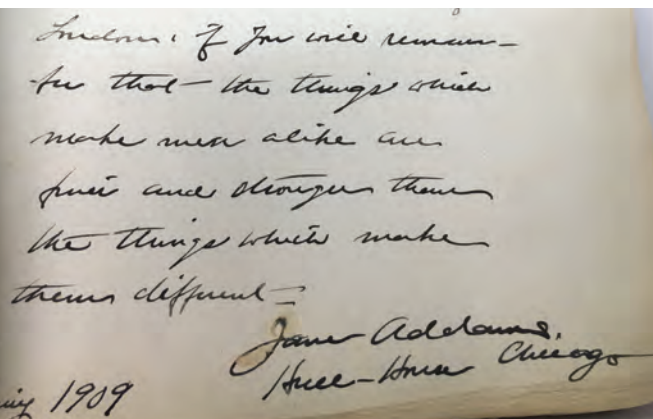
Richard was fond of clever sayings, such as "never stifle a generous impulse"—and he followed his own advice. We will all surely miss Richard, one of the most important and beloved figures in the history of Henry Street Settlement.

Hidden Guest Book Underscores Lillian Wald's Place in History

The tattered ledger had rested undisturbed, between yellowing papers, since the Franklin D. Roosevelt presidency, in a steamer trunk at the Neighborhood Playhouse School on East 54th Street in Manhattan. That is, until May 2019, when the theater school's librarian, Whit Waterbury, called Henry Street to let us know that he had a surprise: **Lillian Wald's guest book had been discovered.**

Henry Streeters were stunned to absorb the book's contents. With signatures and notes from 1909 to 1934, it is like a snapshot of American history from the Progressive era to the New Deal. There are messages from Hull House founder Jane Addams; the banker and philanthropist Jacob Schiff, who purchased the house at 265 Henry Street for the Settlement; photographer and social reformer Jacob Riis; Eleanor Roosevelt; Gov. Herbert Lehman; British suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughter, the activist Sylvia; and pilot Amelia Earhart, who was also a social worker at a Boston settlement house.

"The guest book validates what we've long known—that Henry Street was a place where thinkers from all over the world came to formulate solutions to our society's most pressing problems, just as they do today," says David Garza, Henry Street CEO.



←
"Art has been my gateway" out of depression, Laura Anne says.
Photo: Olivia Morgan

→
From left, HSE graduate Ernesto Ramirez celebrates with Program Director Lisa Diamond and current student Kaymie (Qifang) Mai.

Clay Imitates Life: Ceramics Class Serves as a Rehearsal

Making things out of clay can be soothing for anyone, but at Henry Street's Community Consultation Center (CCC), a ceramics class is helping participants work through challenges they face outside the classroom. Whether accepting the uncertainty of how a piece will turn out, addressing mistakes as they occur, or letting go when things don't work out, **these artists experience the class as a dress rehearsal for coping with real-life situations.**

The ceramics program is a collaborative effort between Henry Street's Abrons Arts Center and behavioral health services. It grew out of Henry Street's commitment to ensuring that the arts are integrated through all of its social services.

"Lillian Wald believed that the arts were critical to a democratic society and to individual well-being," says Craig Peterson, artistic director of Abrons Arts Center, which connected instructor Christine Rebhuhn, a sculptor, with the behavioral health program.

In August 2019, the class had its first show, at the CCC's Unlimited Boutique, where one participant, Laura Anne, displayed images of the cats she owned over 20 years. "I have suffered from depression most of my life, and art has been my gateway out," she says.

Articulating an artistic vision and nurturing it to life can be especially rewarding for students who have had trouble bringing their goals to fruition in the past, according to Rebhuhn. "The challenges that come up through these material processes are often mirrored in our lives," she says. "A student might believe a project is too ambitious at the beginning, but often what they end up making is even more dramatic and exciting than they had anticipated."



Shelter Team Advises Filmmakers on Domestic Violence

Henry Street's Domestic Violence Program team have always been our all-stars, but now they're actually movie stars, cast in *A Vigilante*, a film about domestic abuse released in March 2019, directed and written by Sarah Daggar-Nickson and starring Olivia Wilde.

A Vigilante shines a light on a subject little addressed in film and demonstrates the strength it takes to both survive and leave such circumstances.

The main character's experience was based on accounts that residents of Henry Street's Domestic Violence Program shared with the filmmakers. Daggar-Nickson and Wilde visited the program and consulted with team members Beverly Atkinson and Theater Huggins (pictured here to the left and right of Wilde) on how to depict survivors' support groups. Atkinson and Huggins, as well as Estefania Tejada and Ebony Hilaire, former clients of Henry Street's program, appear in the film.

Photo: Patrick Lewis/Starpix



Jobs Plus Surpasses Goal!

(continued from cover)

Often, their first step in connecting with potential members is to ask one crucial question: "Will you have a cup of coffee and chat with us about your needs?"

Before Flowers came to Jobs Plus, she was a lifetime Henry Streeter—participating in girls softball and after-school at Boys & Girls Republic and in the Young Adult Internship Program. Attending the New York City College of Technology, she supported herself as a baker and restaurant worker. When a particularly difficult restaurant job left her feeling burned out, Flowers knew she needed a change. But the thought of applying for jobs made her anxious. "I felt like I was a terrible interviewer because I panic," she says.

Senior Employment Coordinator Raven David helped Flowers update her resume and then moved on to interview preparation. The key factor was David's insistence that Flowers come to the Jobs Plus office every day for a week for mock interviews with various team members, so she could get used to multiple interview styles. When Flowers was sent to interview with Columbia University's Events & Catering department, she was hired on the spot! She also got a part-time job working at Boys & Girls Republic in the afternoons.

"Every time I go to Jobs Plus, I get what I need," Flowers says. "Raven is always nudging me to do more. When I was scared, she pushed me and motivated me."

After several years working for Columbia and Boys & Girls Republic, Flowers was ready for a job with room for growth, better pay, and a consistent schedule. Again she turned to Jobs Plus, which connected her to Kaplan House. Though the work is difficult, she enjoys the chance to mentor the young men—especially when they get frustrated and lose their tempers—and to teach them to cook!

For Flowers, Jobs Plus was a logical step in a lifetime shaped by Henry Street. "The community changes, but Henry Street stays the same," she says.

Photos of Kianna Flowers by Nicole Fogarty

"Just Keep Going": A Record-Breaking HSE Graduating Class Persists

Achieving a high school equivalency diploma is no easy thing. Before sitting down to take the two-day exam, students must prepare in subject areas like math and social studies that might have gone unexplored for decades.

This year, 24 Henry Street HSE students passed the exam—the largest cohort in the history of the Settlement's preparation program. Almost half succeeded on their first try. The graduates gathered in celebration at a ceremony on August 16, 2019.

They ranged in age from 18 to older adults and had a variety of reasons for taking the test. Some want to go to college; others hope to advance in their careers; and still others see a high school diploma as an emotional milestone.

In addition to tackling the nuts and bolts of the test, Settlement teachers address a number of non-academic challenges: testing and performance anxiety often come up, explains Lisa Diomande, program coordinator. So does the complicated nature of returning to a school-like setting as an adult.

Ashleigh Staples, part of this year's cohort, passed the exam on her first try; she had been unable to complete high school for medical reasons. Staples is looking forward to taking her SATs and will start applying to college as those results come in. Reflecting on her Henry Street journey, she offered up advice to students preparing for the exam:

"Just keep going, even if it feels pointless. Even if you're sitting in class, feeling like you already know everything or like you don't need it, you're developing an endurance that will help you when it's time to take the exam—everything is working to prepare you," she said. "So, keep going."

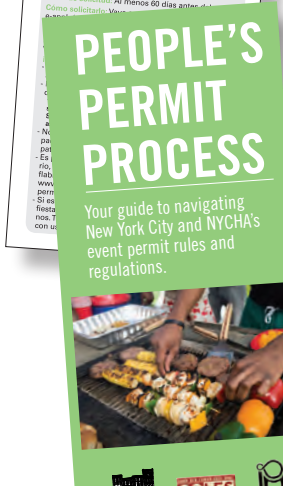
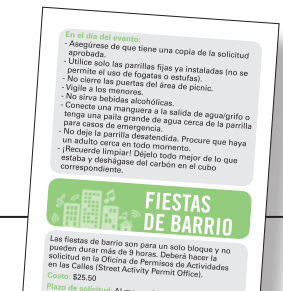


People's Permit Lets the Community Take Back the Outdoors

Dancing in the street is among the greatest joys of summer, but Henry Street Community Advisory Board member and Infinite Movement Executive Director Shaheeda Yasmeen Smith has seen too many parties ruined because the organizers didn't know they needed a permit. So, after discussing the matter at Henry Street's June 2019 Safety Town Hall, she decided to do something about it.

Henry Street worked with Smith and Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES) to develop the People's Permit Process, a guide to navigating New York City and NYCHA's event permit rules and regulations.

The guide explains how to apply for permits—as well as their timing and costs—for groups of over 20 in public parks, for holding picnics and barbecues in NYCHA developments, for hosting block parties, and for acquiring sound permits. Copies are available in English and Spanish at henrystreet.org/communityresources.



THE 2020 ART SHOW

TO BENEFIT HENRY STREET SETTLEMENT

Organized by the Art Dealers Association of America

GALA PREVIEW PARTY

Wednesday, February 26
5:00, 5:30, 6:30, and 7:30 p.m.
ticket entry

RUN-OF-SHOW

Thursday, February 27 –
Sunday, March 1

Buy Your Ticket Today!

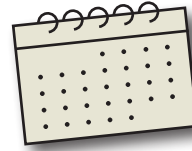
THEARTSHOW.TIX123.COM or
call 212.766.9200 ext. 2248

Join Henry Street for our most glamorous fundraiser, opening with a Gala Preview on Wednesday, February 26, 2020, at the Park Avenue Armory. The Art Show features 72 of the nation's most respected art galleries to create this defining event on New York City's cultural calendar. The Gala Preview—a fabulous party in a beautiful setting—offers an exclusive first look at The Art Show's intimately scaled and thoughtfully curated presentations.

Purchasing a ticket or making a contribution to this extraordinary cultural event has a **direct impact on the 50,000 people who come to Henry Street's** employment, education, shelter, health & wellness, and arts programs each year.

UPCOMING EVENTS 2019

AT 265 HENRY STREET
November 19, 6-8 p.m.
Power and Policy on the Lower East Side: Panel discussion with Perfect City



AT ABRONS ARTS CENTER, 466 GRAND STREET
October 24-November 24
Welcome to the Idiot World: A Shanzhai Lyric
An installation of Shanzhai (counterfeit) garments and related programming
November 7-9
U.S. Premier: Sénsa
Sound, light, and movement come together in exploration of diasporic geographies, ancestral knowledge, and visibility/invisibility of marginalized voices in Western-dominated history.

BECOME A HERO OF HENRY STREET

Henry Street's monthly donors are our heroes. Their generosity and dedication give us much-needed consistent support each month. We can do our work knowing that our monthly donors will be here for Henry Street now and in the future. From the bottom of our hearts, **we thank all our donors for caring so deeply** and are honored to highlight a few individuals who shared their inspiration to give back to the Settlement:

"I love everything about Henry Street Settlement and its unique mission to provide help to people and support the arts."

— Meredith / *Monthly donor since November 2018 and former Abrons Arts Center artist-in-residence*

"I came across Henry Street by volunteering with my company. The story and its role over the years inspired me to take a bit more active role."

— Rajat / *Monthly donor since November 2017*

"Since 9/11, I've made donations to Henry Street to thank the organization for its kindness, as well as for the support it provides others every day."

—William / *Donor since November 2001*

Join our Heroes of Henry Street monthly giving program and become part of this special community of committed and passionate donors who care about providing vital services for people in need. **Go to henrystreet.org/heroes to sign up and learn more.**



Photo: Darian DiCianno/BFA.com

Love what we do? There are so many ways to get involved, including:

DONATE TODAY by returning the enclosed envelope or going to henrystreet.org/donate.

BUY A BRICK in our historic firehouse — the Dale Jones Burch Neighborhood Center—for yourself or a loved one.

JOIN FRIENDS WITH BENEFITS, our young leadership group.

VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME in any of our programs.

LEAVE YOUR LEGACY and include Henry Street in your will or trust, impacting future generations.

For more information, please go to henrystreet.org/waystogive or reach out to Ellen Schneiderman at eschneiderman@henrystreet.org or 212.766.9200 x2260

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