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# **Southside United Housing Development Fund Corporation Annual Report 2013**



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# Mission

*To nurture and sustain a vibrant neighborhood that supports the diverse family life of Williamsburg by advocating for and developing affordable housing, family health and well-being, and equal opportunity for all.*



Catchment area





*Bring Our Daughters and Sons to work Day 2013*

In 1972, with minimal staff and a handful of volunteers, Los Sures began the daunting task of rebuilding its community, the South Side of Williamsburg, Brooklyn. The community residents who started the organization were responding to an epidemic of landlord abandonment, withdrawal of city services, and illegal evictions by landlords. Illegal evictions included some property owners who were trying to vacate their buildings in order to change the ethnic composition of the neighborhood. Los Sures fought back by promoting community-based control of housing, through both management and ownership. In 1975, Los Sures became the first community-based organization to enter into agreements to manage City-owned properties. A few years later, it was one of the first groups to undertake large-scale rehabilitation. Today, Los Sures is regarded

as a pioneer in both the management and development of affordable housing.

Williamsburg has changed drastically in the last few decades from an affordable alternative to Manhattan to a neighborhood sought out by an up-and-coming artistic community. As Williamsburg becomes more gentrified and demand for apartments in the area increases, rents continue to rise drastically- more than doubling in the past few years alone. Families who have lived in the neighborhood for years feel the economic strain as they can no longer afford to stay in their apartments, and an entire community finds itself in need of assistance. Los Sures provides affordable housing, community organizing, and social services, including a food pantry, to address this challenge.

# Foreword from the Board Chairman



*David Lopez*  
*Board Chairman, Los Sures®*

Our Multi-Service Community Organization, Southside United HDFC, has been in existence for over 40 years. Most will agree that it has been of great service to both the residents of Williamsburg and the City of New York, and is dedicated and committed to the task of insuring that we continue to be of assistance to hard working families for decades to come.

As we direct our gaze towards the future, we will continue to lead in promoting and preserving low income, affordable and fair housing for future generations both in Williamsburg and the city of New York. We have re-committed our organizing efforts to ensure that residents living in what is left of the affordable rent stabilized housing stock are not forced out.

As we remain true to our mission and stay true to our past, we must also look towards the future and work towards building a sustainable community for the coming generations. We can embrace a more holistic approach and serve as catalyst or join with unified efforts to enhance fair housing, tenant education, job develop-

ment and training, youth services and financial literacy, higher education, adult education, senior services, social services, legal services, health education and disease prevention for individual families, and a healthier understanding of our mutual interest in both protecting and sustaining our environment.

Some may forget how far we have come from the time when the palpable suffering of families and children as a result of widespread arson and abandonment could be felt neighborhood wide, to the present where Williamsburg is now, one of the most desirable places to live in the City of New York. Our task is not to forget, and our calling is to continue to build upon this legacy. This undertaking is not as the saying goes, a walk in the park. However, if we have one advantage, it is that the souls of our collective feats have always been inspired when in unity, we walk in the streets.

Sincerely,

David Lopez  
Chairman of the Board

# A Message from the Executive Director



*Los Sures® Executive Director Ramon Peguero speaks at an affordable housing rally at NYC City Hall*

This past year has proven to be a time of renewal for Southside United HDFC. Following a long history of success, we have examined the current local climate and made key decisions to ensure the organization's sustainability in the future, including refreshing our mission statement to reflect our strategic goals and unrelenting commitment to the community.

We have hired additional professionals to improve our operations, reinvigorate our goals and inject new ideas into our planning processes. In addition, the Board of Directors has begun development trainings to enhance its leadership capacity and technical knowledge.

Our social services department continues to grow and we have expanded our food pantry to include an on-site hydroponic farm, offering fresh and healthy lettuce directly to our clients- no transportation carbon footprint is created and no pesticides are used. The department also opened a new satellite office at 366 Hewes to increase its service area.

We are excited about our development department's work with Churches United for Fair Housing and Read Property Group to develop affordable housing at the old Rheingold Brewery site. The department will also be full of activity with 15 buildings undergoing resyndication, which means major capital improvements will be taking place that will boost the quality of life for many tenants. Additionally, we trademarked "Los Sures" to protect

the long history and identity of the organization so that they will not be lost or misused. Having received the approval from the United States Trademark and Patent Office, we have already begun using the registered trademark symbol to identify our work.

An unfortunate fire at our former administrative offices prompted our move to our new home on South 5th Street. A lot of memories may have been lost, but our spirits are stronger than ever and ready to serve the neighborhood we love.

The new city administration promises to improve the economic well-being of those who were forgotten under the past administration. While we remain hopeful of changes to come, we will stand by our community and work with elected officials so that they stay true to their promises.

The neighborhood will continue evolving, as will we, and we stand ready to meet the challenges that come our way. We thank our sponsors, supporters, and friends for believing in our mission and our capacity to protect Brooklyn residents from displacement through affordable housing development, social services, and community organizing. We have collectively faced many struggles and found innovative ways to overcome them. You are the fuel that keeps us energized to meet our goals, not only through your intellectual and monetary contributions, but also through your steadfast solidarity.

Together, we shall preserve our legacy for future generations.

Sincerely,

Ramon Peguero, Esq.  
Executive Director



# Real Estate Development

Through its Real Estate Development Department, Los Sures acquires and develops low-income housing for the community of Williamsburg, Brooklyn. To date, it has been involved in the rehabilitation and construction of over 5,000 units in over 340 buildings and co-ops, including seven small vacant buildings that were purchased and rehabilitated and later sold to local residents.

The department continually seeks opportunities to create housing for low and moderate-income families. Financing for these projects are secured from the City, State, Federal government, banks, and financial intermediaries.

In 2013, Los Sures refinanced a 56-unit HUD 202 senior building and began construction and rehabilitation in November. Rehab includes new kitchens and bathrooms, as well as a new lobby and community room that will allow for better senior services and activities and a more aesthetically pleasing building. In addition to construction activities, Los Sures will implement several new programs to improve the environment

and lifestyle of its tenants, including using green cleaning supplies, improving water conservation, and following active design guidelines wherever possible to encourage walking and the use of stairs.

Los Sures also completed rehabilitations in six of its Special Initiatives Program (SIP) buildings. The buildings in this project, consisting of 122 units, received new roofs and boilers as well as other necessary capital work. A new scope will be implemented in conjunction with Community Preservation Corporation's energy efficiency initiative which will add further items to make the buildings greener.



To further its environmental goals, the development department brought on a Graduate Fellow from NYU Wagner through a program sponsored by Morgan Stanley and ANHD to head a large-scale greening initiative for our entire portfolio. The Fellow has collected data to analyze current energy,

*201 Roebling undergoing rehabilitation*







160 S. 2nd Street

## — By the Numbers\* —

2,950 Units developed in 300 Buildings

1,002 Units developed in 43 Co-ops

*\*All units developed by Los Sures® to date*

water, and gas consumption, and is working on a plan of action to make Los Sures buildings more energy efficient, with the goal of ensuring that all of our buildings are at or below the benchmark of energy usage for affordable housing projects.

The South Side has a conspicuous deficiency of park space, which has had detrimental effects on the health and well-being of area residents. In an effort to curb this problem, Los Sures continued its role as the lead agency working with former Council Member Diana Reyna on BQ Green, a unique project covering a section of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, providing much needed open park space to neighborhood residents.

Looking into 2014, Los Sures has approximately 300 units in its portfolio that have exited the Year

15 Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program. A plan has been created to resyndicate these units as one large package in order to maximize the amount of construction that can be completed in the buildings. By infusing additional tax credits into the project, we will be able to complete all necessary capital improvements, greatly increasing the quality of life of our tenants.

Closing on a construction loan is also expected in 2014 to begin rehabilitation at 383 Hewes Street, a 22-unit building in severe distress. The project will utilize monies from the Williamsburg Cross-Subsidy Funds as well as city sponsored Resolution A funding, a private loan from the Community Preservation Corporation, weatherization funding from Community Environmental Center (CEC), and a loan through the HPD Participatory Loan Program.

A very exciting new partnership emerged among Los Sures, Churches United for Fair Housing and Read Property Group in late 2013. This new partnership will allow Los Sures to develop 80 units of affordable housing in six lots at the old Rheingold Brewery site in Bushwick, thereby expanding the organization's catchment area.

# Social Services

Los Sures® does much more than affordable housing. As a multi-service organization, it provides a host of services designed to meet the needs of neighborhood residents. The Los Sures® Food Pantry, which is now a “Choice” supermarket-style pantry, serves over 1500 individuals monthly and it has been such a success that the Food Bank for New York City recently named Los Sures “Agency of the Year.”

Through funds from a seed grant administered by United Way of NYC, a hydroponic farm built in 2012 at the pantry offers fresh and healthy lettuce directly to the community. In fact, families have the opportunity to harvest their own lettuce- it does not get fresher than that! Last year alone, the farm yielded 4200 heads of lettuce.

Los Sures Social Services employs a non-traditional community-based approach to assisting local residents of the South Side of Williamsburg, including formerly homeless tenants. Every year, the staff advocates for and provides various services, including Medicaid and Supplemental Needs Assistance (SNAP, also known as Food Stamps) enrollment, to over 700 individuals each year.

In 2013, Los Sures introduced a new service to the community, Virtual Taxes, in partnership with Food Bank for NYC. Staff completed tax forms for

350 people, which brought back approximately \$105,000 in refunds into the community.

The social services department opened a satellite office at 366 Hewes Street to provide easier access to residents on the eastern side of the South Side. This new office is already providing many services, including groceries to 221 seniors each month.

The Los Sures “David Santiago” Senior Center continued expanding its activities last year, providing health promotion and recreation activities, such as Zumba, music lessons, computer lessons and arts & crafts. The center also served approximately 1,300 meals to seniors.

Los Sures also advocates for neighborhood residents on issues that affect them directly. In 2013, staff members helped over 200 community



*Music lessons at the senior center*

## By the Numbers

**360**

Seniors received monthly groceries through NYS CSFP

**500**

Farmer's Market coupons distributed to seniors

**700**

Individuals received social services assistance

**1,500**

Individuals received food assistance from the Food Pantry

**4,200**

Heads of lettuce harvested

**13,000**

Meals to seniors at the Senior Center





*Clockwise from top: Los Sures Food Pantry, Los Sures Hydroponic Farm, Community Cookshop, and free flu shots with Visiting Nurse Service of New York*

residents give voice to their objections to the cuts in SNAP by participating in the Paper Plate Campaign. Families and individuals wrote personal anecdotes of how the cuts affected them so that elected officials could read firsthand the negative impact their choices have on the community.

In addition to many services provided, Los Sures also conducted the Community Cookshop, a 6 week series over the summer for families where 20 adults and 33 children cooked together and learned about healthy eating on a budget.

## Services Provided

- Choice Food Pantry
- Hydroponic Farm
- Tax preparation assistance
- Senior Center
- Information & Referral Services
- Service Coordination
- Supportive Counseling
- Nutritional education
- On Site Food Stamp & Affordable Healthcare Enrollment (Medicaid)

**V** Milagros Bueno  
**O** Ana Espinal  
**I** Violeta Estrella  
**U** Marcos Gomez  
**N** Juana Hernandez  
**T** Flavio Mirabal  
**E** Maria Cristina  
**R** Juan Santiago  
**S** Patricia Serrano  
 Manuel Zuniga





*Clockwise from top: Los Sures Organizing Director leads a group at a housing rally, Town Hall Meeting on the Domino Development, Borinquen Place vigil*

## BY THE NUMBERS

- 86** Residents assisted with DYCD funding
- 438** Residents assisted with HPI funding
- 1,173** Residents assisted without allocated funding

# Community & Tenant Organizing

Los Sures® helps over 1700 individuals every year through its organizing department's anti-displacement activities, housing clinics, tenant rights assistance, organization of tenant associations, assistance to 12 low income HDFC cooperatives, and many other services.

In 2013, organizers worked closely with its ANHD partner in the "Our City, Our Homes" campaign to urge that the 2014 New York City administration prioritize housing issues and improve the overall housing policy. The efforts will continue in 2014 to demand Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning in all new developments.

The department also held various housing rallies, workshops, clinics, and community meetings, including a meeting attended by over 500 residents regarding the development of the Domino Sugar Site.

## Services Provided

- Anti-Displacement activities
- Organization of tenant associations
- Workshops on tenant rights
- Housing clinics & Housing Information
- DHCR form assistance
- SCRIE & DRIE assistance
- Housing application assistance
- Community leadership development
- Work with S.O.S.
- Assistance in management of low-income HDFC coops
- Other activities concerning the community (education, immigration, civic engagement and more)

### V o l u n t e e r s

Cesar Aristi  
Rosa Aviles  
Maria Batista  
Isabel Cairo  
Jesus Castillo  
Lydia Erazo  
Daisy Fuentes  
Yoeli Jaquez  
Anthony Medina  
Yesinia Johnson  
Maria Ozuna  
Rosa Perez  
Rosa Perez  
Melba Rodriguez  
Nurka Rosario  
Amfry Sanchez  
Luisa Santana  
Kathleen Santiago

*L-R: Organizers provide tenant rights information; community residents at "Our City, Our Homes" forum*





# El Museo de Los Sures



For over 40 years, Southside United HDFC (Los Sures) has witnessed dynamic changes in South Williamsburg. As the area undergoes gentrification and demand for housing rises, rent costs have increased significantly- more than doubling in the past few years alone. Although many long-term residents have been displaced, others continue to proudly form part of this thriving neighborhood.

To preserve the history of the neighborhood's residents, Los Sures partnered with Cornell University and Churches United for Fair Housing to create El Museo de Los Sures. In 2013, the museum held a photographic exhibit depicting life in the South Side in the 70s and 80s.



# Cultural and Community Celebrations

Los Sures hosted events, festivals, & holiday celebrations throughout the year that united the community and raised cultural awareness.



**Community Leadership  
Recognition Day**



**Los Sures® Festival**



**Social Services Satellite  
office Grand Opening**



**Los Sures® Halloween**



**Dominican Restoration  
Day Celebration**



**Dominican Independence  
Day Celebration**



**11th Annual Community  
Thanksgiving Dinner**



**Vigil and March against  
Domestic Violence**







# Los Sures® Management Company

Los Sures® Management currently manages the marketing, maintenance, lease renewals, re-certifications, and rent collection of 29 properties, which include over 580 units of affordable housing and over 25 commercial spaces. Additionally, staff works with low-income tenant cooperatives to provide various types of technical assistance, such as book-keeping services, creating monthly financial reports, managing repairs, and rent collection.

During the past couple of years, Los Sures® Management has aggressively worked to increase rent collections by 95%, which means that buildings will now have a better financial situation and needed repairs can be undertaken.

Staff also regularly submits reports to all the monitoring Agencies as per its regulatory agreements with New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development and the Division of Housing and Community Renewal. Additionally, they submit annual apartment, building and major equipment registration in accordance with city codes.





# Major Funders

- **NYC Department of Youth & Community Development**  
*Housing & Community Organizing, Discretionary Grant for Social Services & Organizing*
- **NYC Department for the Aging**  
*Los Sures® “David Santiago” Senior Center*
- **NYC Department of Housing Preservation & Development**  
*Housing Preservation Initiative (HPI) Contract for Organizing*
- **New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal**  
*Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) Contract for Affordable Housing Development & Organizing*
- **Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development**  
*INCO grant for anti-displacement and Fellowship Program (w/ Morgan Stanley)*
- **M&T Foundation**  
*Community organizing grant*
- **Council Member Diana Reyna**  
*Affordable housing development funding*
- **Capital One Foundation**  
*Operating support grant*
- **United Way**  
*Los Sures® Food Pantry and Hydroponic Farm grant*
- **Food Bank of NYC**  
*Los Sures® Food Pantry grant*

# Financial Overview

## SOUTHSIDE UNITED HDFC & RELATED ENTITIES

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Total Assets	\$34,753,194
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Total Liabilities	\$11,859,307
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<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>\$22,893,887</b>
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Total Management Revenue	\$1,020,546
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Total Management Expenses	\$984,471
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<b>Net Management Revenue</b>	<b>\$36,075</b>
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Total Development Revenue	\$85,935
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Total Development Expenses	\$41,369
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<b>Total Development Revenue</b>	<b>\$44,566</b>
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\*Information based on June 2012 audited financial data.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**David Lopez**  
*Chairman*

**Ray Narvaez**  
*Vice Chairman*

**Israel Rosario**  
*Treasurer*

**Maria Ocasio**  
*Secretary*

**Cassandra Acevedo**  
**Teresa Cruz**  
**Gladys Franco**  
**Ricardo Molina**  
**Maisha Morales**  
**Rosa Nieves**  
**Martin Needelman**  
**Gladys Ogando**  
**Juan Ramos**

## STAFF

**Ramon Peguero, Esq.**  
*Executive Director*

### ADMINISTRATIVE

**Evelyn Cruz**  
*Administrative Assistant*

### COMMUNICATIONS

**Thomas Servello**  
*Director of Communications*

### FISCAL

**Shaquaya Givens**  
*Bookkeeper*  
**Gaudi Polanco-Mendoza**  
*Fiscal Director*  
**Maria Rojas**  
*Bookkeeper*

### HUMAN RESOURCES

**Alex Nemenko**  
*H.R. Manager*

### ORGANIZING

**Gladys Ferra**  
*Administrative Assistant*  
**Debra Medina**  
*Director of Organizing*  
**Iris Minaya**  
*Community Organizer*  
**Barbara Schliff**  
*Tenant Organizer*

**PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**  
**Soula Panagodimos**  
*Fundraising & Program Director*

### PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

**Luis Alicea,**  
*Field Supervisor*  
**Julio Amayo**  
*Porter*  
**Jorge Elias Arias**  
*Porter*  
**Jose Bonilla**  
*Superintendent*  
**Richard Borges**  
*Superintendent*  
**Eulogio De La Cruz**  
*Porter*  
**Sonia Iglesias**  
*Director of Housing Management*  
**Luis Maldonado**  
*Superintendent*  
**Pablo Maldonado**  
*Superintendent*  
**Majorie Marcellus**  
*Rent Recovery Specialist*  
**Jose Peñalo Batista**  
*Porter*  
**Gregorio Perez Manzueta**  
*Superintendent*  
**Carlos Reyes**  
*Porter*  
**Judith Rivera**  
*Housing Specialist*  
**Hector Rodriguez**  
*Superintendent*  
**Felix Rosario**  
*Porter*  
**David Ruiz**  
*Superintendent*  
**Jasmani Santillan**

*Superintendent*  
**Donavan Soria**  
*Superintendent*  
**Gilbert Sotomayor**  
*Porter*  
**Ernesto Torres**  
*Porter*  
**Maria Vazquez**  
*Porter*  
**Edgardo Velez**  
*Field Supervisor*

### REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT

**Brandie Moreno**  
*Morgan Stanley/ANHD*  
*Community Dev. Fellow*  
**Natalie Rodriguez**  
*Dev.Assistant*  
**Sandy Rozario**  
*Director of Real Estate Dev.*

### SOCIAL SERVICES

**Denise Correa**  
*Senior Center Director*  
**Dilcia de la Cruz**  
*Kitchen Aid*  
**Nilsa Gonzalez**  
*Service Coordinator*  
**Pedro Lebron**  
*Kitchen Aid*  
**Maily Mateo**  
*Food Support Coordinator*  
**Raquel Queme**  
*Services Coordinator*  
**Maria Reyes**  
*Activities Outreach Specialist*  
**Robin Sirota-Bassin**  
*Director of Social Services*  
**Adrienne Vega**  
*Services Coordinator*



**Father Karvelis**

**Monsignor Ruiz**



