

# SOUTHSIDE UNITED HDFC - LOS SURES<sup>®</sup>

2014 Annual Report





*Community Residents at the South 5th Street Block Association Block Party, facilitated by Los Sures.*

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*2014 Los Sures Bring Your Sons and Daughters to Work Day.*



# About Southside United HDFC

Southside United HDFC, better known as “Los Sures®,” is a community-based, non-profit organization that has served as an integral part in rebuilding the South Side of Williamsburg, Brooklyn since 1972. Los Sures has undertaken large-scale rehabilitation of many buildings, allowing families and individuals to live comfortably while creating a sustainable neighborhood. Additionally, the organization provides a multitude of much-needed services, including a senior center and a food pantry.

## 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.*

## Vision

*“Los Sures envisions a future where its organic roots in Williamsburg will continue to contribute to building a community where diversity is valued and embraced; where neighborhood residents share the core values of respect, commitment, and integrity; and where unity, hope and perseverance help to unfold the human potential of the Williamsburg community.*

*Los Sures pledges to continue the struggle and advocate for affordable housing, access to health care and nutrition services, and educational opportunity and employment services, working in collaboration with the larger community.*

*In such a future Los Sures will continue to be known and widely respected; will have sustainable resources; will be housed in a facility that respects the environment and the aspirations of neighborhood residents so as to continue to improve the quality of life for Williamsburg children, youth, seniors and families.”*

# A message from the Chairman of the Board

To our community,

Our Multi-Service Community Organization, Southside United HDFC, has been in existence since 1972. Most will agree that through the decades it has been of great service to the residents of North Brooklyn through its dedication and commitment to working families.

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 recommitted our organizing efforts to ensure that residents living in what is left of the affordable rent-stabilized housing stock are not forced out.



While remaining true to our mission and to our past, we must also be open to new opportunities 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 development, youth services, financial literacy, higher education, adult education, senior services, social services, legal services, health education and disease prevention for families, and a healthier understanding of our mutual interest in both protecting and sustaining our environment.

In present day Williamsburg, one of the most desirable places to live in the City of New York, 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. 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

Dear friends and supporters,

We've had a great year at Southside United HDFC, and we could not have done it without you. Our staff and services have continued to grow and so has the support from our community and our business partners. The future looks promising as our programs now go far beyond the development and preservation of affordable housing.

Few things energize us more than to see community members become empowered through education and activism. In October, we brought together over 800 individuals for a town hall meeting to learn about the Domino site redevelopment. Throughout the year, we organized and transported Williamsburg residents to citywide protests, including the Real Affordability for All march in Harlem, where they joined over 1,000 individuals.

We are also passionate about the direct assistance we provide to our community. Despite the radical gentrification rampant in North Brooklyn, we were able to help 1,700 individuals stay in their homes last year through tenant counseling. In addition, we assisted over 19,000 individuals through various programs, including free benefits enrollment, tax filing, and monthly groceries at the Los Sures Food Pantry, named "Agency of the Year" by the Food Bank for New York City in 2014. The food pantry's hydroponic farm has been converted to a state of the art automated system where lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, and cilantro are now grown and distributed to residents directly.

As waves of new residents call North Brooklyn home, we have not forgotten about our seniors, who should have a place to socialize and continue learning. The Los Sures "David Santiago" Senior Center provides a variety of free classes and services year round to seniors and was recently selected as one of only 5 centers citywide by NYC's Department for the Aging and United Neighborhood Houses of New York to participate in the Older Adults Strengthening Communities through Food. This initiative will build



and develop best practices for a strength-based and purpose-driven approach to programming in senior centers.

We believe that to meet affordable housing needs in Brooklyn, new development and the preservation of available stock must go hand-in-hand. As we reposition 60% of our housing portfolio, we are expanding our catchment area through a partnership with a private developer to create affordable housing in Bushwick.

We thank our sponsors, supporters, and friends for believing in our mission and our capacity to protect local 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 and we look forward to our continued collaboration.

Sincerely,

Ramon Peguero, Esq.  
Executive Director



To date, we have  
**Developed** and  
**Rehabilitated**  
over **4000** units  
for residents of  
**North Brooklyn**

*201 Roebling, a senior housing building rehabilitated by Los Sures in 2014.*



# Housing

Through its Housing Department, Los Sures acquires and develops low-income housing for the community of North Brooklyn. To date, it has rehabilitated and constructed **2,950 units in over 300 buildings** and has developed **43 co-ops, with 1,002 units**. In addition, the organization has purchased and rehabilitated seven small vacant buildings, which were sold to local residents.

The housing department also oversees Los Sures Management Company, Inc., which manages close to **600 units in 30 Buildings**, with 213 units expected to be brought back to the management portfolio in the near future. The company's current stock is varied and it includes HUD Section 202 Senior Housing, Low Income Housing Tax Credit and HDFC co-ops and rental properties.

In 2014, Los Sures completed the rehabilitation of a 56-unit HUD 202 senior building located at 201 Roebling Street in Brooklyn. The project was financed with New York State Low-Income Housing Tax Credits through a partnership with The Richman Group. The rehabilitation included all new kitchens, bathroom upgrades, new roofing, new windows, a new elevator, and an improved HVAC systems. Most noticeable is the newly redesigned lobby area,

community recreation room, and outdoor garden space, which were improved utilizing Active Design elements developed in collaboration with the New York City Department of Health. Los Sures also worked with LISC's Two Shades of Green initiative to implement green cleaning measures in the building to improve the quality of life of tenants so that they would no longer be exposed to potentially harmful chemicals.

In late 2014, Los Sures closed on construction financing for six of its Special Initiatives Program (SIP) buildings and 383 Hewes Street, which already began undergoing rehabilitations. The buildings in these two projects, consisting of 144 units, will receive new roofs, parapets, and boilers as well as other necessary capital work, including the restoration of their masonry facades. 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.

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 BQGreen, a unique project covering a section of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway,

providing much needed open park space to neighborhood residents.

In 2015, Los Sures plans to reposition the 21-unit residential building at 907 Driggs Avenue to provide financing for renovations. The rehabilitation work scope includes new roofing and windows, as well as updating the HVAC, elevator, and trash compactor systems. In addition to the modernization improvements, Los Sures will also implement several new green design measures in lighting and insulation through a partnership with BrightPower, aimed at improving energy efficiency and overall building performance.

In addition to the rehabilitation of existing buildings in the portfolio, Los Sures is also planning new residential construction and is currently in the planning and pre-development stages for 211-213 South 4th Street and at the former Rheingold Brewery site in Bushwick. The 211-213 South 4th Street project is a partnership with Two Trees, and preliminary projections call for a 54-unit building at 120% of AMI. The Rheingold project is a joint venture with Churches United for Fair Housing, utilizing land acquired from Read Property Group in late 2013. Los Sures hopes to leverage community support to expand its catchment area and build around 70 units of senior housing to reverse the trend of displacement in Bushwick.



*New intercom system at 201 Roebing Street.*



*New mural at 201 Roebing street.*





*Rehabilitation work on the roof at 201 Roebling Street.*



*New boiler at 201 Roebling street.*

# Social Services

As visitors to Williamsburg and North Brooklyn notice the towering high-rises and trendy restaurants that continue to appear almost overnight, they may forget the families struggling to make a living and stay in their homes. However, the number of individuals that the Los Sures Social Services department assists continues to increase, clearly demonstrating that these families are still here and that they need help.

The social services department employs a non-traditional community-based approach to assisting local residents of North Brooklyn, including formerly homeless tenants. The department manages the Los Sures Food Pantry and Hydroponic Farm as well as the Los Sures “David Santiago” Senior Center.

In 2014, the Los Sures Food Pantry was honored as “Pantry of the Year” by Food Bank for New York City. **18,762 individuals** received food from the supermarket-style “Choice” Emergency Food Pantry, representing a 12% increase from the year before. Additionally, **600 seniors** receive monthly groceries through the Food And Nutrition program, which is a 50% increase over last year.

The Hydroponic Farm, located within the Food Pantry, was converted to a state of the art automated system where lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, and cilantro are now grown. The pantry is in the process of expanding its access to fresh food by raising chickens to produce eggs.

As a Virtual VITA site, Los Sures filed **700 tax returns** in 2014 bringing in approximately \$300,000 in refunds to the community. The staff also assisted **over 500 unduplicated**

**individuals** with a variety of issues such as housing and income supports.

The Los Sures “David Santiago” Senior Center continues to thrive by providing various classes, including Zumba, music, and basic computer literacy. Seniors also have the opportunity to enjoy trips to many different locations and activities. In 2014, the center was selected as one of only 5 centers citywide by NYC’s Department for the Aging and United Neighborhood Houses of New York to participate in the Older Adults Strengthening Communities through Food. This initiative will build and develop best practices for a strength-based and purpose-driven approach to programming in senior centers

The social services department also plays a vital role in creating a sense of belonging and community among seniors, not only at the senior center, but also in the senior housing buildings at 145 S. 3rd Street and 201 Roebling Street. The staff plans various holiday and special occasion celebrations throughout the year to encourage seniors to socialize and expand their support network. They also plan activities and keep them informed on important issues.

At the end of 2014, the department planned a successful Holiday Food and Toy drive to ensure that the pantry was stocked and that low-income kids in the neighborhood would be able to receive gifts during the holiday season.

The Social Services Satellite Office is able to assist residents residents East of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway and it also plans celebrations, movie nights and other activities for the tenants of 366 Hewes Street, where the office is located.





We help  
**O V E R**  
**19,000**  
Residents  
**M a k e**  
**E n d s**  
**M e e t**  
Every Year

*Lettuce growing at Los Sures Hydroponic Farm.*



## SERVICES PROVIDED:

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



*Volunteers assisting residents at the Los Sures Food Pantry.*



*Kids receiving gifts at the 2014 Holiday Food & Toy Drive.*





*Seniors celebrating mothers day at the Los Sures "David Santiago" Senior Center.*



*A teacher and a student learning about hydroponics at the Los Sures Hydroponic Farm.*



We help  
over 1,700  
**TENANTS**  
**STAY IN**  
**THEIR**  
**HOMES**  
every year



*Los Sures community activists at a rally and march in 2014.*



# Community & Tenant Organizing

The Los Sures Organizing Department provides technical assistance to neighborhood residents by providing tenant consultations, improving their self-leadership, and advocating for their housing rights. This past year over **1,700 residents** received direct assistance from the department. Additionally, staff helped residents in forming and facilitating building-based tenant associations, providing resources through meetings and workshops, accompanying tenants to housing court and to other housing-related agencies.

The department works with **12 HDFC's and 14 Tenant Associations** and in 2014 it helped four of them obtain loans from the Survival Fund, which helped them to improve their buildings; structures: 272 South 5th Street (New Boiler), 312 South 3rd Street (New Boiler), 341 South 5th Street (Repaired the roof and a vacant apartment) and 392 Marcy Ave (Hot Water Heater).

Throughout the year, Los Sures works with various organizations and coalitions to advocate for affordable housing, including:

- Association for Housing and Neighborhood Development*- Works to build the strength of the community development movement in New York City.

- Broadway Triangle Community Coalition*- Works to ensure that the whole community is included in the development process of that area.

- Mobilization against Displacement*- Fights displacement in North Brooklyn.

- Housing Task Force (ACABO)*- Seeks to create relationships with city and state agencies to ensure prompt attention to buildings with abusive landlords and hazard conditions.

- Rheingold Coalition*-Works to ensure that the community is involved in the development process at the Rheingold site.

- Right to Counsel*-Works to pass legislation that will allow every person the rights to legal assistance.

- Stand for Tenants' Safety* - Works on legislation that will provide safety for tenants in buildings that are undergoing construction.

- Rent Regulations Coalition (R3)*: Works to make sure that the rent regulations are renewed and strengthened.

In 2014, Los Sures conducted housing rights workshops in local churches, Schools and Day Care Centers. Staff also held monthly housing clinics from May through September during evening hours to help working individuals.

Los Sures also organized community residents and volunteers to participate in various marches and rallies throughout the city.

## 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.OS.
- Assistance in management of low-income HDFC co-ops
- Other activities concerning the community (education, immigration, civic engagement and more)



*Tenant association meeting led by Los Sures Tenant Organizer Barbara Schloff.*

*Los Sures and other activists at New York City Hall demanding Mandatory Inclusionary Zoning.*







*Over 800 community residents at a town hall meeting organized by Los Sures and CUFFH.*



*Community Residents speaking out against domestic violence in North Brooklyn.*

# Culture

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 while welcoming new residents, Los Sures hosts various cultural events throughout the year celebrating diversity. 2014 events included: Dominican Independence Day Celebration, Puerto Rican Heritage Celebration, 12th Annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner, Los Sures Festival, South 5th Street Block Association Block Party, Dominican Restoration Day Celebration, and Los Sures Halloween.

In 2014, **El Museo de Los Sures** teamed up with the International Studio and Curatorial Program (ISCP) to host international artists who

were eager to engage the community. 2014 artists included Alice Schivardi (Italy), Michelle-Marie Letelier (Chile), and Itziar Barrio (Spain). The museum's lineup for 2015 has already been filled with international artists and an exhibition by NYU students researching gentrification in Williamsburg and Bushwick. Los Sures created the museum in 2012 to unite established and new residents through art while remembering the heritage of the individuals who shaped this community.

Los Sures also publishes ***Williamsburg Now***, a bilingual newspaper with stories about North Brooklyn and the great work that Los Sures and other organizations, businesses, and community leaders have undertaken here. The newspaper consistently includes stories about art and cultural events. In 2014, it was published quarterly and beginning in 2015, it will increase its frequency to become a monthly publication. Readers can find the publication in print at various locations and online.





*Cultural dance performance at 2014 Dominican Restoration Day.*



*Community residents at the 2014 Los Sures Festival.*



*Los Sures staff and volunteers serving residents at the 2014 Annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner.*

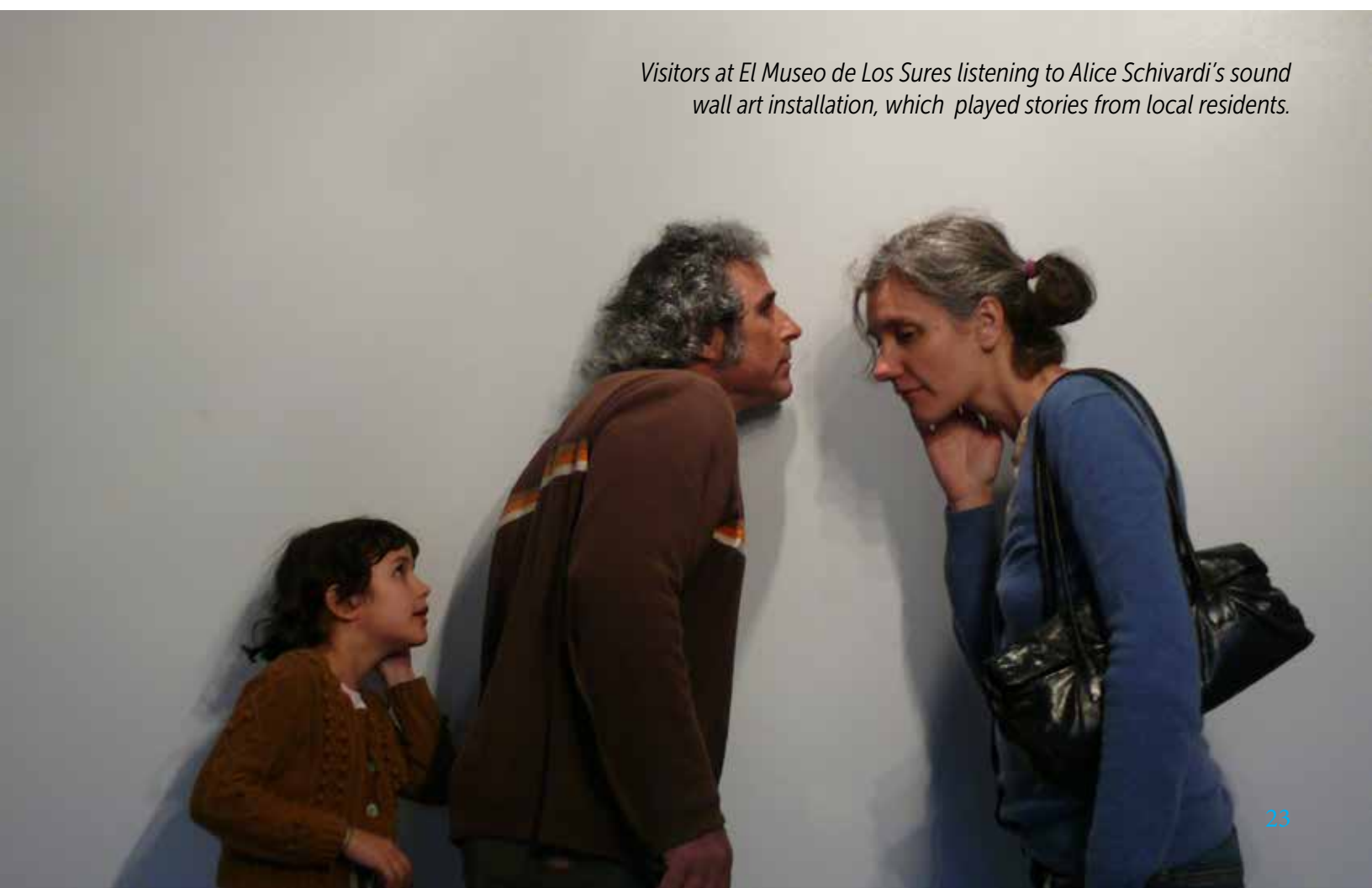




*Cultural performance at the 2014 Puerto Rican Heritage Celebration.*



*Visitors at El Museo de Los Sures listening to Alice Schivardi's sound wall art installation, which played stories from local residents.*





# Major Funders & Private Sponsors

## FUNDING ENTITIES

Capital One Foundation  
Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP)  
Food Bank of NYC  
M&T Charitable Foundation  
NYC Dept. of Youth and Community Dev.  
NYC Dept. of Youth and Community Development  
NYC Department for the Aging  
NYC Dept. of Housing Preservation & Development  
NYS Division of Housing & Community Renewal  
New York Community Trust  
TD Charitable Foundation  
United Neighborhood Houses of New York  
United Way of NYC

## PRIVATE SPONSORS

Almo Group Corporation  
FG-PH Corporation  
LP Fuel Oil Company  
Read Property Group  
Richman Housing Group  
Rockabill Advisors

# Financial Overview

Total Assets	\$35,723,250
Total Liabilities	\$14,239,577
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$21,483,673</b>
Total Management Revenue	\$749,414
Total Management Expenses	\$618,538
<b>NET MANAGEMENT REVENUE</b>	<b>\$130,876</b>
Total Development Revenue	\$85,714
Total Development Expenses	\$36,902
<b>TOTAL DEVELOPMENT REVENUE</b>	<b>\$48,812</b>



# Board of Directors and Staff

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

David Lopez  
*Chairman*  
Ray Narvaez  
*Vice Chairman*  
Israel Rosario  
*Treasurer*  
Cassandra Acevedo  
*Secretary*  
Teresa Cruz  
Ricardo Molina  
Maisha Morales  
Rosa Nieves  
Martin Needelman  
Maria Ocasio  
Gladys Ogando  
Juan Ramos  
Willie Vargas

## STAFF

Ramon Peguero, Esq.  
*Executive Director*

### ADMINISTRATIVE

Evelyn Cruz  
*Administrative Assistant*

### COMMUNICATIONS

Thomas Servello, MBA  
*Director of Communications*  
Hector Cardona  
*Communications Associate*

### FISCAL

Gaudi Polanco-Mendoza, CPA  
*Fiscal Director*  
Shaquaya Givens  
*Staff Accountant*  
Maria Rojas  
*Bookkeeper*

## FUND DEVELOPMENT

Soula Panagodimos  
*Director of Program & Fund Dev.*

### HOUSING

Sandy Rozario, MS  
*Director of Housing*  
Sashelle Archer  
*Administrative Assistant*  
Majorie Marcellus  
*Rent Recovery Specialist*  
Iris Minaya  
*Maintenance Supervisor*  
Judith Rivera  
*Housing Specialist*  
Natalie Rodriguez  
*Dev. Assistant*  
Alan Baker Yu, MCP  
*Project Manager*

## MAINTENANCE

Luis Alicea,  
*Field Supervisor*  
Edgardo Velez  
*Field Supervisor*  
Julio Amayo  
*Porter*  
Jorge Elias Arias  
*Superintendent*  
Jose Bonilla  
*Superintendent*  
Raidy Candelario  
*Porter*  
Luis Castillo  
*Porter*  
Eulogio De La Cruz  
*Porter*  
Edwin Guzman  
*Superintendent*  
Luis Maldonado  
*Superintendent*  
Jose Peñalo Batista  
*Porter*

Gregorio Perez Manzueta  
*Superintendent*  
Hector Rodriguez  
*Superintendent*  
Felix Rosario  
*Porter*  
David Ruiz  
*Superintendent*  
Jasmani Santillan  
*Superintendent*  
Donavan Soria  
*Superintendent*  
Gilbert Sotomayor  
*Porter*  
Miguel Tituana,  
*Porter*  
Ernesto Torres  
*Porter*  
Maria Vazquez  
*Porter*

## ORGANIZING

Debra Medina  
*Director of Housing Resources*  
Daniel Moraff  
*Community Organizer*  
Alejandra Nasser  
*Community Organizer*  
Barbara Schliff  
*Tenant Organizer*

## SOCIAL SERVICES

Robin Sirota-Bassin, MSW  
*Director of Social Services*  
Dilcia de la Cruz  
*Kitchen Aid*  
Nilsa Gonzalez  
*Service Coordinator*  
Pedro Lebron  
*Kitchen Aide*  
Sonia Iglesias  
*Senior Center Director*  
Raquel Queme  
*Services Coordinator*

### **Special thanks to our dedicated volunteers:**

Cesar Aristi, Christine Argento, Rosa Aviles, Maria Batista, Milagros Bueno, Isabel Cairo, Yanet Castelan, Jesus Castillo, Lydia Erazo, Ana Espinal, Violeta Estrella, Rene Fodera, Daisy Fuentes, Marcos Gomez, Domingo Guzman-Estrella, Juana Hernandez, Yoeli Jaquez, Yesinia Johnson, Anthony Medina, Flavio Mirabal, Annie Orta Maria Ozuna, Margarita Pepin Rosa Perez, Rosa A. Perez, Melba Rodriguez, Maria C. Rosa, Nurka Rosario, Amfry Sanchez, Luisa Santana, Juan Santiago, Kathleen Santiago, Patricia Serrano, Lynn Villanti, Manuel Zuniga.



