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HEIGHTS AND HILLS

supporting brooklyn's older adults

annual report • 2010



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends of Heights and Hills,

Heights and Hills is a vibrant and vital community organization comprised of dedicated professionals and passionate board members who come together to make a positive impact on the lives of older adults in Brooklyn. I am deeply honored to write to you as Heights and Hills' new president and want to thank Eliza Rossman, our immediate past president, for her leadership over these past three years of unprecedented change and challenge; as well as Mary Lou Wells who retired from our board after 24 years of service. They both exemplify the commitment and dedication of our volunteer board.

As the largest borough in New York City, Brooklyn also has the largest number of older adults who, now or in the future, will need our help. Our newly revised mission statement, "**Heights and Hills promotes successful aging in place**," is a simple sentence that belies the complexity of the services and work that our caring multi-lingual professional staff provides to older adults in our community. This year, our Executive Director, Judy Willig, led the organization to new heights. Our professional staff was increased

in order to meet the service needs of our continually expanding client base. Through case management, our primary tool, we were able to ensure that more than 2,000 elderly Brooklynites received the services they need to live as independently as possible, and with dignity. However, there is much more going on in the offices at 57 Willoughby Street.

Heights and Hills successfully competed for a new Caregiver contract allowing us to expand our services to the family members and friends who provide care to our older adults, helping caregivers understand the many issues involved in eldercare and access important respite care for themselves. Through our Community Empowerment Project we put together a steering committee of community residents to explore ways to assure that our neighborhoods are places that are "user friendly" for all of us as we grow.

While our basic services are covered by government funding and we proudly operate with conservative fiscal principals on a lean budget, government grants are not enough to cover the costs associated with running an effective organization. With shrinking government budgets and cuts to funding looming around every corner, the generosity of our individual, foundation and corporate supporters are more important now than ever.

On behalf of the board, the staff and those who count on the services of Heights and Hills, we thank you for your past support and ask that you join us in supporting Heights and Hills this year. Your contributions demonstrate to us how vital the work of Heights and Hills

continues to be in the community. Thank you for your confidence in our work and for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Dona Metcalf Laughlin
President



"I thank you on behalf of my sisters for the outstanding support provided by our mother's social worker who spent quality time helping our family understand the process and intricate procedures associated with improving our mother's diminishing quality of life. Whenever there were problems, they were solved so quickly that we did not know a problem existed. She visited our mother in times of distress. Her personal involvement made a significant difference in our mother's life. Your hard work and dedication has been truly appreciated!"

Gregory R.

"Without your interest and concerns my existence and for many others in our community life would be dismal and meaningless. Thank you for your extraordinary dedication."

Rose L.





JUDY WILLIG, LCSW
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Our last year was one of many challenges, but our accomplishments and our positive impact on older adults aged 60 and over and their family and friends in the 18 Brooklyn neighborhoods we serve were even more abundant.

We are proud to have grown to become one of the largest providers of case management services for older adults in NYC. Through the hard work of our staff, our Board of Directors, our volunteers, and the support of our generous donors, neighbors and friends, Heights and Hills has become a stronger, more dynamic and effective organization. We are delighted to share with you our numerous achievements over the past year:

PROGRAMMATIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Case Management

• Since January 2010, Heights and Hills received 1,372 new calls from people in need of services. Through our expedited **intake process**, callers were given information about services, received assistance with applications for entitlements and/or were provided with referrals to other community services without having to wait for services, while the rest were assigned to social workers or case managers for on-going services.

• From January until the time of this writing, our multi-lingual staff provided **case management** to 1,573 adults aged 60 and over who are struggling to maintain their independence in their homes. Some of our clients have been with us on a long-term basis while others are new to Heights and Hills. All of these elders received visits in their

homes to assess their needs and the majority of them were provided with on-going services and follow-up care. This number represents a 70% increase in the number of clients we served from last year and a 1,050% increase in the number of clients from 2007, the year prior to our expansion.

- Unfortunately, we do not have enough staff to meet the growing needs, which means that potential clients are put on a **waiting list** for case management services. Recognizing that this is a trend that is not going to end anytime soon, we have worked diligently to set up a system that triages client needs quickly and serves as many people as possible in the most efficient and effective way possible. As a result, no one has to wait to receive home delivered meals and we have been able to reduce our waiting list down to only 70 people from a peak of 465 in 2009.

"You are the greatest! I truly love you all – each and every one!"

Theresa F.

- Government funds to help provide services to the elderly have been decreasing at the same time that our caseloads have been growing. To deal with this serious challenge, we have been working in close collaboration with other providers and in partnership with the NYC Department for the Aging (DFTA) to implement service reductions when there is no alternative, but in ways that will not place elders at risk. And, when loud voices are needed to speak for those who don't have a voice, we are at the table to **advocate** on their behalf.

- Heights and Hills staff members participated in **19 in-service trainings** on topics ranging from hearing and vision loss, elder abuse, burn prevention, entitlements and benefits, hospice care, specialized Medicaid services, Alzheimers disease, working with older GLBT clients, worker safety

in the field, and more. In addition, staff regularly participates in trainings and workshops offered by other organizations in order to make sure that we are aware of the latest developments in aging services.

Caregiver Program

- Effective July 1 of this year, Heights and Hills was awarded a three-year contract to establish a **Caregiver Program** that offers information, referrals, counseling, support groups and other services to families and friends providing care to elderly loved ones. Our caregiver program staff consists of a director, a social worker and an entitlements and benefits coordinator, who are available to make presentations, give workshops, consult and offer counseling.

- Between July and September, before our staff was on board, we counseled 40 caregivers. In October, our first full month of operations, we saw an additional 56 caregivers and our first support group was formed. Workshops on topics specific to caregivers were introduced in November, including:
 - **Caregiving, It's Inevitable So Why Not Prepare And Do It Better?** – a program for employees of Time, Inc.
 - **Understanding Dementia** – a program open to the community presented at Heights and Hills' office
 - **Caregiver Q and A** – a program for the Park Slope United Methodist Church

"There is no way to ever thank you enough or to repay you. Please know, though, that your efforts, compassion and caring really did make a huge difference for both my aunt and me. I will not forget you or your agency – ever. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."

Nancy K.

- Our work with caregivers offers us the opportunity to incorporate the entire family in the work that we provide. While the care recipient must be an

older adult, the caregiver does not. Likewise, the care recipient does not need to live locally. For instance, a caregiver who lives in Brooklyn and cares for a parent living in Ohio is welcome to utilize the services of this new program to seek information or support or to have questions answered.

"My social worker has been working with my daughters to get me on Medicaid and to advise what other benefits are available. He is a dedicated and caring individual who has done far more for us than his job requires, not asking for thanks but believing he has the obligation to go way beyond what we expected. He deserves all the praise we can give him!"

Pearl U.

Community Empowerment Project

- Heights and Hills is one of 15 organizations in New York State and only one of three in New York City to receive a **Community Empowerment planning grant** from the State Office for Aging (SOFA) to engage in a collaborative planning process with older neighbors to identify what they need and want in order to age in place in their communities. As a result of this work, we are collecting data through a comprehensive survey developed by a hard-working steering committee of volunteers from our target communities. The results, once compiled will be useful in developing a roadmap for the future of six contiguous and historic Brooklyn neighborhoods: Boerum Hill, Brooklyn Heights, Carroll Gardens, Cobble Hill, Gowanus and Park Slope. To date we have reached out to more than 20 different organizations to enlist their help in disseminating our survey. We have received nearly 400 responses and are eager to hear what community residents age 55 and older have to say.

- To access our survey and have your voice heard, go to <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/5XRYTDQ>.

Transportation Program

- Through our senior shuttle and van services, we have provided 4,846 rides to seniors living in the communities of Brooklyn Heights, Cobble Hill, Carroll Gardens, Concord Village and Boerum Hill since January.

As we move into our 40th anniversary year, we face more challenges and now new budget cuts from DFTA are looming. However, we enter this new chapter with a renewed and re-energized sense of hope and excitement. Now, more than ever, we are committed to our mission to "promote successful aging in place." We thank you for joining us in our efforts to meet that objective and in making our communities a better place.

Warmest regards,

Judy Willig, LCSW
Executive Director

FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial summary derived from audited financials from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010

OPERATING REVENUE

Government grants	\$1,274,424
Foundation grants	\$125,000
Special events	\$54,795
Individual and community giving contributions	\$99,252
Rent, interest and miscellaneous income	\$46,869
Total Operating Revenue	\$1,600,340

EXPENSES

Program services	\$1,230,559
Management and administrative services	\$186,548
Fundraising	\$123,836
Total Expenses	\$1,540,943

NET ASSETS

Net Assets, beginning of year	\$830,993
Change in net assets	\$116,091
Net Assets, end of year	\$947,084

