

Come on in

Brooklyn leaders show support at our 1st annual open house

On September 20, a warm and sunny day, TP/DOMI welcomed more than 300 new and old friends to our 1st Annual Open House. We designed a day-long series of events to raise public awareness about our work and to honor some of Brooklyn's outstanding political, business and community leaders for their tireless work on behalf of Sunset Park, Red Hook and surrounding Brooklyn neighborhoods.



Zakia Feracho

U.S. Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez, Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, NYS Assemblyman Felix Ortiz and Ray Figueroa.

Touring TP/DOMI

The day opened with a narrated "vision" tour at TP/DOMI's home office on Fourth Avenue. Having been part of TP/DOMI almost since its beginning, Executive Director Ray Figueroa delivered a lively overview of our nearly 30-year history.

Staff then brought guests by van to our other facilities; they saw our shelter for homeless young women at Turning Point Housing on 3rd Avenue; they toured our apartments for formerly homeless youth at Turning Point Red Hook on Henry Street; and they visited our Educational Center on 7th Avenue. At each site, TP/DOMI staff presented details about the services they deliver daily to our clients. Guests returned to Fourth Avenue to be treated to a sumptuous

buffet lunch and musical entertainment.

Honoring Brooklyn leaders

The afternoon's festivities centered on a Community Commitment Recognition Award ceremony held in front of our office. Brooklyn's Borough President Marty Markowitz joined Ray Figueroa as an unofficial emcee. New York State Senator Seymour Lachman, former Community Board 7 Chairperson

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Good News

REBUILDING
RENEWING
RESTORING
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Phone: 718.439.0077 Fax: 718.439.3963 www.tpdomi.org

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NYS Legislature (Special Legislative Session)
NYS Office of Alcoholism & Substance Abuse Services
NYS Office of Children & Family Services

NYS Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance
NYC Department of Homeless Services
NYC Department of Housing, Preservation & Development
NYC Department of Probation
NYC Department of Youth & Community Development
NYC HRA (HIV/AIDS Services Administration)
NYC HRA (Medical & Health Research Association- Ryan White)

Good News

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Success at last Ending addiction, beginning anew

For some people, success is measured by how much money they make and how many things they have. For Carmen Nazario, changing her life is the measure of her success. Nazario came to TP/DOMI as a client in 1998; now she is an administrative assistant at TP/DOMI. That's a big change. That's success.

Young troubles

Born in 1951 in Puerto Rico and raised in Park Slope, Nazario became, in her words, a "rebellious teenager" and joined a gang. "There was a lot of racism in the neighborhood and Puerto Ricans weren't safe on the Italian side of the block, and vice versa." Although she liked school and got good grades, Nazario rarely attended. She liked the parties more.

At 14, Nazario remembers, "I made the worst decision in my life." She quit school and moved to the Bronx with her 19-year-old boyfriend. "I thought it was love. He got me into drugs, sent me out on the street and he beat me up. I got a beating everyday." At 16 she was pregnant; at 17 a mother and in detox. "It was the Rockefeller program for drug abusers and I was there for a year, locked up like in jail." Freedom was Phoenix House

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Bringing joy and compassion

Ray Figueroa honored at NYC College of Technology

IN DECEMBER, TP/DOMI Executive Director Ray Figueroa received a 2002 Gifts for Special Children Award at NYC College of Technology of the City University of New York. He accepted the five huge boxes of toys on behalf of the children whose families are affected by HIV/AIDS. "I was very moved by the ceremony, and its purpose — to bring a little joy to children with great needs because of the disease," says Figueroa.

Gifts for Special Children

Each year, City Tech's students, faculty and other supporters collect and distribute thousands of holiday gifts for children living with HIV/AIDS. Professor Francisco Betancourt, chairperson of City Tech's Hospitality Management Program, founded and coordinates the Gifts for Special Children Project. Now in its 16th year, each December the project honors individuals and organizations that are at the forefront of the fight against AIDS.

At the December 12 award ceremony, Figueroa was cited for his compassionate work with children and families affected by HIV/AIDS. David Sheppard, executive director

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Carmen Nazario

Figueroa honored at NYC College of Technology

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of Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS and Angela Grant, director of HIV Prevention and Intervention Services at A.R.T. Corporation, also received awards.

“Whatever hardships our clients are facing— HIV/AIDS, drug addiction, homelessness, illiteracy— as long as they are on the road, trying to turn their lives around, then there’s hope.”

—Ray Figueroa
Executive Director

The festivities began with a luncheon in City Tech’s dining room that students in the college’s Hospitality Management Program prepared and served. Professor Betancourt and Dr. Victor Ayala, dean of professional studies at City Tech and founding chairperson of the Brooklyn AIDS Task Force, hosted the luncheon. The event continued in the college’s atrium before an audience of over 300 people that included Ken Rosato from Fox 5 News and Anna Nurse of the James Beard Foundation.

The program included a series of award presentations, a musical tribute to those

Celebrating & remembering

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Dr. Victor Ayala and Ray Figueroa

lost to AIDS and the release of hundreds of colorful balloons in a symbolic “Rainbow of Love.”

The ceremony concluded with an amazing “Parade of Gifts” given to 22 New York City agencies, including TP/DOMI, that serve HIV/AIDS clients. “We have terrific staff who genuinely love our clients. And we have clients who are really trying to change their lives. All of us appreciated the generous donation of gifts for our clients’ kids,” says Figueroa. ❖

Ending addiction, beginning anew

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program.” The methadone took care of the heroin but not alcohol and coke. In 1993, when she failed a drug test, Nazario decided that it was time “to clean up.”

Things got worse before they got better. She moved in with a man she met in the methadone program, who gave her the virus for HIV. “I was numb. I wasn’t promiscuous. I didn’t share needles. I was in denial for a couple of years and I refused to go on medications,” recalls Nazario. A low, and steadily declining T-cell count and hepatitis C finally were the wake-up call Nazario heard. Today she credits her doctor, Jeffrey Vieira, — “he’s awesome” — for bringing her through. She takes her medications religiously and “feels great.”

Finding a better way

Nazario found her way at TP/DOMI. As a client, she got counseling and was in the first graduating class of the Career Development Program. She did an internship and became an HIV peer educator, giving presentations, handing out pamphlets

and teaching people about HIV and STDs. Nazario’s turnaround was complete when TP/DOMI hired her as a receptionist; in October 2002, she became an administrative assistant.

Nazario is happy today. She feels well and works hard. Her two sons, Angel and Anthony, are doing well and she is the grandmother of five. “In 1998, I came to the Lord and was baptized.” She weaned herself from methadone in 2002.

Carmen Nazario is not done: “I’d like to do more in this organization. I want to take classes and work with people, give back what I got so freely. I have no problem talking about my history. My past is my experience.” ❖

“I’d like to do more in this organization. I want to take classes and work with people, give back what I got so freely.”

—Carmen Nazario
TP/DOMI client,
TP/DOMI administrative
assistant, HIV/AIDS advocate

WHAT’S UP



Save the Date June 9, 2003

TP/DOMI Gala Dinner

at the Brooklyn Marriott

AMONG THE HONOREES

ACTOR/ACTIVIST

Danny Glover

For information and tickets contact Yolanda Rivera 718.439.0077, ext. 157

Our 1st annual open house

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and now New York City Councilwoman Sara Gonzalez who represents Sunset Park, and District Leader George Martinez all showed their support for TP/DOMI by attending the ceremony. Mr. Martinez paid special tribute to our contributions to the community: “Without organizations like this, our children will be lost in the streets.”

This year’s honorees were United States Congresswoman Nydia M. Velazquez; New York State Assemblyman Felix W. Ortiz; the late Sister Geraldine Tobia, co-founder of the Center for Family Life (co-founder Sister Mary Paul accepted the award in her memory); Robert Walsh, senior

vice president for external affairs at Lutheran Medical Center; Gregory Ahl, president of Ahl Tone Communications, Inc; and David Spira of Gross Realty Management.

Thanks to all

The TP/DOMI staff worked hard to plan and host the day. Deputy Executive Director Edith Gnanadass led the planning teams. The police from the 72nd Street Precinct cooperated with our outdoors ceremony. *Caribbean Life* (Brooklyn/Staten Island Edition), the *Bay Ridge Paper* and the *Brooklyn Papers* (Park Slope Edition) all covered the event. And the weather was perfect. Thanks to all for making the Open House a memorable addition to our rich history. ❖