



## **CHiPS and Frances Residence: History and Work to Date**

CHiPS (Community Help in Park Slope) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit, founded in 1971 and based in Brooklyn's Park Slope/Gowanus neighborhood, with the mission of reaching and supporting the needs of our community's most vulnerable members: the hungry, single mothers, and those struggling to make ends meet.

We operate both a food pantry and soup kitchen to provide 425 meals daily (up from 200 per day in the recent past) for breakfast and lunch, and also run the Frances Residence, a temporary shelter for new and expectant mothers and their children.

Established in 1999, the Frances Residence accommodates up to nine new and expecting mothers and their young children. The residence is a transitional program, with the goal of ensuring that all mothers leave when they are ready. The average stay for a family is one year, with the first three months post-childbirth dedicated to building a healthy parent/child bond.

The residence is crucial because being a single parent frequently leads to increased poverty within the household and community. In New York City, 23.6% of children live in poverty, whereas 46.7% of children living in households headed by a single woman are living in poverty, with the rates in specific community districts as high as 82.6%. Rates of child poverty are 27.1% for Black children and 30.1% for Hispanic children. The mothers in our residence are 56% African American, 34% Hispanic-American, and 10% AAPI, the same marginalized populations most vulnerable to systemic oppression and inequality.

Our resident mothers live in fully-furnished studio apartments, and are assisted in finding services, such as pre- and post-natal care, counseling and child care assistance. They also receive personalized guidance with career advancement opportunities and searching for a permanent home. They receive weekly 1:1 coaching provided by social work interns at the top social work schools in NYC. Mothers and families in our care also have full access to our soup kitchen, pantry and our nutrition educator, who works with them individually to develop healthy eating plans for the entire family. Every other week, we provide workshops for the residents on a variety of topics, such as stages of child development, nutrition, budgeting and financial planning and resume writing. We are fully committed to ensuring that each family receives access to quality care and wraparound services.

We admit mothers who are in the last trimester of pregnancy or have children under three years old, and, most importantly, who are proactive in their efforts for a better life. Mothers must be 18 or older, with the typical age being mid-to-late 20s. Mothers come to us to escape such hardships as domestic violence, eviction/rejection by family, and housing arrangements unsuitable for small children.

Dulce, a former Frances Residence mother, offered this testimony of her experience: "This year has been a year of many changes, but thanks to the help I received from the Frances Residence, I am ready to continue advancing in my life, together with my daughter. Thanks to you, I had the time to settle down and find a job that allows me to pay my rent and what is necessary for my daughter. I am leaving with a heart full of gratitude and beautiful memories."



## **Responding to a Growing Need and The Parent Driven Change Program**

Over the last few years, we have seen a surge in need for our services, particularly the food pantry and soup kitchen, but also the Frances Residence. The reasons for this include the extended impact of COVID on families and the expiration of COVID-era benefits, the problem of inflation and rising food prices, as well as the fact that CHiPS is located at the nexus between four of the New York City's Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Centers (HERRCs) set up to provide shelter to asylum seekers in the city.

Although our deepest engagement with these women is during their time at the Residence, we have always done some programming to also support them after they leave. We are seeking support for the introduction of a new program - our Parent-Driven Change Program - that seeks to give control and ownership of outcomes in their own lives back to our Resident mothers by providing them with monthly cash stipends of \$500 to use as they see fit based on goals they have set for themselves.

After spending a year with us at Community Help in Park Slope (CHiPS), the mothers who live in our Frances Residence are poised and ready to take control of their lives, pursue their interests, and continue to provide the best life possible for their children. Our Parent-Driven Change Program is built on the foundational assumption that these mothers have already come as far as they have, against many odds, based on their own intelligence, persistence, hard work, and courage. While we will support them in crafting goals and benchmarks, we believe from experience that these mothers know best themselves what they need. In exchange for this limited, but meaningful unrestricted cash stipend, we will require them to report back to us periodically to let us know where they are in terms of achieving the goals that they themselves set.

Our role as the administrator of the Parent-Driven Change Program will be to first assist them in developing these goals during their time at the residence. Then, during the 12 months after they leave the Frances Residence, we will provide the full panoply of CHiPS' referral resources - i.e. assistance towards housing, education, employment and/or parenting programs. While our outcomes will be varied and based entirely on parameters set by the participants, we will be measuring progress across a spectrum of benchmarks, such as success in finding permanent housing, progress in career development and/or wage increase, or successful enrollment of children in educational programs.

Our Director of Residential and Case Management Services will provide a base level of care and counseling support to our residents, during their stay at the residence and after they leave. By expanding our Frances Residence program to include the Parent Driven Change component, our goal is to ensure that when a family leaves our care, they are fully situated and empowered, completely able to thrive on their own and revel in their independence.

Ultimately, our goal as a transitional residence is to have all mothers settle into new apartments of their own, utilizing the tools provided by CHiPS staff and social workers. To help them succeed on their journey to independence.

## **Budget and Revenue**

The annual operating budget for CHiPS (including Frances Residence) is \$1,835,812, which we raise annually through a combination of individual donations, and foundation and government grants. The budget of Frances Residence is \$400,000.