



Reaching the Maximum Level of Self-Sufficiency

CAP Celebrates Culinary Excellence

On Aug. 22, 41 chefs graduated from an HRA training program, many of which already had jobs waiting for them.

The BEGIN Culinary Arts Program (CAP) celebrated the accomplishments of these students with a ceremony in Long Island City. "Hard work pays off," said Excellence Award winner Colin Campbell. "I got my first paycheck today. I start my second job tomorrow night."

Clients in the program are enrolled full-time from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday for 12 weeks. This includes six weeks of classroom instruction and six weeks of work experience in a kitchen setting using skills acquired in class, said Georgia Salley, Executive Director of the BEGIN program. The program has a limit of 160 students annually, but 172 were enrolled in FY 08. For FY 07, of the program's enrollments, 100 clients were placed in full-time jobs ranging in salary from \$7 to \$19 per hour. For this year, out of the 172 enrolled, 108 of the trainees were placed in jobs with salaries ranging from \$7.15 to \$15.38 per hour.



BEGIN Executive Director Georgia Salley congratulates a graduate.

CAP began in 2002. Students are taught in an industrial kitchen setting by a highly experienced and licensed professional chef. CAP trainees learn basic cooking including food preparation, nutrition and sanitation, knife and equipment skills, food presentation, event planning and catering skills. As CAP caters many HRA/FIA events and meetings, this provides the trainees a real world experience at planning, preparation and service for professional business events, Salley said. At the sixth week of training, the students are scheduled for testing with the Food Protection certification conducted by the Department of Health.

New Program Helps Non-Custodial Parents Pay Down Arrears

In partnership with several private employment programs, the Office of Child Support Enforcement and employers will identify candidates who are eligible for the Child Support Adjustment Credit Program, which could forgive as much as \$35,000 in arrears.

To qualify, participants must owe \$3,000 or more in child support and have a current New York City case. Clients must get a job and agree to go back to court if they are asked to. Clients must also make all child support payments on all active child support orders for the next three years, said Beth Forrest, OCSE communications coordinator. Participants can earn up to \$10,000 toward money owed in arrears after each year of paying their current child support for as many as three years. An additional \$5,000 can be earned for finishing an approved skills training program and completing an approved parenting program.

HRA is also moving forward on an Arrears Adjustment Demonstration Project, for which State approval was received in July. Under the pilot, 1,000 selected low-income non-custodial parents, in exchange for obtaining employment and paying current child support for three years, will reduce arrears owed to New York State and City for up to \$30,000.



HRA Program Updates

Increase in Homeless Families Placed in DV Shelters

HRA's No Violence Again (NoVA) program, located at the DHS family shelter intake at PATH, has dramatically increased the number of homeless families being placed in domestic violence shelters. DHS intake staff refer families who report they are experiencing domestic violence to the NoVA caseworkers for a thorough domestic violence and safety assessment. For fiscal year 2008, the average monthly percentage of families placed was 27 percent. For the week of August 10-15, NoVA staff placed 62 percent of the eligible families in domestic violence shelter. Families who are experiencing domestic violence are best served in a domestic violence shelter where they can access specialized support services.

OCCA Coordinates HRA's FY 2010 Budget Consultations

In August, OCCA received the questions submitted to NYC's Office of Management & Budget by the Community Boards in each borough reflecting their concerns about HRA services and future plans for FY 2010. OCCA is coordinating program responses that will be verbally presented to the community boards at the September meetings.

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“Summer of Success” Job Fair Brings Opportunities to Shelter Residents

Event Calendar

LIVE UNITED

Saturday, Sept. 20, 2008

Brooklyn Bridge Walk and LIVE UNITED Volunteer Festival, 10 AM at City Hall Park. Contact Barbara Woods at 212 331-3336 for more information.

HRA Blood Drives

Help Maintain NYC's blood supply. Make your donation at the following locations:

Friday, Sept. 26, 2008, Investigation Revenue & Enforcement Administration (IREA) Bureau of Eligibility Verification (BEV), 253 Schermerhorn Street, 7th Floor Conference Room, Brooklyn from 10:30 AM to 4 PM. To make an appointment, call Reuben Archer at 718-923-6536.

Friday, Oct. 3, 2008, Investigation Revenue & Enforcement Administration (IREA) Bureau of Eligibility Verification (BEV), Busmobile, 320 Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn from 10 AM to 3:30 PM. To make an appointment, call Tracey Bruno at 718-473-8234.

On August 27, more than 750 employable residents of the New York City Shelter System came to the BEGIN Training Center in Midtown Manhattan to attend “Summer of Success,” a Work Advantage Job Fair organized by HRA and the Department of Homeless Services.

Becoming employed enables shelter residents to enroll in the Work Advantage Program, created to help homeless families secure permanent housing by providing a time-limited rental subsidy and a transitional City-matched savings plan to participants who remain employed.

Job seekers were outreached by Employment Services' Occupational Resources and Career Advancement Program (ORCA), and by preparation with HRA's Back-to-Work (BTW) partners to help them assess their employability prospects and needs and to assist in resume writing. ORCA also held follow-up orientations before job seekers went onto the fair floor and organized the fair to avoid confusion and overcrowding.

The job fair drew employers such as Citarella, D'Agostino, WaMu and Chase, Fed Ex, Security Works and Allen Heat, as well as industry specialist partners, who provide short-term intensive training and placement in high demand job sectors, and representatives from other City agencies.



Prior to the opening of the job fair floor, Commissioner Doar, Julia Moten, representing Commissioner Hess of DHS, FIA's Executive Deputy Commissioner Seth Diamond and Ray Singleton, assistant deputy commissioner of FIA's Employment Services, welcomed the employers and thanked them for their partnership with HRA.

HRA's Services to Substance Abusers Achieve Results

HRA provides services to individuals with substance abuse disorders who receive cash assistance to enable them to achieve recovery and realize their potential for self-sufficiency. About 12,000 individuals on HRA's cash assistance caseload are served in two programs administered at 109 East 16th Street. A significant number of these clients report health/mental health issues and many are homeless.

Until 1997, individuals who declared themselves substance abusers were exempted from work participation, as long as substance abuse remained an issue. Those claiming substance abuse are now afforded a continuum of service that begins with an assessment by a Credentialed Alcohol & Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC) of HRA's contracted SA vendor, NADAP, to determine if treatment is required, the level needed and the modality. The CASAC counselors and staff of the Substance Abuse Service Center (SASC), which manages the assessment process, have established a supportive atmosphere, in which 95 percent of the treatment recommendations are accepted, according to NADAP's records.

The two main programs providing substance abuse services are the Residential Treatment Service Center (RTSC), which manages the cases of severely addicted individuals enrolled in residential treatment, and SASC, which oversees the cases of outpatient clients who receive either intensive or non-intensive treatment. Non-intensive treatment clients work with HRA's Back to Work vendor FECS, which specializes in working with individuals in recovery.

Research has proven that substance abusers progress faster and better when they engage in work and have support in sustaining motivation. This is evident in job retention numbers for January to June 2008, which show that an average of 78 percent of SASC clients placed in jobs achieved the three-month milestone and 71.5 percent the six-month milestone.



Pillars of HRA's Substance Abuse Programs: (clockwise) Leonel Meyers, USJC director, Margaret Rhoden, director of SASC, Greg Gomez, executive regional manager, Rebecca Blanc, special needs regional manager, Laura Wilkinson, program manager, NADAP/SACAP.