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2021 ANNUAL REPORT & CALENDAR
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At the time of this writing the presidential election has not been decided, COVID is running roughshod over our city, our country, our world and there appears to be very few fixed points around which to ground oneself. The only path forward remains a cohesiveness of effort, adaptation and purpose over time - exactly the qualities I have witnessed in abundance from my staff, the residents of our buildings, and center members who all have found ways to stay rooted in this year like no other.

So, for 2021 we will build upon this foundation of resourcefulness and endurance to bolster connections between and amongst ourselves wherever we may physically be. We will continue to adapt our health and wellness programming to reach people from a distance while readying our centers to again open their doors – safely – to the public. We will seek to add more units of affordable senior housing to our portfolio using market downturns to our advantage for a change and to expand this wonderful community. And we will continue to take our cues and inspiration from the elders who make themselves a part of our lives and inform our work.

As 2020 has made abundantly clear – We are all in this together. Same goes for 2021.

All the best,

David Gillcrist
Executive Director
When Porsha Hall was a girl, she tagged along with her mother to her volunteer shifts engaging with seniors at the local VA. “My mom had a passion for working with older people,” she says. “I grew up watching her connect with them in a very positive way. I also realized I liked having conversations with older adults—there’s a richness and depth that I was drawn to.”

Now Project FIND’s Director of Community Services, Porsha is responsible for making sure everyone in our senior centers receives quality services that meet their needs. Says Porsha: “My mom’s volunteer work was the seed.”

Graduating college with a degree in exercise science, she found her way to work with residents at a retirement community—and never looked back. She went on to gain expertise in the management of older adult services, community-based research, and elder program impact measurement.

Porsha’s current role at Project FIND actually represents its own comeback. Until 2015, she served as Program Coordinator of our senior center health programs. “One of the reasons I came back is that the staff here is so invested in the people we serve,” she says. “They have a deep knowledge of the needs of a population that is constantly evolving.”

Throughout the pandemic, Porsha and her team have worked every day to figure out how to maintain the interaction and support that Project FIND’s community depends on. She is constantly in touch with the people she serves—and with the respect she has for them. “We encourage everyone to advocate for what they need and hold us accountable,” she says. “People can be strong, in many ways, at every age.”
Since its founding in the 1990s, our Homeless-In-Reach Plus (HIR+) program has consistently placed one third of its participants in housing arrangements, and on a path to self-sufficiency. Even during the pandemic, it never closed its doors—not even its showers. All along, the program continued to provide clothing, housing assistance, intakes, housing surveys, and other case management services, plus the chance to pick up mail. At one time, Project FIND’s shower room was one of the few such facilities—if not the only one—open throughout the city.

Then and now, the path to independence often starts with an opportunity to just come in and take a shower, change clothes, and get a bite to eat. From there, the experienced staff is able to start building the relationships that form the foundation for compassionate care and well-matched services. Participants are referred to a range of resources to address their housing needs, health issues, and more. The program also received funding from the Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation that enabled them to provide a psychiatrist one day a week solely devoted to the HIR+ population—which continued on Zoom during the pandemic—as well as a peer specialist to mentor and guide them as they pursue their housing goals.

Robin Ann Plummer, Director of Social Services and HIR+ Supervisor, has countless memories of and stories about participants who have come and gone on to live independently. She recalls Mr. W. who recently went from living in his storage unit to a clean, light room in the Woodstock Hotel. He no longer needs HIR+, but he still comes by—to help out with the computers, and just to say hello. “He rides his bike, he’s got his headphones, he looks rested and great,” she says. He also volunteers at a food pantry, she adds. In this way, HIR+ also helps create a community of people who give back.
BOLLY BELLY DANCE

“It’s hard to sit still when you’re listening to the playful, joyous music of Bollywood,” says Andrea Beeman—and her students of BollyBelly Dance agree.

Andrea started out teaching at the Coffeehouse with the support of a grant from the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. Her class was so popular—and also a magnet for the other exercise classes offered—that in June 2020 she began teaching at Woodstock as well.

But it wasn’t about just the music and the moves. One day a week they met to work on their steps—and the other, to create their costumes. Sewing experts in the group supported those who were less handy. Their final performance—open to the public—included both group and solo dances and was a huge hit.

So are the classes themselves, which Andrea went on to present at other Project FIND residences—and also, of course, via Zoom. Zoom classes like Andrea’s are gifts. The day Project FIND had to cease in-person activities due to the pandemic is shown on the whiteboard below. Instituting virtual programs has been a mainstay for so many Project FIND members.

Why is this type of dance so in tune with seniors’ needs? It’s an expressive mixture of dance styles including semi-classical Indian, belly, jazz, and hip-hop, plus traditional Indian and Western Asian folk dance—so it’s a truly hybridized, global dance form with broad appeal in a diverse community. “The movements help the dancers feel all parts of their bodies, and remembering the choreographed sequences stimulates the dancers’ minds,” Andrea says, “and the dancers’ spirits are always brighter at the end of the class.”
Project FIND’s Coffeehouse has a rich—and, notably, uninterrupted—history in the Hell’s Kitchen/Chelsea neighborhood. Coffeehouse has served hot and takeaway meals to homeless and indigent members of the community for more than 40 years. Even in the pandemic, it did not close its doors. Coffeehouse guests regularly affirm to staff that they “don’t know what they would do without this food,” and know that Project FIND is “looking out for them.”

Located in a fully accessible center in the Holy Cross Church, Coffeehouse normally provides breakfast and lunch five days a week, as well as dinners and takeaway meals known as “Day for Night.” When the pandemic hit, most such services were forced to switch to home meal delivery—but of course, as Project FIND’s Assistant Director of Community Services Aaron De Broux notes, “Those meals can’t reach you if you don’t have an address.” So Project FIND worked hard to advocate for—and received—special permission to safely provide grab-and-go meals. So while all other congregate meals and activities were put on hold, Coffeehouse continued to reach up to 40 homeless individuals each day.

And Coffeehouse doesn’t just serve grab-and-go food—it serves delicious grab-and-go food: stuffed peppers with rice, winter or summer blend vegetables, chicken, salmon, sweet potatoes, and more. But of course, the community members miss the Coffeehouse atmosphere and activities—and their friends. “We look forward to being able to offer group meals and to going back to our normal activities,” Aaron said in the fall of 2020. “We have a plan for how to do it safely. We’re ready to go.”
To have a penthouse and rooftop garden in Manhattan is a special and wondrous privilege. Now, thanks to a major new renovation, the residents of Project FIND’s Woodstock Hotel can enjoy that benefit every day.

The roof deck, and everything beneath it, are a project that is decades—actually more than a century—in the making. What is now Project FIND’s Woodstock Hotel opened in 1903 as the Spalding Hotel, changing its name to Woodstock after purchase by a consortium led by the Governor of Vermont. But by the 1960s and 1970s, the neighborhood had declined, the hotel with it. In 1975 Project FIND cobbled together the funds to lease the hotel with an option to buy. Over decades, Project FIND renovated the hotel and expanded its capacity to both house and serve.

It now contains 291 SRO units and its tenants are 55 or older earning less than 60 percent of the area median income. Its senior center offers three meals a day (during non-pandemic times) and provides social services and activities. As a result of assistance from public and private sources, Project FIND performed the latest upgrades: switching from oil to natural gas, converting to a steam heat system, cleaning the facade, making over the hallways—and, as the crowning touch: creating the penthouse. Even during a time of social distancing, residents will be able to enjoy the garden’s beauty and open air. “It’s finally here,” says Executive Director David Gillcrist, “and we’re ready to celebrate.”
Rubén Darío Cruz helps seniors find their star power. For eight years, he and his team of artists have provided health and wellness and arts and culture programs at Project FIND that enable residents to express themselves through dance, drama, and more.

Rubén started out professionally in the corporate world. All along, together with his actor father, he was always involved in artistic projects: community theater, advising cultural nonprofits. In 2006, he left the for-profit world for good and dedicated himself to the arts. He founded a media company that produces programming in English and Spanish and went on to create arts and culture programs for children and seniors as well. “I was making 20 percent of my former salary—but I can’t tell you how much happier I was,” he says.

Working with seniors held an important place in his heart. “I had experienced elder abuse in my family. It made me hyper-aware of the problem,” says Rubén, who trains his team members to notice the warning signs—and to create safe and collaborative spaces where seniors connect with their strengths.

The courses he and his team have provided—both before and during the pandemic—have included arts and crafts, textile design, writing, digital photography, theater, and numerous types of dance and exercise, from tango to Zumba.

Rubén has also led a theater festival called “Abuelito, dime tu” (“Grandpa, tell me a story”), in which several senior centers, including those at Project FIND’s Hamilton and Woodstock, develop the production and perform it at his theater in the East Village. The group is able to provide entertainment to the community and perhaps even challenge assumptions people may have about the capacity and vitality of seniors. What’s more, as in all of Ruben’s programs, the participants find strength in working as a team. “If we enjoy each other’s company, we can do anything together,” he says.
For Project FIND’s Clinton Senior Center, patience has always paid off. It began in 1969 as a once-weekly meeting in the basement of Sacred Heart Church, becoming a full senior center in 1973, and moving into the West Side’s Harborview Terrace apartment complex in 1977, where it officially became Project FIND’s Clinton Senior Center.

Years after that, plans for a major and much-needed set of upgrades had to be shelved in the wake of September 11. Eventually, though, with the backing of local elected officials, and with the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) supporting the renovations, Clinton was provided a computer lab, library, and a large dining room. The center opened Monday to Friday, with lunch served on weekdays and many classes and activities—including trips, holiday parties and themed celebrations—bringing joy to all.

Then, this year, came COVID. “It’s very frustrating not to see the Center’s rooms full of life and people rewarded for their patience, but such is life,” says Project FIND Executive Director David Gillcrist. And the minute they get the green light, those rewards of enjoyment - for all those who attend the center — will come.
Ken Gray has taught Tai Chi at Hamilton House for 12 years. Often described as “meditation in motion,” Tai Chi is an ancient Chinese martial art that has evolved from a form of self-defense into a graceful, flowing form of exercise involving deep focus and breathing alike. For his loyal students, “Tai Chi helps with balance, flexibility, pain relief, osteoporosis...everything,” Ken says.

Ken’s first career was in the legal profession, but—30 years ago—after he started to learn martial arts with a friend, he eventually evolved from student to teacher. Now he keeps his Project FIND students coming back with his deep knowledge of Tai Chi and related disciplines, including experience working with cancer patients—and with his broad sense of humor. “I leave no joke unturned,” he admits.

With the pandemic, Ken, like so many others, had to translate his classes to Zoom. “I went from a stage performer to a TV performer,” he says.

But of course, it’s not just about performing. Whether in the same room or online, Ken dedicates himself to giving his students individual attention, offering modifications or additions from other healing and exercise modalities as needed. Still, he misses the in-person interaction—and the students for whom online learning is not a fit.

No matter what, Ken’s dedication gets results, both physical and emotional. Walking with shuffling feet is a common problem among those he teaches—and he has a method to address it. This helps his students relieve back pain, avoid falls, and improve balance. Says Ken: “It’s so gratifying to see them leave my class walking with confidence.”
Longtime Hamilton resident Rhoda Glass is both president of the Advisory Council at the Hamilton senior center and the person you call when you need help fixing your remote. Rhoda volunteers generous amounts of her time both in the house and elsewhere, working with animal rescue groups, nonprofit organizations, food pantries, and more. “I try to be there when people need me,” she says. In other words, she embodies the spirit of Project FIND.

Rhoda grew up in Brooklyn and Queens. She paid her way through college and two advanced degrees with a relatively brief modeling career, and later went to work as a paralegal at a distinguished law firm. Later, Rhoda eventually became vice president of a corporation in New Jersey that worked with pharmaceutical companies. She raised four children and became a grandmother.

After losing her husband in 2002 she decided to move back to New York City. When she was ready for senior housing, she made her way to Project FIND. “I had a friend who lived in The Hamilton, and she said ‘Come to lunch’!” Rhoda recalls. “I fell in love with the neighbors and the building, and I moved in that August.”

The pandemic has been tough on Rhoda, as she credits staying active and involved—and being a vegetarian for 34 years—with her enduring vibrant health. “I’m accustomed to doing something every minute of my day,” she says—which also includes taking fellow residents shopping and fostering animals in need. When the pandemic wanes, Rhoda will surely be back to her fully active, engaged self—and with her presence, so will Hamilton House.
**THEA PRATT**

“You don’t fit the pose—the pose fits you,” says Thea Pratt, who leads Project FIND participants in yoga, yoga therapy, and meditative movement.

With years of experience working with seniors, Thea is able to help her students adapt their practice to their own limitations and requirements, incorporating chairs and other supports as needed. Yoga therapy in particular is known to help address chronic injuries and illnesses, including balance issues, osteoporosis, and even early-stage Alzheimer’s. “It’s gentle. It’s not stressful. It helps with anxiety and focus. It produces relaxation,” says Thea. “It’s incredible.”

Thea has also had to adapt her practice to the reality of the pandemic—with inspiringly positive results. She notes that there are no space restrictions, and people can join virtually from anywhere. “There are so many pluses that I hope we can continue online even when things open up,” she says.

Thea is constantly motivated and inspired by the impact that her students report—and that she can see. One participant told her that her yoga practice had helped her steady her emotions to the point where she was able to improve difficult dynamics with relatives. Another student battling an illness came into her class stooped over by the stress and strain of dealing with the challenges of the ailment. “When she left,” Thea says, “she was taller than me.” Wherever she’s teaching, Thea’s work changes lives, inside and out.

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Navaratri begins

Columbus Day

Mawlid Begins

Halloween

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OCTOBER 2021

NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH (SEPTEMBER 15-OCTOBER 15)
During “normal” times, residents of Hamilton House didn’t have to make an appointment to speak with resident social worker Sonia Mejia. “They could just drop by and see if I was available, and talk about whatever was on their mind,” she says.

That has had to change. But Project FIND remained open throughout the pandemic, with staff working diligently on the front lines to ensure that more than 3,000 senior center members and 600 residents were taken care of through a range of activities including telephone reassurance, coordination of home delivered meals, and ongoing social work support.

Likewise, Sonia and her colleagues never stopped providing care. They were able to sustain remote and face-to-face interaction with residents, using personal protective equipment and CDC protocols. They continued to aid tenants with approaches to problem-solving—and solutions to new challenges related to COVID-19—so they can live comfortably and with independence, even in shifting circumstances.

So now it’s Sonia who drops by their place. “I don’t go inside,” she says, “but I take the proper precautions and I’m still able to interact with them face to face, human to human.”

When the pandemic began, Sonia guided residents through shopping online and other tasks they’re not used to—including sitting still. She went out of her way to visit any client who had expressed concern or whom she thought might welcome a bit of extra company. Sonia knows what a difference her efforts made—in part because people told her. “One resident emailed me to say she’d been feeling depressed and my unexpected visit cheered her up,” she recalls. “During such a stressful and challenging time, I was so pleased to bring a little bit of hope.”
Project FIND has entered into an agreement with Fairstead Partners—a real estate developer specializing in affordable and mixed-income housing—that will transform an SRO on West 79th Street into a vital 78-unit living space. A sizeable portion of the new tenants will come from the city’s shelter system. True to Project FIND’s mission, the residence will provide tenants with a roof over their heads and with the services and resources that enable them to thrive.

Project FIND’s Associate Executive Director Mark Jennings notes that the Fairstead partnership was the outcome of a selective process. “Our pitch was about our 50-year connection to the Upper West Side community, our relationships with local officials, and our expertise in providing services,” he says. “Their choosing us is a testament to our history and legacy.”

The agreement makes Project FIND both the service provider for the building and its nonprofit owner. The project will be financed through the Department of Housing Preservation & Development’s (HPD) Senior Affordable Rental Apartments Program.

The social service program is designed for residents to live independently for as long as possible. Two full-time social workers will connect them to vital services, as well as educational, cultural, social, and recreational resources including coffee klatches and reading groups.

Project FIND is working to make sure that the renovation meets residents’ physical needs by incorporating grab bars in hallways and safely designed showers. Having learned from the pandemic, Project FIND will blend evolving needs into the design. “We are giving extra thought to how we provide access to technology and how we design community spaces,” Mark says. “It’s forced us to be extra creative.”
SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

Executive Director
David Gillcrist

Associate Executive Director
Mark Jennings

Community Services
Porsha Hall, Director of Community Services
Aaron DeBroux, Assistant Director

Development and External Relations
Kathleen Fitzgibbons, Director

Social Services
Robin Ann Plummer, Director

Finance
Deon Lewis, Controller

Property Management and Housing Services
Karen Imbrah, Director

Facilities Maintenance
Ismet Alija, Director

Administrative Services
Richard Maranda, Director

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BY THE NUMBERS

SENIOR CENTERS

3,014 Members

221,581 Meals Served

Attendance

800 members attend at least twice per week
337 members attend at least once per week
611 members attend at least once per month

HOMELESS-IN-REACH

Contacts

3,709 Showers Provided
1,438 Articles of Clothing Provided
1,270 Social Worker Contacts

NUMBER OF YEARS HOMELESS

<5 years (47%)
5+ years (25%)
10+ years (23%)
20+ years (5%)

Gender

76% Male
24% Female

Age

60-64 (40%)
65-69 (43%)
70-74 (17%)
75+ (0%)

INVESTMENTS AND CONTRACTS

Investments for Capital Improvement

2018 $1,859,773
2019 $5,347,684
2020 $2,294,989

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS AWARDED

2018 $4,097,766
2019 $3,901,096
2020 $4,143,353

Breakfast: 50,462
Lunch: 139,236
Dinner: 26,426
Other Meals: 5,457
CONDENSED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
Year Ended December 31, 2019

Operating Revenues And Other Support
Grants and Contracts ................................................................. $3,901,096
Contributions and Program Income ........................................ $302,106
Special Events ........................................................................ $175,624
Rental Income ........................................................................ $5,702,375
Contributed Facilities ................................................................. $127,320
Property Management Fees .................................................... $99,968
Investments and Other Income ................................................ $723,572

Operating Expenses
Program Services:
Senior Housing ..................................................................... $4,982,141
Senior Centers ...................................................................... $4,328,429
Management & General ......................................................... $1,270,621
Fundraising .............................................................................. $233,878

Change in Net Assets ............................................................. $216,992

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
Year Ended December 31, 2019

Assets
Cash and Cash Equivalents and Investments ......................... $4,766,941
Restricted Deposits and Funded Reserves ............................. $3,061,942
Grants, Tenant Accounts, and Other Receivable ................. $1,140,272
Due from Affiliate ................................................................. $188,630
Deferred Rents Receivable .................................................. $189,302
Prepaid Expenses ................................................................. $234,476
Property and Equipment, Net .............................................. $18,807,742

Liabilities and Net Assets
Total Liabilities ....................................................................... $18,982,262
Net Assets:
Without Donor Restrictions .................................................. $9,274,626
With Donor Restrictions ......................................................... $132,417

$28,389,305
**PROJECT FIND SENIOR CENTERS**

**Clinton Senior Center**  
530 West 55th Street, New York, NY 10019  
Director: Trenace Simmons  
Phone: 212-757-2026  
Email: tsimmons@projectfind.org

**Coffeehouse Senior Center**  
331 West 42nd Street, New York, NY 10036  
Director: Kathleen Mohamed  
Phone: 646-545-4621  
Email: kmohamed@projectfind.org

**Hamilton Senior Center**  
141 West 73rd Street, New York, NY 10023  
Director: Melissa N. Johnson-Bowen  
Phone: 212-787-7710  
Email: mbowen@projectfind.org

**Hamilton Senior Center Annex**  
111 West 71st Street, New York, NY 10023  
Phone: 212-580-0888

**Woodstock Senior Center**  
127 West 43rd Street, New York, NY 10036  
Director: Chenal Thompson  
Phone: 212-575-0693  
Email: cthompson@projectfind.org

**PROJECT FIND HOUSING**

**Hamilton House**  
141 West 73rd Street, New York, NY 10023  
Property Manager: Joshua Perez  
Phone: 212-595-3385  
Email: jperez@projectfind.org

**Hargrave House**  
111 West 71st Street, New York, NY 10023  
Property Manager: Joshua Perez  
Phone: 212-579-7881  
Email: jperez@projectfind.org

**Woodstock Hotel**  
127 West 43rd Street, New York, NY 10036  
Property Manager: Elizabeth Cunningham  
Phone: 212-730-1442  
Email: ecunningham@projectfind.org

**PROJECT FIND SOCIAL SERVICES**

**Hamilton House Social Services**  
141 West 73rd Street, New York, NY 10023  
Phone: 212-501-8966

**Hargrave House Social Services**  
111 West 71st Street, New York, NY 10023  
Phone: 212-787-6461

**Homeless-In-Reach Program**  
127 West 43rd Street, New York, NY 10036  
Peer Specialist: Chandra Sutton ext. 414  
Housing Specialist: Gary Capers ext. 423  
Phone: 212-730-1442

**Woodstock Social Services**  
127 West 43rd Street, New York, NY 10036  
Social Work Supervisor: Russell Eisgrub  
Phone: 212-730-3259 ext. 417

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