

AGENCY OF THE MONTH



Bradhurst Court features a Pathmark Supermarket and 125 apartments.

strong and healthy community."

In these cases, market rate rentals translates into \$1,200-\$1,300 for a two-bedroom apartment while comparable affordable units are available to those with incomes at 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI) for \$500-\$600 per month.

Creating home ownership opportunities for low and moderate-income Harlem residents has been a major focus for HCCI in recent years.

Angelou Court, developed in 1999 at 520 Manhattan Avenue, was HCCI's first cooperative development. "It was a very creative model because it uses tax credits to provide low-income coops," explains McEwen. "Tax credits usually require a rental. What we do is lease the entire building to a coop association so we are meeting the federal rental requirements." Although HCCI manages the building, it looks and feels like a coop from day one. Tenants put down a deposit of roughly \$3,000 deposit equal to approximately 6 months of maintenance fees. "At year 15, when the tax credit compliance period is over, the coop as a whole will then take on the remaining mortgage and everyone will become a fully vested cooperative owner."

HCCI has replicated the model, which it feels is unique, in several recent cooperative development projects.

"Our goal was to create a model where very low income families at 60% of AMI or less would be able to participate in home ownership," says McEwen. "We have become a victim of our own success because real estate prices are running away and even moderate and middle income families can't afford the price of homes in Harlem today."

"There is a thin line between redevelopment and gentrification," says Canon Williams. "We are involved in redevelopment. Affordable housing and home ownership are the issues HCCI is concerned about."

HCCI supports its residents with Financial Fitness and Home Ownership classes. "We know the importance of financial management and good budgeting, establishing a good financial track record so that you are able to get a mortgage," says McEwen.

The agency also works hard to ensure that community residents have access to the new housing being created in Harlem, both by HCCI and other developers.

"We assist people by making sure that they understand the application and the lottery process," says McEwen. HPD-funded projects feature a 50% preference for community residents and HCCI



New HCCI projects include The Sutton (at left) and the Bradhurst Early Childhood Training Academy (at right).

Learning by Design

"There are no assignments, no deadlines, no grades, no 'teachers' in the traditional sense, just a commitment to produce new and sometimes complex design and multimedia projects," says Fred Riedel, Coordinator of HCCI's Computer Clubhouse. The result, he explains, are kids who show up because they want to, take part because it's fun and learn by doing.

HCCI's Computer Clubhouse is based on a national model developed in the early 1990s by the MIT Media Lab and the Boston Museum of Science. It features state-of-the-art computer equipment and high end software for graphic design, music production and even robotics.

"We received funding for three years and all the computer hardware from Intel," says Lucille McEwan, HCCI's President and CEO. Additional software has been donated by Adobe and other firms.

"Members can make their own website, record their own music, take digital pictures, shoot and edit video and much, much more," says Riedel. "All the tools that they use are the same ones that professionals in the world of multi-media and design use everyday."

In addition to Riedel and another staffer, members get technical support from mentors — often professionals of the wide range of programs available.

The Club operates Monday through Friday during the school year. Kids from 10 to 12 are admitted from 3-5pm and 13-18 year olds from 5-7pm. An expanded summer schedule is currently being formulated and girls can sign up for a special girls only program.

Now, all HCCI needs to do is keep the program going as initial funding begins to dry up. "We will need to replace that grant during the coming year," says McEwan.



Club members produce hi-tech self portraits such as this one by Jevon Mendez-Briggs.

works with its own congregations and other community groups to make sure they reach that target. The agency also assists other housing developers with community outreach.

However, HCCI believes neighborhood revitalization requires more than just bricks and mortar. "HCCI is not just about housing," says McEwen. "Housing is the keystone, but you have to have a plethora of activities to support it."

In some cases, HCCI's supportive housing projects target specific high-need populations and provide on-site services and case management. For example, the

agency operates 60 units of scattered site housing for individuals and families living with AIDS. Its housing for the formerly homeless also offers direct services.

HCCI also has developed a broader array of services which are generally available to the community as a whole.

"We run two afterschool programs," says McEwen. "One focuses on math, reading, tutoring and homework assistance." The Bradhurst Academy of Excel-

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