

The Sunflower News



Fall 2010

Housing+Solutions

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Dear Friends What does it mean to be financially self-sufficient? I reviewed the recently published Self-Sufficiency Standard for New York City 2010. Self-sufficiency defined as living on ones income without any public benefits or private assistance. I chose to look at the data for Brooklyn and compare it with information we have on our tenant's earnings. The **Real Deal** chart on this page shows what the self-sufficiency report considers a living wage for an adult and for a parent with two young children. *Below I have inserted the wages of two adults and two families living at Housing + Solutions.* Each one has worked at the same job for three years or longer. Only one adult fits the definition of self-sufficiency according to the report. Few make more than the average wage while most do not and many make minimum wage.

It is difficult to see a way out of poverty when making a living wage is daunting. The career paths to choose from that would advance ones income

require additional education or specialized training which are costly and time consuming. *Our employment statistics this year are: 77% of our tenants have worked full-time, part-time, in temporary or seasonal jobs. The average salary is \$10.36 an hour or \$20,202 annually—not enough to be self-sufficient.* We charge 30% of a tenant's income for rent and for those eligible we help secure other entitlements (i.e. a child care subsidy or food stamps). We offer employment services and referrals for school and training. Subsidized housing with supportive services not only prevents families from returning to a homeless shelter but is the clearest path to making changes that could lead to earning a self-sufficiency wage. We thought you'd like to know what the 'real deal' is.

Rita Zimmer
Executive Director

Summer Fun Program



Ready for camp and whatever comes next.

The 2010 summer has been the best ever. A grant from **Simple Works**—helped us establish a **Summer Fun Camp** for twenty children ranging in age from five to fifteen and their parents. A leadership grant from the Jewish Fund for the Education of Women in partnership with the New York Women's Foundation provided funds to hire Katie Schaffer a Swarthmore sophomore as Camp Director and she hired and nurtured a small counseling staff. Each day started with breakfast cooked by a parent volunteer—that proved to help get everyone to camp on time and off to a healthy start. A typical day might include a science project, play time in the park or swimming, games and a computer class. We ran computer classes for the parents too—for some their first time using a computer and learning skills that could prove beneficial at work or when looking for a job. We opened early and stayed late to accommodate working parents' and when school opened we morphed into an afterschool program for two weeks until the public schools opened their

continued on reverse

The Real Deal

Self-Sufficiency Standard for Brooklyn 2010

| Group Composition | Hourly Rate | Annual Salary |
|--|-------------|---------------|
| Self-Sufficiency Standard for a single adult | \$13.43 | \$28,368 |
| Housing + Solutions single adult #1 | 7.15 | 14,872 |
| Housing + Solutions single adult #2 | 16.25 | 29,590 |
| Self-Sufficiency Standard for parent with two children | \$29.91 | \$63,166 |
| Housing + Solutions parent #1 with two children | 16.13 | 29,364 |
| Housing + Solutions parent #2 with two children | 12.92 | 25,192 |

You can get a full copy of the Self-Sufficiency Standard for New York City 2010 report that was prepared for the Women's Center for Education and Career Advancement at www.wceca.org.

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Summer Fun Program...con'd

programs. **We want to give special thanks to Naomi Marks and Vivienne Keegan from Simple Works—whose vision and grant made possible the Summer Fun Camp.**

Two brothers, worried about attending a new school made friends at the

camp and celebrated their 9th and 11th birthdays in style.

A parent's success story stands out. Shirley, a receptionist for four years, attended the computer classes and by the end of the summer had enough skills and confidence to enroll in a 10-week case manager training program this fall. She had lamented not having the skills to apply for openings at her job that would lead to a better salary and career path.

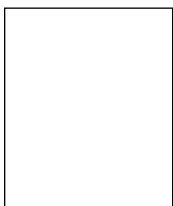
Carolina—a summer counselor not only discovered the joy of working with children but that she was good at it. At the end of the summer she applied for a teacher aide position at the local elementary school and was recently called for an interview.

**Ruby House:
A New Home for
Homeless Women
Opens in December**

In September The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) selected Housing + Solutions as the substitute grantee to take over a homeless project in Brooklyn serving up to twenty homeless women with substance abuse disabilities. The city-wide competition to assume the contract gave us an opportunity to highlight our success and accomplishments: 77% of our tenants worked over the past year; 80% of the tenants are in recovery and no family has been separated. HUD and the New York City Department of Homeless Services consistently ranks us in the top 25% of the over 200 applications renewed annually. New staff members have been hired, we have a property and we have begun recruiting tenants. Our goals and theirs are: are housing stability, solving health and personal problems and self-sufficiency through employment. We look forward to the challenge of opening Ruby House and meeting the needs of formerly homeless women and families. The expansion will increase our housing capacity by 40% and we hope lead to new opportunities for public and private funding. Winter approaches and the need for shelter increases. **Ruby House** opens on December 1 and we will be ready to give women the help they need.



Two brothers visit Brooklyn's Prospect Park Zoo.



HousingPlusSolutions.org
**Please visit our
website**

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