

# WEST END RESIDENCES

West End Intergenerational Residence • True Colors Supportive Housing

Empowering homeless youth, families & older adults to live full and productive lives

## A Message from Our CEO



This end of summer and back-to-school season are like no other.

Spring and summer have brought protests and pandemics, and we're all experiencing a great deal of uncertainty about what the future holds.

Which schools and businesses will reopen? What will reopening mean? How do we adapt as city budgets tighten in response to COVID-19?

Our staff have reoriented for new ways of providing service during the pandemic. I am honored to work with a team of such dedicated professionals.

Still, we face challenges. Stay at home is straining bandwidth and internet capacity across sites—wiring, router and service upgrades are needed.

Residents and staff are accessing public benefits assistance online, continuing counseling remotely, and using more video conferencing platforms to maintain connections. Critical empowerment, skills-building and behavioral health services once delivered only in person are creatively adapting to online tools.

Amid this uncertainty, these things remain clear:

- We are home for homeless seniors, young mothers and LGBTQ young adults.
- We are committed to providing individualized, trauma-informed care.
- We are grateful for your generosity and your trust in us.

Although West End Residences receives government funding for basics and essential services, it falls short of meeting the needs for high-quality care. The support of individuals, corporations and foundations is life-changing. Thank you.

Together, we're providing the tools and care for vulnerable homeless persons to heal and thrive.

May you and your families remain healthy and safe.

All the best,  
Jeannette K. Ruffins  
Chief Executive Officer

P.S. Stay up-to-date on how we're adapting services during the pandemic—and how you can help. **Sign up for email news at [westendres.org/updates](https://westendres.org/updates).**



## Essential Workers. Essential Care.

Led by Women's Empowerment Life Skills Program Manager **Althea Finley**, Intergenerational Residence young families participated in a fun and useful activity—making tie-dye face masks.

Do you have antsy toddlers at home? What are your favorite kid-friendly activities during the pandemic?

Share your ideas on Twitter and Instagram @WestEndResNYC and on Facebook at [facebook.com/WestEndResNYC](https://facebook.com/WestEndResNYC).



## About Us

West End Residences began in 1989 with one of the first mixed-age housing sites in New York State, a converted Upper West Side building that is transitional housing for homeless young mothers and their children, and long-term affordable housing for low-income and homeless older adults.

We recognized a growing need—like the young mothers at our intergenerational residence, LGBTQ youth start young adulthood having experienced gender-based physical and emotional abuse.

In 2011, we adapted our trauma-centered care model to create a first of its kind LGBTQ young adult supportive housing site, True Colors Residence in West Harlem. In 2015 we opened a second location, True Colors Bronx.

At each of our housing sites, we offer support services that include case management, counseling, referrals, community-building activities, and life skills programs.

We tailor our life skills for the communities served, offering the **Women's Empowerment Program** for young mothers and the **True Colors Empowerment Program** for LGBTQ young adults.

Our individualized care and wraparound services offer young mothers, seniors and LGBTQ youth a new beginning as they transition into the next phase in their lives.

## We Serve Resilient Communities

### ➤ Young families overcoming homelessness and abuse

The single mothers at our Upper West Side Intergenerational Residence are between the ages of 18 and 24 and have up to three children under age seven—these moms are the youngest heads of household in the shelter system.

In addition to suffering the trauma of homelessness, two-thirds are survivors of domestic or family violence.

At our Upper West Side location, homeless mothers have safe and supportive transitional housing where they can build skills, set goals and achieve permanent housing for their young families.



### ➤ Older adults breaking cycles of abuse and poverty



Homeless and low-income seniors (many with age-related medical conditions worsened by poverty and abuse) have a safe, affordable home at our Upper West Side location.

Our intergenerational housing model fosters an environment where families and seniors can take classes and celebrate together. Seniors receive the care services needed to remain healthy and independent as they age in place.

### ➤ LGBTQ young adults healing from rejection and trauma

65% of homeless LGBTQ youth experience family rejection resulting in street homelessness. Homeless LGBTQ youth endure high levels of harassment and violence on the street, in the shelter system, and elsewhere. Many struggle with substance use and mental illness.

With behavioral health care, skills-building programs, and the stability of affordable housing, LGBTQ young adults are active participants in their own care, goal-setting and achievement as they work towards more independent housing.



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## A Video Chat with Volunteers the Mom Squad

Our chief executive officer recently hosted a video chat with the Intergenerational Residence Mom Squad.

The Mom Squad, a volunteer group of Upper West Side moms and friends, was formed in fall 2014 by **Cheri Fandozzi, Doris Coleman, Neetu Lakhani and Jennifer Vickery**. Pre-pandemic, volunteers hosted a monthly birthday party for the young families as well as a monthly hot meal and community gathering for the senior residents.

In response to COVID-19, Mom Squaders have provided face masks, hygiene items, nonperishable food, and a once-a-week meal delivery for the young families and older adults at our Intergenerational Residence.

Mom Squad members are creative problem-solvers. CEO Jeannette Ruffins spoke with them to thank them for their volunteerism and to discuss resident needs—including ideas for virtual and small group physical activities like dancing and yoga, and the ongoing need for toys and activities for restless toddlers.

***“Your passion and commitment to service are evident, as is your sense of connectedness to our residents and each other.”***

— Jeannette Ruffins, addressing the Mom Squad

“What you’ve built is remarkable,” she adds. “West End Residences thanks you and your children who have volunteered alongside you. In my 30-year nonprofit career, the Mom Squad stands out as a unique model of family volunteerism, particularly appropriate for an intergenerational site.”

Thank you to Mom Squaders **Molly Burke, Lisa Cicha, Doris Coleman, Cheri Fandozzi, Stephanie King, Deirdre Lord, Adrienne Perry, Mary Rothfus, Rachel Talbot** and **Jennifer Vickery** for joining us for the video chat. Thank you to the entire Mom Squad for everything you do to serve the young families and older adults at our Upper West Side location.

To learn more about the most effective ways to volunteer during the pandemic, contact [volunteer@westendres.org](mailto:volunteer@westendres.org).



*Masks already were in fashion for a pre-pandemic birthday party at our Upper West Side location*

### Professional Staff, Trauma-informed Care

The young adults we serve at our LGBTQ supportive housing have mental health and substance use issues that intersect with the traumas of homelessness and abuse.

The fear, sadness and frustration we’ve all experienced in this moment can be especially challenging for those who’ve previously had their mental illness under control. Too often, communities under stress are over-policed when social services like behavioral health care are needed.

This past month, **Mina Chauhan** (director of LGBTQ supportive housing in the Bronx), **Michelle Vasquez** (clinical case manager), and **Zoie Coleman** (security guard) worked together using de-escalation techniques to calm a young adult tenant—and prevent police involvement.

These situations are not uncommon in supportive housing. Staff often go above and beyond—Mina also went grocery shopping for a tenant fearful of leaving the apartment due to COVID-19.

However, because staff view such moments as expected parts of the regular quality care they provide, it isn’t easy getting staff to share these stories. **Kimberly Marshall** (chief program officer) notes the staff’s humility and commitment to “doing the work the right way.”

“How we serve tenants does not seem to be extraordinary,” says Mina, “because it is our passion to assist and be the best we can.”

West End Intergenerational Residence and  
True Colors Supportive Housing  
c/o West End Residences HDFC, Inc.

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You can empower  
homeless youth, families  
and older adults to  
live life forward.

Your gift will...

- Support safe **housing** for homeless NYC young families, seniors and LGBTQ young adults
- Build the **skills** needed for housing stability
- Sustain trauma-informed **care** that allows residents to heal and thrive

Make a gift today at  
[westendres.org/donate](https://westendres.org/donate).

### In Development: LGBTQ Housing in Harlem

We are in predevelopment for a third True Colors Supportive Housing site in Central Harlem that will provide affordable housing and wraparound services for 50 homeless LGBTQ young adults.

The need for LGBTQ young adult supportive housing is great—we have waiting lists at our existing sites in West Harlem and the Bronx.

We anticipate the City will tighten its budgets and have planned accordingly to ensure predevelopment financing moves forward without substantial delay.

“COVID-19 has paused our community outreach about the project,” notes our Housing Development Project Manager **Eliot Hetterly**, “but once it is safe to do so, we will resume in-person outreach meetings with social service providers, community groups, local elected officials and the Community Board to keep them in the loop regarding the status of the project.”

Stay tuned! We expect to have updates for you before the end of the calendar year.