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NEWS

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Residential Snapshot: Echo Place Residence

The Echo Place Residence, the newest addition to PCMH's growing residential portfolio, sits at the end of a quiet street just a few blocks from the Bronx's historic Grand Concourse. Sparklingly clean and modern, with an enclosed backyard and lots of common areas, it's a welcome addition to PCMH's burgeoning presence in the Bronx.

A tour of Echo Place reveals why both clients and staff are excited about the new residence. Having opened its doors on July 13, it boasts a community room and gallery space where its 47 residents can watch TV and play cards, as well as a conference room for staff meetings, and a large kitchen where residents can enjoy cooking lessons together. Echo



The 55 studio units at Echo Place boast amenities including modern kitchens with tile backsplashes.

Place's 55 units, all of which are studios, have amenities that any New Yorker would crave, including hardwood floors, glossy kitchen cabinets, tile backsplashes, roomy bathrooms, and ample closet space. New residents are subject to random apartment inspections once a week for the first few weeks to ensure they're managing well, then once a month going forward.

Intake interviews take place twice a week, under the supervision of Program Director Wanda Ellis, to ensure that applicants would happily and successfully adjust to living at Echo Place. Residents pay 30% of their income toward rent, most of which comes from Social Security benefits and public assistance; since Echo Place is a Level I residence, they can come and go as they please. All residents are assigned a residential counselor, with whom they meet every two weeks, and there are also always at least two staffers on duty to assist them should they need help.



Echo Place in the Bronx is the latest addition to the PCMH residential portfolio.

Like some other PCMH residences, Echo Place boasts a large enclosed courtyard, which come next spring will be filled with outdoor furniture and barbecues for festive gatherings in warm weather—one of the many highlights Echo Place residents and staff have to look forward to.

New at PCMH: 1775 Grand Concourse

PCMH has an exciting new hub in the Bronx at 1775 Grand Concourse. The spacious new offices have given three vital PCMH programs a fresh start and lots of room to grow and flourish. Following is a snapshot of each.

Bronx Child and Adult Clinic

PCMH's Bronx Child and Adult Clinic has taken on a new dimension since its move to the 8th floor of 1775 Grand Concourse from 97th Street in Manhattan last May: formerly known as the Postgraduate Center Child Mental Health Clinic, it expanded its license to serve both adults and children.



Three PCMH programs have relocated to spacious new offices at 1775 Grand Concourse in the Bronx.

As Michael Zaretsky, LCSW-R, director of the clinic, explains, the clinic serves children as young as five years old through adults into their senior years, providing individual and family psychotherapy services as well as group therapy for PCMH clients.



Michael Zaretsky is the director of the PCMH Bronx Child and Adult Clinic.

Clients come to the clinic to address a variety of issues, ranging from kids and teenagers having difficulty in school and anxiety to adults dealing with depression, past trauma, and divorce.

The clinic now enjoys the luxury of much more space compared to its former location: it has 19 offices and two group rooms at the new address, versus eight offices on 97th Street. Mr. Zaretsky and his team—11 therapists, two psychiatrists, one psychiatric nurse practitioner, an office manager, and an administrative assistant—currently serve 199 patients.

While the clinic lost a lot of patients in the transition, it's quickly adding new ones to its ranks, thanks in part to the fact that there are other social services agencies within the building with which the clinic has connected. Mr. Zaretsky, who has been with PCMH for over two years and whose career as a social worker spans nearly three decades, says his goal is to serve 400 patients by next spring. "I'm actively trying to hire more staff and recruit additional patients," he says.

Mr. Zaretsky also notes that the fact that the PCMH PROS program is on the same floor is a great asset to both the clinic's and PROS's clients. "The PROS program works with more chronically ill adults, but when they're doing a bit better and they can step down from that level of treatment, they can step down across the hall," he explains. "By the same token, if we have someone who's too ill to be treated here, he or she might be better served right next door."

With the clinic growing and moving full steam ahead, Mr. Zaretsky is excited about the future at PCMH. "What I really enjoy about working here is I find the administration is very honest, clear, and direct, and very committed to both patients and to staff," he says. "It's a great group of people."

PROS Program

PCMH's Personalized Recovery Oriented Services (PROS) program, which was formerly located at the West Side Clinic on 36th Street in Manhattan, moved to 1775 Grand Concourse in September 2014. Under the supervision of Nathan Gammill, a Family Nurse Practitioner and PCMH veteran of nearly six years who became the director of PROS last February, the program is flourishing, and currently has 138 clients.

PROS is a comprehensive recovery-oriented program for those with severe and persistent mental illness, whose goal is to integrate treatment, support, and rehabilitation in a way that facilitates their recovery. While PROS also lost a significant number of clients in its transition from Manhattan to the Bronx, Mr. Gammill notes that its client roster has grown by well over 20% since the move. In addition to being a fan of the gleaming new office space, he believes PROS is better positioned for the long-term in the Bronx, where many of PCMH's clients live and where program costs are less than they were in Manhattan.



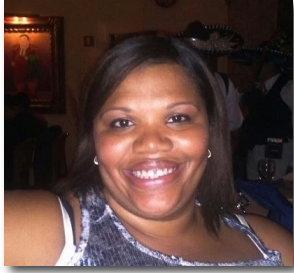
Nathan Gammill, a nearly six-year PCMH veteran, heads up the PROS program at PCMH.

And like Mr. Zaretsky, Mr. Gammill thinks the continuity of care created by the proximity to other PCMH programs is one of the key benefits of the new location.

"We can walk records between offices and have conversations face to face between providers," he says. "It's much easier and more efficient in helping to build an effective therapeutic alliance with the client."

Scattered Site Housing Program

The Scattered Site program, the most independent level of supported housing under the PCMH umbrella, is also now headquartered at 1775 Grand Concourse. Scattered Site apartments are located in residential buildings in all of the city's boroughs except Staten Island, with the bulk of the residences located in the Bronx and Brooklyn. Scattered Site South also has a new hub, at 443 Winthrop Street in Brooklyn.



Karen Taylor oversees the Scattered Site program at PCMH.

Karen Taylor is the managing director for the entire Scattered Site operation, overseeing from the Bronx office a program that presently has 527 clients. Besides helping to find apartments for PCMH clients who are ready to live more independently, Ms. Taylor speaks to landlords, negotiates lease renewals, and, with the help of two program directors and two field coordinators, oversees Scattered Site's operations. She also works with clients regularly to help them resolve any issues they may be having.

A former senior director for care coordination at Weston United, Ms. Taylor joined PCMH last November, after Scattered Site North had already moved to its new home, and is very optimistic about the new space. "Being located near two major subways means the office is extremely accessible for all of our clients," she says.

Client Close-Up: The Rivera Family

Rene Rivera and his family—wife Marilyn and daughters Meilynn, 13, and Keilynn, 11—may well be the happiest residents at PCMH's Hull Avenue Residence in the Bronx. Lifelong residents of the borough, they moved to central Florida a few years ago and bought a house, in search of a change of pace. Mr. Rivera, a carpenter, soon discovered that work there was scarce; they lost the house after a year, and found themselves back in the Bronx at a shelter.



The Rivera family (daughter Keilynn not pictured) is thrilled to call PCMH's Hull Avenue Residence home.

It was there that a housing specialist took an interest in the Riveras, and helped them apply to Hull Avenue. The family moved into their two-bedroom apartment there in July 2012, and they couldn't be more thrilled to be there.

"I like everything about living here," says Mrs. Rivera. "It's quiet, it's clean, and when I need something the staff is always there to help."

Mr. Rivera notes that being out of the shelter system has given his family peace of mind. "My wife is a lot calmer now," he says, noting that she is diabetic and has heart problems. Mrs. Rivera's health is one of the reasons their housing specialist worked so hard to help get them into Hull. "If it wasn't for her I don't know where we would have ended up," he says.

The entire family has thrived at Hull: Mr. Rivera works as a super at the Echo Place residence, and Meilynn and Keilynn go to school locally. "They love living here," he says. The family also goes to church in the neighborhood. In their free time they enjoy music: Mr. Rivera plays the drums and the guitar, Mrs. Rivera plays the piano, and their daughters play the drums too. Mrs. Rivera also enjoys cooking for her family. "That's my kitchen!" she laughs.

Mr. Rivera is deeply grateful for the life his family has had the opportunity to build at Hull Avenue. “This is our sanctuary,” he says. “I could have kissed the floor when we got here.”

New Faces at PCMH



Luz Alvarez, Administrative Assistant

Hired: January 2015

Luz Alvarez is the administrative assistant to the Queens ACT team in Jamaica, where she helps out with everything from billing to securing Metrocards for clients. “Every day I’m learning something new, which is great,” she says. She comes to PCMH from Pathways to Housing, a well-known non-profit organization, and is presently pursuing a degree in sociology at night at Hunter College. Born in New Jersey and raised in East Harlem, Luz lives in Rego Park, Queens.

Charlie Case, Field Coordinator

Hired: November 2014

Charlie Case is a Field Coordinator based in Brooklyn, where he supervises case managers in the four boroughs in which PCMH operates. Calling himself a “Johnny on the spot,” he also helps to troubleshoot issues with clients. A native of Brooklyn who also came to PCMH from Pathways to Housing, he holds a Master’s degree in education from Long Island University. “Working to address a big problem in my home city and home borough for a vulnerable population is gratifying,” Charlie says.

