



*BUILDING  
COMMUNITIES*

*ENSURING  
OPPORTUNITY*

*ACHIEVING  
JUSTICE*

Community and Economic Development Docket 2007

**Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A**



**Brooklyn A provides legal assistance to low-income individuals and groups in the North and East Brooklyn communities of:**

Williamsburg  
Greenpoint  
Bushwick  
Oceanhill-Brownsville  
East New York  
Bedford-Stuyvesant  
Cypress Hills  
Starrett City  
City Line  
East Flatbush  
Flatlands  
Canarsie

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A's purpose and goal is to provide high-quality legal assistance to low-income individuals and groups in the North and East Brooklyn communities of Williamsburg, Greenpoint, Bushwick, Oceanhill-Brownsville, East New York, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Cypress Hills, Starrett City, City Line, East Flatbush, Flatlands, and Canarsie.

The Corporation views legal assistance not only as traditional representation but also as a wide range of activities including, but not limited to, group representation and community education. The Board of Directors, management and staff are dedicated to maximizing the Corporation's effectiveness in serving the community via close and mutually supportive relationships with effective local grass roots organizations that have a demonstrated commitment to our common goal of social and economic justice.

**The printing of this Docket is made possible by a generous in-kind contribution from the law firm of Davis Polk & Wardwell**

## Letter from the Program Directors

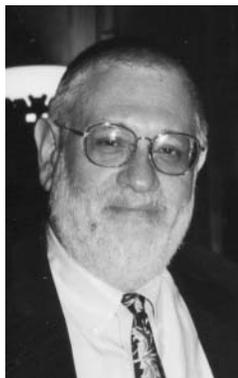
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Since its inception, a key element of Brooklyn A's mission has been to provide legal support to community-based organizations and their initiatives to build and reinforce the infrastructure of the neighborhoods of North and East Brooklyn. Brooklyn A's Board and staff are extremely proud of our success in continuing to fulfill that original vital mission. Indeed, that component of our mission was part of our dear friend Sargent Shriver's vision of the national legal services program that he helped to create as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty.

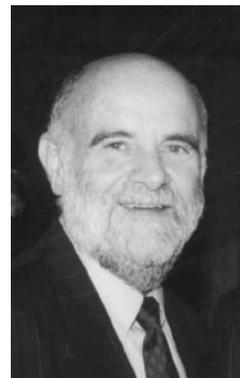
This year's updated "Community & Economic Development Docket" details and gives a description of the wonderful work of our CED/Group Representation Units. This extraordinary team includes Ralph Martinez, Jessie Rose, and Director of Litigation Rick Wagner, who have now been joined by Max Weinstein, our first ever Skadden Fellow, and Mike Haber, an Equal Justice Works Fellow, as well as Joanne Koslofsky, and Roberto Marrero. No summary gives a true description of the significant and continuing impact of their efforts, providing day-to-day counsel to an incredible array of community partners, many of whom we have been associated with from their inception and our own beginning. Indeed, a national evaluation team that visited our program declared our CED/Group Representation work to be the best of its kind in the country!

Congratulations to the entire "Partnership for Community & Economic Development," namely our CED/Group Representation team, our community partners, those law firms providing pro bono assistance to our team, and you, who provide the moral, political and economic support, without which none of this great work would have been possible.

Thank you and read on!



**Marty S. Needelman**



**Paul J. Acinapura**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marty Needelman".

**Marty S. Needelman**  
Project Director &  
Chief Counsel

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul J. Acinapura".

**Paul J. Acinapura**  
General Counsel &  
Director of CED Unit

*Community  
and Economic  
Development  
Docket  
2007*

**Brooklyn Legal Services  
Corporation A**

# Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A

Since its inception in 1968, Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A (Brooklyn A) has been committed to providing high-quality, neighborhood-based civil legal services to low-income individuals and families throughout North and East Brooklyn, and to the nonprofit organizations that serve those communities. Brooklyn A's offices in Williamsburg, Bushwick, and East Brooklyn serve over 6,000 individuals throughout the neighborhoods of Williamsburg, Greenpoint, Bushwick, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Oceanhill-Brownsville, East New York, Canarsie, Cypress Hills, Flatlands, and East Flatbush. The staff offer representation and advocacy: (1) regarding housing issues to individuals, organized tenant associations and low-income tenant cooperatives; (2) concerning family issues including family preservation and domestic violence; (3) to persons living with HIV/AIDS, the elderly, and persons with disabilities; (4) to obtain or restore critical benefits such as "welfare," SSI and Unemployment Insurance to those improperly denied them; and (5) to counter predatory lending practices that affect Brooklyn residents. In essence, our work prevents homelessness, helps people-in-need receive the benefits they are entitled to, and assures that families remain whole. Along with these essential civil legal services that we provide in order to better the lives of individuals and families, Brooklyn A has also made community economic development a major program priority since 1976. This work, and our success with it, makes Brooklyn A unique and exceptional in its

ability to improve the quality of life and promote empowerment within the diverse communities we serve.

## **COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/ GROUP REPRESENTATION TEAM**

Brooklyn A is one of the only not-for-profit, neighborhood-based, public interest legal services offices in the country to develop a sustained, substantial practice representing community-based organizations (CBOs) and community development corporations (CDCs) in low-income communities. Brooklyn A has carved out a role as the legal catalyst fueling community-initiated projects critical to improving the quality of life in its neighborhoods. This work results in the creation of new and rehabilitated housing, the empowerment of tenants, the expansion of health and dental care, childcare services, the development of community centers and nursing homes, and the creation of minority- and community-owned businesses and jobs. A primary tenet of this work has been community ownership of the process and assets once they are created.

Brooklyn A's community and economic development work is done through its Community & Economic Development (CED)/Group Representation Units, which serve both as house counsel and special project counsel to not-for-profit CBOs engaged in housing, health care, day care, education and other community development endeavors. Its legal work involves, but is not limited to:

## **PARTNERSHIP FOR COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **Honorary Co-Chairs**

John D. Feerick, Fordham School of Law

Barry H. Garfinkel, Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom

James F. Gill, Bryan Cave LLP

Henry L. King, Davis Polk & Wardwell

Robert MacCrate, Sullivan & Cromwell

Barbara Paul Robinson, Debevoise & Plimpton

Sargent Shriver

Haywood Burns (1940-1996)

Charles E. Innis (1935-1997)

Hon. Harold R. Tyler, Jr. (1921-2005)

William A. Volckhausen (1937-2001)

### **Thomas Early, Chair**

Health Plus

### **Members**

Alvin Adelman, Cullen & Dykman

Fred Arriaga, Brooklyn Borough President's Office

Henry P. Baer, Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom

Maureen Bateman, Holland and Knight

Eileen Berkman, JPMorgan Chase & Co.

Carlos Cabrales, Bank Leumi USA

Evan Davis, Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton

Matthew Fishbein, Debevoise & Plimpton LLP

Michael G. Flanigan, Citibank, N.A.

- Real estate, including pre-development coordination and title and loan closings
- The drafting and negotiation of contracts
- Financing (public and private)
- Regulatory representation and negotiations with governmental authorities
- Corporate and tax advice
- Litigation
- Employee relations

Our CED/Group Representation attorneys offer nonprofit clients ongoing, long-term representation which encompasses the full range of services that private sector corporations routinely receive from their corporate counsel — they review, draft and negotiate contracts; and represent clients in tax matters, real estate transactions, administrative, licensing and regulatory proceedings, and, if necessary, litigation.

CED/Group Representation attorneys act as counselors, negotiators, tacticians, strategists and troubleshooters. Our attorneys are essential partners and advisors to local leaders as they fulfill ambitious and strategic development plans for neighborhood revitalization; we are at their side, whether navigating the governmental and regulatory

universe or financial and insurance requirements. We are meeting our historic task of building self-sufficiency within our communities.

In particular, the anti-predatory lending work and litigation of Rick Wagner and Max Weinstein has raised serious and significant legal challenges to this practice, which all too often has not only victimized individuals and families but also drained communities of equity value.

To achieve its community and economic development mission and goals, and enhance the legal counsel services that foster community and economic development, Brooklyn A created a dynamic, public/private Partnership for Community & Economic Development which brings the resources, skills, expertise, and strategic advice of key individuals in banks, corporations, foundations, universities, government agencies and other organizations that support our ongoing efforts to better Brooklyn's neighborhoods.

Our Partnership for Community & Economic Development collaborates with Brooklyn A to provide the legal counsel necessary to meet our community and economic development program goals. The members of the Partnership play a key role in generating major economic, pro bono, and in-kind support from law firms, corporations, and foundations who believe in Brooklyn A's community and economic development programs.

Steven Flax, M&T Bank  
 Joseph E. Geoghan, Union Carbide (ret.)  
 Stephen L. Gordon, Cravath Swaine & Moore  
 Gary S. Hattem, Deutsche Bank  
 Michael Hickey, Deutsche Bank  
 Jean G. Leon, Kings County Hospital Center  
 Frank J. Macchiarola, St. Francis College  
 Kenneth J. Mahon, The Dime Savings Bank  
 Kevin Mahoney, Verizon  
 William Mastro, Group Health Incorporated  
 Nelson Perez, Con Edison

Vincent F. Pitta, Pitta & Dreier LLP  
 Mariadele Priest, North Fork Bank  
 Patricia Ricketts  
 Leslie B. Samuels, Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton  
 Frederick A.O. Schwarz, Jr., Brennan Center for Justice  
 Terri Thomson, Citigroup Inc.  
 Grace Lyu Volckhausen  
 Stephanie Wall, U.S. Trust Company  
 Joseph Wayland, Simpson Thacher & Bartlett

## *CED Projects*

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**The CED Unit is continuously providing an array of legal counseling and representation to its organizational clients. Attorney-client relationships between Brooklyn A and most of its organizational clients have existed for long periods of time as they work together on development projects that can last for many years. The following are examples of community and economic development projects that Brooklyn A is currently involved in by providing legal counsel to nonprofit community partners on an array of matters that facilitate project planning, development, and completion.**



**Los Sures Senior Housing Project  
(page 9)**

# East New York Preparatory Charter School

**The East New York Preparatory Charter School** is a new kindergarten-8th grade charter school in East New York. East New York Prep's charter was approved in 2005 and it opened its doors to its first students in September 2006. The school enrolled over 100 kindergarten and first graders in its first year of operation, and will expand one grade per year until it enrolls all grades, K-8.

Among the various elements in the school's design and curriculum development are: developing a high-performing, achievement-oriented environment where children learn, master and apply foundational skills to increase higher-order conceptual thinking, extending the length of school days and the academic year, fostering a college-bound community, providing opportunities for children to study architecture, business and law in 3rd to 8th grade, and preparing students to enter into rigorous college-preparatory high schools. Like all charter schools, East New York Prep does not charge tuition and is available to all families in NYC on a lottery application basis.

The staff and Board of Directors of the school worked with Brooklyn A to form Friends of East New York Prep Charter School, Inc., a separate independent not-for-profit corporation. Friends of East New York Prep, Inc. was formed for the purpose of supporting the school and its students and making contributions to the school and to other organizations that are 501(c)(3) exempt. Many charter schools choose to form two separate organizations to keep private fundraising activities independent from the operational activities of a charter school. The "Friends of" organization voluntarily donates its funds or in-kind service to support the school.



*Students of the East New York Preparatory Charter School.*

**Brooklyn A's work has included the following: preparation and filing of the school's federal tax exemption application; NYS incorporation and federal tax exemption of Friends of East New York Prep, Inc.; and assisting general board governance and employee issues. Conversations have been had with the school about future matters with it as it grows including assistance when it is ready to obtain a larger permanent school facility (it currently has been assigned to a small annex building of a pre-existing NYC Department of Education school).**

In 1992 the Brownsville Community Development Corporation opened its first community health center in the Brownsville community of Brooklyn, known as the **BMS Family Health Center**, was the first community health center in this medically underserved neighborhood of Brooklyn. It has in the intervening years continued to expand its primary health care, nutrition and social services throughout the Brownsville and East New York communities in a number of additional locations.

In October 2004, the **Brownsville Multi-Service Family Health Center (BMS)** became one of 76 organizations across the country to receive federal grants to fund the establishment of new community health centers. The Health Resources and Services Administration, a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, made grants totaling \$49 million nationwide, of which BMS received \$941,667 — one of the largest awards given. These funds were used for the development of BMS' new 3,500 square foot satellite health center at 360 Snediker Avenue in East New York. The \$2.1 million project was financed with the federal grant and a \$1.2 million construction loan from JP Morgan Chase and permanent financing from the Primary Care Development Corporation.

The new health center, which is called BMS@Genesis, is the first location established by BMS outside of its core service area of Central Brownsville. The new center's location in the East New York-Brownsville border area expands BMS's presence and brings primary care services to another medically underserved area in the East New York community. BMS@Genesis is so named because it is located in the Genesis Neighborhood Plaza (GNP), a "permanent service-enriched housing complex" that is home to 54 low-income families. GNP is owned and operated by HELP USA, Inc., from which BMS has leased space to construct 11 newly appointed examination rooms on the ground and basement floors of the complex.

BMS@Genesis opened to the public in May 2005. It offers adult medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, and subspecialties such as dermatology, podiatry, and surgical consultation to 1,300 low-income residents on an annual basis. Given the success of the project, BMS is in negotiations with the landlord regarding the acquisition of additional space to expand the center and its dental services.



**Brownsville Multi-Service Family Health Center has been a client of and has partnered with Brooklyn A on community and economic development projects since 1976.**

**Brooklyn A's work on this expansion project has involved the following: drafting and negotiating architectural, construction, and property management contracts; obtaining governmental regulatory approval from the NYS Department of Health and The Dormitory Authority of the State of New York; and handling the construction loan closing.**

# Los Sures Senior Housing Project

**Southside United Housing Development Fund Corporation (Los Sures)** has historically been the leader in developing new housing opportunities for the low-income, predominantly Latino community in the Southside of Williamsburg, Brooklyn. One of its largest undertakings involves the purchase of a 30,000 square foot, irregularly shaped lot acquired from the State of New York in April, 1999. The organization secured \$10 million in financing from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program to expand the supply of affordable housing with supportive services for the growing elderly population in the community. The project will create 66 units of low-income senior housing on the southern portion of the lot. Approximately 100 elderly individuals with limited income will reside in the building and have access to supportive services, such as cleaning, cooking, and transportation.

The lot was subdivided enabling Los Sures to create an additional 25 units of low-income housing by rehabilitating an existing structure on the north side of the site. The developments have recently been completed and as of March 2007 are in the process of being rented out.

Los Sures' acquisition of this site was crucial to the future of the neighborhood for three reasons. First, it afforded Los Sures a rare opportunity to develop low-income housing desperately needed to strengthen the community. Second, it turned back a State-sponsored proposal to operate an ambulatory methadone clinic in the heart of the residential Southside. Third, it prevented speculators from acquiring the site to build market-rate condos and from further exacerbating displacement pressures, particularly on vulnerable seniors.

The negotiated price for this large site was only \$313,000, an amount necessary to repay the bond monies spent on predevelopment costs by the NYS Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse in their failed attempt to reuse the site. Los Sures funds were also spent on cleaning up the site, boarding up the building, and insuring the property. To help another community program, and to raise capital to offset the high cost of holding the large parcel, Los Sures sold a small portion to El Regreso, a local social service agency, to allow them to construct the area's first Women's Drug Rehabilitation Residence.



**The Southside United Housing Development Fund Corporation (Los Sures) has been a client of and has partnered with Brooklyn A on community and economic development projects since 1970.**

**Brooklyn A has represented Los Sures on this major project since 1999, including the original acquisition of the land from the State and the splitting of the parcel into 3 separate lots and the conveyance of one of the remaining two parcels to El Regreso for a residential facility for women recovering from drug addiction. Brooklyn A's work in this major development project has also involved the following: coordinating environmental inspections; drafting and negotiating architectural, construction, and property management contracts; and handling the title and loan closings, as well as requisition, insurance, and financing matters.**

# Cypress Corners Apartments

The Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation's **Cypress Corners Apartments Project** involves the acquisition and gut renovation of four landlord-abandoned, partially occupied buildings in the Cypress Hills section of Brooklyn, and the rehabilitation of 27 units of low-income rental housing.

This \$5.5 million project, which falls under NYC Department of Housing Preservation & Development's Neighborhood Redevelopment Program, is funded by a combination of federal low-income housing tax credits and city capital funds. Three of the four buildings were partially or fully occupied when Cypress Hills took title in 2004. Most of the tenants have fixed, very low incomes, and little mobility, and given the extremely low vacancy rate and high demand for affordable housing in the Cypress Hills area, permanent relocation within the project's buildings was the only viable option for long-term housing.

This situation necessitated a phased construction schedule to allow for 'checkerboarding', or temporary relocation of tenants between the four buildings, so that each building could be 'gut'-renovated while vacant. Under the first construction phase, tenants were relocated from the smaller buildings into the site on 168 Hendrix Street, the largest of the four. After those three buildings were completed, tenants were relocated out of 168 Hendrix into the smaller buildings so that the second (and final) phase, that of renovating the Hendrix Street building, could begin. Phase II was initiated on February 1, 2006, after the successful relocation of tenants out of Hendrix, and will continue into 2007.

This has been and continues to be an extremely challenging process, given the long-term tenancy of most of the building residents, the pre-existing building conditions, and 'scattered site' nature of the project, among other factors. Although three of the four buildings have been completed, only half of the construction work is done, and much remains to be accomplished in terms of the permanent relocation and stabilization of the tenants and the project itself.



**Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation has been a client of and has partnered with Brooklyn A on community and economic development projects since 1985.**

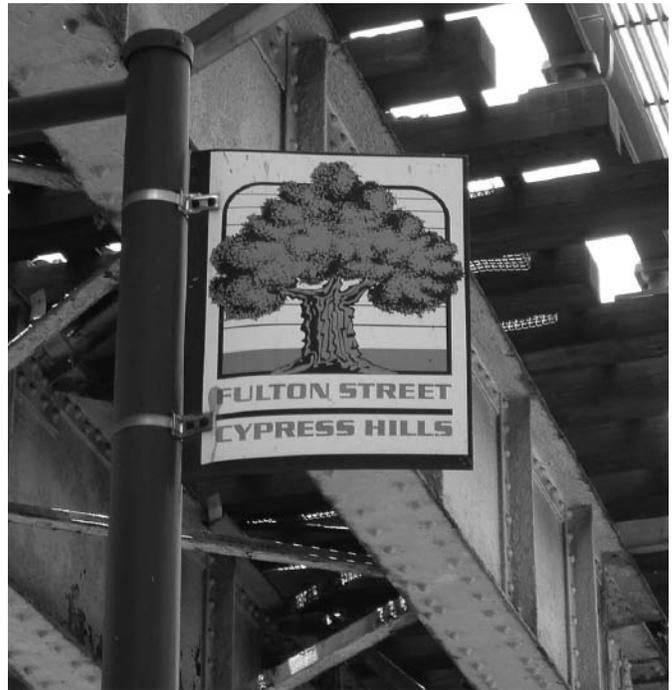
**Brooklyn A's work on this project has involved the following: forming the subsidiary corporation and limited partnership required for the financing; predevelopment coordination (e.g., environmental audits, insurance coverage, permits); drafting and negotiating architectural, construction, and property management contracts; preparing LIHTC (Low-Income Housing Tax Credit) submissions and SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission) and New York State security filings; handling the partnership, title, and loan closings; and addressing matters with contractors and architectural and property management firms that require legal attention and other matters that may require possible redress.**

## Cypress Plaza Mews

Cypress Mews, a major community and economic development project led by **Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation, Inc.**, will be located in the western end of the Cypress Hills commercial corridor, amidst over 200 units of new housing, right next to a busy, newly refurbished subway station, in a neighborhood with a marked increase in population over the last 20 years. There is a continuing area-wide shortage of affordable rental housing in the community and ample consumer demand to support the new retail development.

This project has involved the acquisition of vacant land from the City of New York along Fulton Street in the Cypress Hills community of Brooklyn, and involves the construction of a mixed use (commercial/residential) 25,000 square foot structure with six commercial and 18 residential units. The residential units will be a mixture of affordable and market-rate units. The commercial units will each be approximately 1,000 square feet, and will make space available to local neighborhood entrepreneurs and boost the local economy. The acquisition/construction phase is projected to commence in the summer of 2007. Occupancy is expected in late summer-early fall of 2008. This project will be financed through low-income housing tax credits and loans from private lenders.

In order to accommodate the mixed-use nature of the project, residential tenants will enter their apartments through a separate, pedestrian 'mews' or pathway at the rear of the buildings. The commercial storefront entrances will be along the Fulton Street thoroughfare, with parking spaces in the front of the building, and in the rear of the building for residential use.



**Brooklyn A's work has involved the following: establishment of the subsidiary entity through which development will take place; negotiation and preparation of all documentation relating to hiring of the architect and general contractor; preparation of commercial and residential leases; and handling the construction loan financing closing.**

## *Urban Health Plan: Corona Primary Health Care Center*

**Urban Health Plan** (UHP) has operated in its 30 years of existence in the heart of the South Bronx. In 2001-2002, it moved from 14,000 square feet of rental space into a brand new 38,000 square foot building which it owns. It also operates from two other locations in the South Bronx and provides over 145,000 annual visits of medical and dental services at all three of its locations.

Due to its reputation and success, UHP was approached by interested parties and encouraged and invited to expand its service area into the medically underserved, and predominantly immigrant community of Corona, Queens. Many of the health indicators in Corona are worse than the New York City averages. The New York City Department of Health has reported this service area as being ranked in the bottom 10 among 40 areas analyzed in the rates of infectious diseases, including pneumonia, influenza, and HIV/AIDS. The area also experiences a below average access to medical care and preventive services leading to high rates of breast, prostate, and colon cancer. UHP is looking forward to making its community health expertise accessible to the Corona community. The completion of the project, which is expected in January 2008, will result in a facility from which will be provided more than 22,000 annual visits of primary health care delivered to residents of the Corona community.



*Urban Health Plan's main site was completed in 2001 with the assistance of Brooklyn A's CED Unit.*

**Urban Health Plan has been a client of and has partnered with Brooklyn A on community and economic development projects since 1998.**

**Brooklyn A's work in this expansion involves the following: real estate acquisition through the negotiation of a long-term lease with a private landlord; the negotiation of an architect's contract; the selection of a general contractor for the \$2.5 million renovation and the negotiation of a construction contract for same; coordination and assistance and representation in the submission of the New York State Department of Health's (NYS DOH's) Certificate of Need (CON) application seeking regulatory approval of NYS DOH for the project; representation in the financing placement and closing on the \$3 million privately financed loan to fund the construction; and, upon closing of the financing, the monitoring of the 12 months of construction, the advancing of construction dollars through the requisition process and, upon completion of construction, the obtaining of final approval from the NYS DOH for UHP to operate a diagnostic and treatment center in the new location.**

# Bedford-Stuyvesant Family Health Center (BSFHC)

For more than 25 years the **Bedford-Stuyvesant Family Health Center, Inc.** has provided primary health care services to the residents of this central Brooklyn community. In order to address the critical and growing health care needs of its community, BSFHC will be moving into a newly constructed facility that it will own. The new building will enable BSFHC to expand its patient base, allow for a more efficient delivery of its services, and increase the productivity of its providers, which will mean a doubling of its annual visits to 100,000 patients by its fifth year of operation.

Bedford Stuyvesant has been designated both a medically underserved area and a “health professional shortage area,” and the New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) reported in 2000 that Bed-Stuy had the highest rates of sexually transmitted diseases in all of New York State. As the principal and most respected provider of comprehensive primary and preventive health care in the Bedford Stuyvesant community, BSFHC will enhance its ability to respond to the needs of local residents because its new site will provide a central point for comprehensive ambulatory care in an accessible location that is spacious and designed to avoid long waits, overcrowding, and offer privacy and more direct care.

The tax-exempt bond financing closed in the summer of 2006 and those proceeds will fund the construction of a new state-of-the-art, environmentally sensitive 38,000 square foot facility. The new facility, expected to be open in spring 2008, will enable BSFHC to move from the 10,000 square foot rented facility that has been its home for 15 years, and double the number of health care encounters it provides (up to 100,000 annually) by the end of its fifth year of operation.



Rendering courtesy of William N. Bregier Associates

**The Bedford-Stuyvesant Family Health Center has been a client of and has partnered with Brooklyn A on community and economic development projects since 1994.**

**Brooklyn A has been involved in all aspects of the project from its inception. Brooklyn A's work has included: identification and selection of the location of the new facility (this involved the assemblage of 3 adjoining parcels, acquisitions of same and merger of the three tax lot parcels into one); identification and selection of the project manager, architect and the general contractor (and preparation and negotiation of contracts for same); coordination and assistance and representation in the preparation and submission of the NYS DOH Certificate of Need (CON) application seeking regulatory approval for the expansion project; and representation in the tax-exempt bond financing closing. After closing, Brooklyn A's work will involve participation in the monitoring of the 16 months of construction, the advancing of construction dollars through the construction requisition process, and, upon completion of construction, the obtaining of final approval from the NYS DOH for BSFHC to operate its diagnostic and treatment center at the new location.**

## *Predatory Lending and Consumer Credit Schemes*

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Brooklyn A's Predatory Lending Project, led by Director of Litigation, Rick Wagner, got a tremendous boost in October, 2005 when Skadden Arps Fellow Max Weinstein joined the unit. The project is currently litigating five major, multi-defendant actions in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York against sellers, lenders, appraisers, inspectors, abstract companies, and lawyers who engage in fraudulent, deceptive and unlawful schemes that target primarily minority, first-time home buyers.

The Predatory Lending Project, since its first cases were filed in 2001, has recovered millions in dollars of damages and debt relief for our clients. We have also educated federal and state judges about these unlawful practices and obtained important rulings on the rights and remedies available to these victims. The rulings include a decision that stops the running of the statute of limitations in cases where the victims' "own" lawyers participated in the fraudulent scheme.

The Project recently began taking cases involving fraudulent foreclosure "rescue" schemes. In these cases the homeowners, who have encountered problems with mortgage payments or other indebtedness, are tricked into conveying title to their homes as "collateral" for loans that are supposedly intended to help them out of debt. Instead, the perpetrators record the title they have obtained as security for a loan, and strip all of the equity out of the homeowners' property.

The Project currently has two such cases where we are seeking to void the fraudulently obtained deeds, extinguish the mortgages, and collect damages from the perpetrators. In addition, the Project's co-counsel, Brooklyn Center for Law & Justice, Inc. is seeking attorneys' fees under New York's Deceptive Practices Act. A successful result in these cases will accomplish three important goals; it will make the victims whole, it will deter other perpetrators, and it will demonstrate to the private bar that these cases, when taken on a contingency basis, can generate sufficient attorneys' fees for the victims' counsel. This we expect will result in more lawyers being available to pursue current cases and we hope result in fewer cases in the future.

## The Group Representation unit in Williamsburg

The Group Representation Unit in Williamsburg is led by Brooklyn A Chief Counsel Marty Needelman joined by Senior Attorneys Roberto Marrero and Joanne Koslofsky. This unit works with ten full time tenant organizers from three major community organizations in North Brooklyn, Southside United Housing Development Fund Corporation (“Los Sures”) in the Southside, St. Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation Corporation in East Williamsburg and Greenpoint, and People’s Firehouse in the Northside.

Our primary work involves representing tenants associations in buildings whose affordable apartments are threatened by landlord harassment and/or neglect provoked by the tide of gentrification offering huge profits if existing low-income tenants can be removed.

In addition, the Unit’s lawyers represent the area’s large number of tenant-owned coops (most of which resulted from successful tenant struggles to prevent their ouster by voracious landlords), assisting those coops to sustain themselves as affordable housing for low-income tenants.

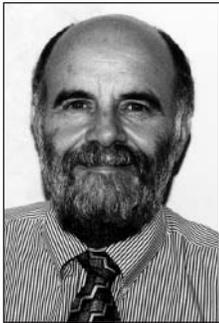
Finally, the Unit represents community organizations and coalitions in struggles for justice for the low-income residents of the neighborhoods of North Brooklyn. Over the years to the present time, Brooklyn A’s Group Representation Unit has been the lawyers for local groups attacking persistent racial quotas discriminating against Latinos and African-Americans in public housing in Williamsburg, successfully preventing the construction of a 47 story garbage incinerator in the Navy Yard adjoining public and subsidized housing developments, working to rebuild the Williamsburg Bridge without relocating large blocks of the community, incorporating the mandatory inclusion of significant amounts of truly affordable housing in the recently adopted rezoning of the East River waterfront from manufacturing to luxury housing, and enforcing the protections against harassment and forced displacement included in that rezoning plan.



**Tenants rallying in front of 190 South 8th Street in Williamsburg’s Southside neighborhood, accompanied by Brooklyn A Chief Counsel Marty Needelman, who has assisted them for several years in avoiding displacement from their long-term home. The building is typical of the situation throughout rapidly gentrifying Williamsburg-Greenpoint, where landlords are doing everything possible to oust long-term, low-income tenants, in the face of a huge market of émigrés from Manhattan willing and able to pay double and triple the current legal rents for these apartments. Brooklyn A’s Group Representation team, in conjunction with tenant organizers from Los Sures, St. Nicholas and People’s Firehouse, have successfully worked with tenants associations in scores of buildings to resist such voracious and illegal attempts to move them out of their neighborhood.**

## CED/Group Representation Staff

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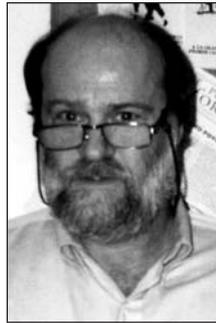


### **PAUL J. ACINAPURA, ESQ.**

Brooklyn A General Counsel &  
CED Unit Director  
pacinapura@bka.org

Paul is the General Counsel of Brooklyn A and Director of Brooklyn A's Community and Economic Development Unit. His pioneering work includes facilitating the financing of the capital expansion of primary care health facilities run by

community-based providers. He also has leadership roles in community organizations, including being a board member of Urban Health Plan, general counsel of the Brownsville Multi-Service Family Health Center, and special counsel to The Bedford-Stuyvesant Family Health Center, Inc. Paul joined Brooklyn A in 1974, and has led the CED practice since 1976. Paul is an alumnus of Rutgers University Law School in New Jersey.



### **RICHARD WAGNER, ESQ.**

Director of Litigation  
rwagner@bka.org

Rick has been Brooklyn A's Director of Litigation since 1985. Prior to that, he worked at NBC-TV from 1967-1969, the Center for Constitutional Rights from 1970-1975, and the firm of Stolar, Alterman, Wagner & Boop until joining Brooklyn A. He graduated from Adelphi

University and New York Law School where he graduated cum laude. Rick has initiated ground-breaking legal strategies, including use of a federal civil statute against owners of dilapidated housing projects receiving federal subsidies, and affirmative federal civil conspiracy lawsuits against both predatory sellers and mortgage lenders.



### **MARTIN S. NEEDELMAN, ESQ.**

Project Director & Chief Counsel  
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Marty is Project Director and Chief Counsel of Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A, positions he has held since 1984. He joined Brooklyn A in 1971 as a Reginald Heber Smith Fellow, specializing in education, immigration, civil rights, housing, and community

group representation. Throughout his 35 years with Brooklyn A, Marty has received a number of awards for his community leadership and legal services work. He is a graduate of East New York's Thomas Jefferson High School, Brooklyn College, Boston University (J.D.) and NYU (LL.M.) Law Schools.



### **RAFAEL MARTINEZ, ESQ.**

Senior Attorney, CED Unit  
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Ralph has been with Brooklyn A since 1998 bringing with him, at that time, more than 20 years of practice in both the private and public sector, including positions of General Counsel to the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, Vice-Chair of the New York City Loft

Board, and New York City Planning Board Commissioner. He is a graduate of Brooklyn Law School.

## CED/Group Representation Staff

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### JESSICA ROSE, ESQ.

Staff Attorney, CED Unit  
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Jessie joined the CED Unit in June 2004 after three years of practice in public finance at Hawkins Delafield & Wood LLP. As an associate at that firm, she worked on all aspects of its structured finance and public finance practice as bond and underwriter's counsel in the public offerings of debt obligations of governmental entities. She is a graduate of Fordham University School of Law, where she was a Stein Scholar in Public Interest and Ethics.



### MAX WEINSTEIN, ESQ.

Skadden Fellow  
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Max, Brooklyn A's first-ever Skadden Fellow, works on our efforts to combat predatory lending in areas in Brooklyn that have historically been "red-lined"—victims of housing discrimination—and currently experience astronomical foreclosure rates. Max, who graduated from Yale Law School in 2005, focuses on pursuing affirmative foreclosure defense strategies and defending low-income homeowners who are maliciously wronged. He received his bachelor's degree from Williams College, and also has a master of philosophy degree from Cambridge University.



### MICHAEL HABER, ESQ.

Equal Justice Works Fellow  
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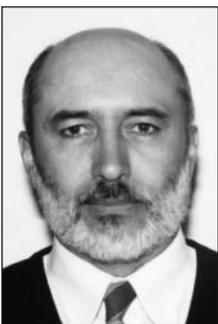
Mike joined the CED Unit in September 2005 for a two-year Equal Justice Works Fellowship. He focuses on working closely with community-based organizations to maintain the affordability of housing currently subsidized by the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program. Mike originally interned with the CED Unit during the summer after his first year in law school. He graduated from Fordham University School of Law in 2005, and has a master's degree from Carnegie Mellon University in Literary and Cultural Theory.



### JOANNE KOSLOFSKY

Staff Attorney, Group Representation  
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Joanne joined the Group Representation Unit in September 2004 after more than a decade of practice in various public interest and labor organizations, including Housing Conservation Coordinators in Hell's Kitchen, Queens Legal Services, United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America, and the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund. Her work at Brooklyn A is focused on preserving decent, affordable housing by representing tenants' groups in their struggle to obtain repairs and essential services and prevent the loss of their homes via illegal rent increases and illegal evictions. Joanne is a graduate of CUNY Law School at Queens College and has a master's degree in Economics from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.



### ROBERTO MARRERO

Staff Attorney, Group Representation  
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Roberto joined Brooklyn A in 1989 after graduating from CUNY Law School. He has been part of the housing units representing both individual tenants facing eviction and tenant associations fighting to improve conditions in their building and against gentrification.

Roberto has also served as a legislative aide in the New York State Assembly and as a Court Attorney in NYS Supreme Court for Kings County.

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For further information about the Group Representation Unit, please call Martin S. Needelman at 718-487-2300