

# Brooklyn A News

BROOKLYN LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

BROOKLYN LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION A—DEDICATED TO EQUAL JUSTICE FOR BROOKLYN NEIGHBORHOODS FOR 28 YEARS • WINTER 1996

## Nuestros Niños: An Educational Beacon

By Jennifer Mulhern

The creation of Nuestros Niños twenty three years ago emerged from the need in the Williamsburg Latino community for child care for the growing numbers of Latin American immigrant children. Its original mission was—and remains—to not only provide adequate child care, but to offer a holistic education for the social, physical and intellectual growth of the children and their families. This educational perspective focuses on the richness of the Latino and American multi-cultural experience.

The languages and rituals of both cultures are integrated into the everyday life of the children currently in the program as well as the thousands of young adults who went through Nuestros Niños' doors. Only by joining the resources of the local community with the families of the children could Nuestros Niños promote the intellectual, spiritual and physical growth of the young people.

Health care services are also being pro-



Photo by Marilyn Pabón

Children playing on the Nuestros Niños Day Care Center playground.

vided in order to further integrate the community into the development of each child. All children have regular medical examinations, and are fully immunized

and tested for lead and other childhood hazards. Two meals and a snack a day are served to the more than 600 children currently enrolled. While these two important contributions develop the physical component of the child, the intellectual and cultural side are developed by the teaching staff drawn from the local Williamsburg community. When the community founded Nuestros Niños it was paramount that the staff be from the immediate neighborhood. This would have a two-fold effect: first, it would provide many jobs and become an economic anchor; and second, by developing the child as a whole person, Nuestros Niños simultaneously developed Williamsburg, too.

Nuestros Niños serves the children through three different programs. One is the Family Home Day Care Program, which gives Nuestros Niños the opportunity to expand beyond the Southside community and reach out to the adjoining neighborhoods. The goal is to provide the same holistic approach to the children and their families as is given in the Day Care Centers. The program provides for 300 children ranging in age from three months to 12 years in a family setting in the homes of

*continued on page 8*

### Inaugurating Brooklyn A's New Williamsburg Storefront



Photo by Denis R. Berger

Brooklyn A board members, staff, community leaders and friends celebrate the grand opening of our new Williamsburg storefront at 256 Broadway on September 12, 1996.



Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A's purpose and goal is to provide high quality neighborhood-based civil legal services 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.

**Project Director & Chief Counsel**

Martin S. Needelman

**Deputy Project Director**

Paul J. Acinapura

**Board of Directors**

Rev. Peter A. Mahoney, *Chair*  
Arthur Bates, *Vice-Chair*  
Brian Sullivan, *Treasurer*  
Mirta M. DeJesus, *Secretary*

Paris Baldacci

Harding Bowman

Laura Effel

Winston McIntosh

Delia Melendez

Ellen Mishkin

Jennie Ortiz-Bowman

Anne Pilsbury

Fran Weinstock

**Advisory Committee**

*Honorary Co-Chairs*

Howard Golden

Robert MacCrate

Sargent Shriver

Harold R. Tyler, Jr.

Charles E. Inniss, *Chair*

John M. Imperiale, *Co-Chair*

Jane N. Barrett

David L. Berliner

Eduardo Castell

John R. Day

Joseph S. Genova

Gary S. Hattem

Valarie Hing

Hal Jacobson

Fritz Kopeinig

Joseph Lipofsky

Dwight Loines

Frank J. Macchiarola

Kenneth J. Mahon

Sam Meyers

Joseph S. Morgano

Eugene E. Mulhern

Russell G. Pearce

Vincent F. Pitta

Frances A. Resheske

Richard J. Roberto

Manuel A. Rosa

Wayne Saitta

Ellen Spodek

Miriam Thompson

Benjamin B. Tucker

William A. Volckhausen

Joan G. Wexler

**Brooklyn A News**

*A publication of Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A*

*Editor & Director of Development*

Denis R. Berger

*Design:* Judith Rew

**Williamsburg Office**

256-260 Broadway, Brooklyn NY 11211

718/487-2300 • Fax: 718/782-6790

**East Brooklyn Office**

80 Jamaica Avenue, Brooklyn NY 11207

718/345-6200 • Fax: 718/342-1780

## A WORD FROM THE PROJECT DIRECTOR

### "If You Want to See the Rainbow..."

With this, my first public occasion to do so, I want to express my deep gratitude to all those who made Brooklyn A's Annual Partnership Awards Benefit such an extraordinarily wonderful evening. More than 300 people from all walks of New York life attended the reception at the World Headquarters of Bankers Trust Company. A special thank you to our event host, Bankers Trust Vice President, and Brooklyn A Advisory Committee member Gary S. Hattem.

Thanks also to our honorees, Henry L. King of Davis Polk & Wardwell and Angela M. Battaglia of Ridgewood Bushwick Senior Citizens Council, Inc. They were very kind to provide us with the opportunity to associate Brooklyn A's name with theirs. Assemblyman Vito Lopez and Legal Aid Society Board Chair Arch Murray, the introducers, could easily have been the honorees, so great has been their contributions to our program, our clients and the law. Denis Berger made it happen, with the invaluable support of Davis Polk's Denny Lewis, Bronwyn Long, Mark O'Brien, Jennifer Valentino, and our own Margie Ruiz, Tisha Torres and Roberto Reyes. The event celebrated our Partnership for Community & Economic Development. The Partners—our incredible staff led by Paul Acinapura, our Advisory Committee led by Judge Harold R. Tyler, Jr., Bob MacCrate, Dean John Feerick, Charlie Inniss and Chase's John Imperiale, our Board led by Reverend Peter Mahoney, and the amazing network of community development organizations—they all made it worth celebrating.

Unfortunately, as is typically the case here, we did not get much of a chance to savor the success and joy of the event because we are increasingly confronted by the harsh, daily realities threatening our clients and therefore making work life more and more distressing for our staff.

In directing Brooklyn A, Paul Acinapura



and I confront two immediate challenges going into 1997. The first is to make day-to-day life more tolerable for our staff, and the second is to try to maintain normalcy and excellence for them and for us no matter what the obstacles. Our deeply dedicated, hard working and talented staff members face enormous pressures to do more than even they are capable of doing.

Every day they, and we, must resist the enormous temptation to let the difficulties of our clients and the struggles of our communities overwhelm us. We are going to have to take a deep breath, focus, prioritize, and work closely in coalition with others to try and address the extremely complicated and large volume of work that must get done.

Paul and I are also going to go out of our way to figure out how to improve the offices that our staff work in, the equipment that they use, and the training and support that they get. I am going to have to be a better leader than I have been in sustaining the morale and spirit of the people who work for Brooklyn A. They make it the great community institution that it is.

At the same time, we must enlist even more support from our Partners in the private sector—individuals, law firms, corporations, banks, foundations, and many others—to maximize the future successful efforts of our neighborhood organizations and to minimize the pain, suffering and injustices imposed on our clients. Brooklyn A is committed to doing everything possible in these hard times to make the system of civil justice work for the people of our communities, and to expanding the opportunities available for local non-profit groups to empower, build and revitalize North and East Brooklyn. Now more than ever, we will need a lot of help in order to achieve our goals.

In this effort I am heartened by Dolly Parton's prophetic words: "If you want to see the rainbow, you're gonna have to put up with some rain." •



# A Worst-Case Scenario of the New Welfare Law

by **Denene Millner**

DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

*Georgina has been a client of Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A for one and a half years. Lisa Pearlstein, a Senior Staff Attorney specializing in welfare rights at the Brooklyn A Williamsburg office, forced the Human Resources Administration of New York City to raise the meager level of food stamp benefits for Georgina and her family one year ago. Now, as a result of the newest federal welfare "reform" legislation, the obstacles facing this family are insurmountable. The following full page story appeared in the Daily News on Tuesday, October 29, 1996. (c) New York Daily News, L.P. reprinted with permission.*

**T**here was no ice cream, no potato chips, no fresh French bread or fresh-baked pastries in her shopping cart.

No, in the Key Food store in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, Georgina was grabbing the 20-pound bag of rice, the cans upon cans of corn, sweet peas and beets, giant jars of fruit juice mix and those packs of squishy liver that her kids can't stand.

"For the big one, I make it special because if she sees that it's liver she won't eat it," Georgina rattled off to a translator in her thick Dominican Republic patois. She was shopping for two weeks' worth of groceries recently, courtesy of the Daily News, to help examine what food stamp recipients spend their money on.

Legal immigrants such as Georgina who have worked here less than 10 years will see their food stamp benefits slashed or taken away next April, the result of recent welfare reform legislation.

Georgina and her husband, Roberto, who asked that their last name not be used, have three children—Sandra, 12, Robinson, 2, and Joralisa, 10 months. They can ill afford surf and turf when they're trying to make \$397 in food stamps stretch across a month—a not-so-easy task for a family with scant income and five stomachs to fill.

Thus, liver becomes the meat of necessity rather than choice.

But even *that* will be a luxury for them come April, when their food stamps will be virtually eliminated.



SHOPPING ART: Georgina's \$397 in monthly food stamps goes mostly for the staples.

Georgina, who immigrated from the Dominican Republic in 1984, worked about seven years as a seamstress for a Brooklyn tuxedo firm, but was fired when she became pregnant with Robinson—she thinks because her boss didn't want to pay her benefits.

Her husband, Roberto, has been here but a year, and 12-year-old Sandra, born in Georgina's native San Jose de las Matas, isn't old enough to work.

So the \$397 in food stamps that arrives at the first of the month to their tiny two (barely)-bedroom apartment in Williamsburg will be reduced to \$72—enough to support only the American-born babies.

Which, of course, leaves Georgina's family in a quandary: How will a family of five eat with money for two?

It's a question that invited a shrug from Georgina.

"That's what we would like to know," she said softly. "The \$397 is not enough for the whole month as it is. It doesn't even last 15 days.

"My husband makes only \$127 a week—and sometimes they tell him don't come because there's no work and we won't pay you," she added. "That's where money to live comes from. Once the food coupons run out, you cut into our money to live."

For welfare advocates, Georgina's family is the perfect example of the danger of the new legislation, which Congress and President Clinton said would help reduce what they view as exorbitant assistance to the needy. It's estimated that 100,000 to 200,000 legal immigrants across the state could lose their food stamps under the law.

"This is a hardworking family that's trying to make it off welfare," said Lisa Pearlstein, a senior lawyer at the Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A, an advocacy group for the needy.

"The family is intact, the father is working to make ends meet. Why not support them? Why not make sure they can feed their family every night until they don't need that help anymore? I haven't a clue as to how they're going to scrape by."

Indeed, Georgina's family is barely scraping by as it is.

The rent is \$700; \$337 is paid directly to the landlord through public assistance. But the other \$363 in rent, plus expenses for clothing, toiletries, diapers for two babies and transportation must come out of the \$127 a week he brings home from his maintenance job at a Brooklyn furniture company.

Roberto doesn't speak English—so it's hard for him to find better-paying work, Georgina said. She would "love" to work, but she can't find a job that pays enough for day care.

Their refrigerator is perpetually empty—as it was when the Daily News paid \$198.62 for two weeks' worth of groceries, about half her monthly \$397 allotment.

The refrigerator was bare, save for a pack of frozen chicken, a bag of frozen lima beans, a bit of milk, a jug of water, and a short stack of plastic containers filled with leftovers.

Critics of food stamps sometimes claim recipients blow the money on expensive cuts of meat, beer and other luxuries, but Georgina stocked up on bulk items—bags of beans and cereals, and large packs of inexpensive meats like chicken and liver.

Ironically, Georgina came to America to escape the broken, country life she led in the Dominican Republic. Things would be better, she thought.

"That's what my father told me," she said, smiling. "This is still better than there." •

Photo by Andrew Savulich, Daily News

# In Support of Brooklyn A

Remarks by Henry L. King, delivered at Brooklyn A's Annual Partnership Awards Benefit on Thursday, October 24, 1996.



Above: Assemblyman Vito J. Lopez and Martin S. Needelman (left and right) present Honoree Angela M. Battaglia with her gift.

Below left: (l. to r.) From St. Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation Corporation: Michael Rochford, Jeanne Laino, and Richard Macellaro; Gary S. Hattem and Amy Brusiloff, Bankers Trust Company; David Pagan, Southside United HDFC ("Los Sures"); and John Mulhern, Nuestros Niños.

Below right: Staff members of Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A.

We assemble here to honor Brooklyn A's superlative contributions in Brooklyn and the City at large. This event brings together friends of Brooklyn A from all sectors of the City—the judiciary, the private bar, the corporate and business communities, the government, and Brooklyn's community organizations.

For 28 years, Brooklyn A has provided legal representation to individual clients and families in need, and it has fulfilled that mission superbly. In addition, in partnership with economic development groups, Brooklyn A serves a broader constituency. It acts as in-house counsel to dozens of community organizations, providing corporate, regulatory, real

estate, zoning and tax advice and structuring. These organizations participate in wide ranging areas such as housing rehabilitation, health care delivery and child care. The partnership also promotes capital and small business formation in many communities of north and east Brooklyn.

The breadth and importance of these activities show that Brooklyn A has become an indispensable part of Brooklyn's social and economic fabric. Through these efforts, the small staff in Brooklyn A's offices have leveraged their good work many times over. Their operations should serve as a model for groups around the City who share the values of raising up the standards of our communities.

The need for the private bar and others interested in Brooklyn A's work to support it and other legal services organizations is especially acute this year. I need not tell this group that Congress has sharply reduced the funding of the Legal Services Corporation and curtailed the types of cases that programs funded by the Corporation can accept. Federal funding for legal services in New York City has been cut by more than 25 per cent. A number of programs have closed offices, while others—including Brooklyn A—have been forced to make painful reductions in their legal and support staffs.

The effect of these cuts on people who need legal assistance is devastating. According to the City Bar Association, almost 10,000 fewer New Yorkers will receive necessary legal services because of the reductions







Henry L. King

in federal support.

One need look no further than the front pages of the newspapers to be reminded of the continuing crises facing poor and working people in Brooklyn and the City at large. For example, the recent *New York Times* series called the "Hidden Housing Crisis" revealed the daunting challenge that confronts far too many New Yorkers earning a modest income and seeking affordable housing. Many of the episodes reported occurred in the neighborhoods served by Brooklyn A.

But as Brooklyn A has demonstrated so well, *with proper funding*, solutions to many problems of this nature are in the making at the grassroots level. Instead of simply raging at the problems around them, Angela Battaglia and others have chosen to light a candle and lead the way.

When Brooklyn A's Marty Needelman, Paul Acinapura, and Denis Berger guided me and others from Davis Polk through the Brooklyn neighborhoods where they work, we could easily recognize the impressive impact Brooklyn A has had. I mention here the most significant of the projects that Brooklyn A and its lawyers have been involved in:

- Brooklyn A provided legal assistance to the George Street Houses and other affordable housing sites developed by Angela and the Ridgewood Bushwick Senior Citizens Council, Inc.
- Brooklyn A helped the Brownsville Family Health Center become the first community-based health care provider to secure tax-exempt bond financing in New York State. Brownsville is now the largest non-hospital primary health care provider in Brooklyn.
- Brooklyn A worked on Brownsville redevelopment projects sponsored by the

"...The work of Brooklyn A demonstrates the truly creative role that lawyers can play in enabling individuals and communities to control their destiny."

Oceanhill-Brownsville Tenants Association, as well as tenant-owned coops organized by Los Sures and the St. Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation Corporation at countless sites in and around Williamsburg.

- And Brooklyn A and its lawyers assisted the Fedayeen Construction Company, Oceanhill-Brownsville Security Corporation, and other community and worker-owned businesses that provide jobs and training to community residents.
- The lawyers and their legal assistants at Brooklyn A work every day to keep families together, help them avoid eviction and prevent the loss of crucial government benefits.

As will be seen by these activities, the work of Brooklyn A demonstrates the truly creative role that lawyers can play in enabling individuals and communities to control their destiny.

I believe that assisting in the provision of legal representation to all who require it, such as that offered by the Brooklyn A lawyers, is a critical responsibility of all lawyers. Pro bono work affords lawyers the opportunity to provide a service to New York and to the community, civic, and cultural institutions that are the life's blood of the City. We must never forget that we are part of the City. We do not live or work in isolation. The vitality of the City depends impor-

tantly on the well-being of all our citizens. By education, training and experience, lawyers are well placed to make the contribution required to raise up the economic standards of those less fortunate.

I have found the pro bono work in which I have been privileged to be involved to be deeply rewarding on a personal level. Such work allows a lawyer whose regular practice takes him or her away from the community to take part more fully in local life. The opportunity to participate in a positive, community-building legal effort is an experience that I encourage every lawyer to seek.

I thank you for this honor. I thank Brooklyn A for its valuable contributions to the life and well-being of our City. I especially want to recognize Brooklyn A as a beacon of professional responsibility for the bar. Brooklyn A's story reminds all lawyers of our obligation and, indeed, I would suggest, our opportunity, to work with businesses such as our gracious host Bankers Trust and other community-spirited companies to continue to develop creative solutions to our social problems. •

*Henry L. King, former managing partner at Davis Polk & Wardwell, was honored by Brooklyn A for his commitment to pro bono legal service to the poor as well as for his leadership in support of New York City civic and cultural institutions.*



Angela M. Battaglia and Henry L. King greeting friends and guests at the October 24th reception.

Photos by  
Marian Goldman

## DONOR RECOGNITION

*Special thanks to our contributors for their generous support of Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A*

Bankers Trust Company Foundation  
Bedford Stuyvesant Family Health Center  
Blakel Construction Corporation  
BMS Family Health Center  
Brooklyn Brewery  
Brooklyn Union  
Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce Wood Gundy  
Chadbourne & Parke, LLP  
Chase Manhattan Bank  
Con Edison  
Cravath Swaine & Moore  
Cypress Hills Local Development Corp.  
CUNY Law School at Queens College  
Damon House New York, Inc.  
Davis Polk & Wardwell  
Debevoise & Plimpton  
The Dime Foundation  
The Dime Savings Bank of Williamsburgh  
Donaldson, Lufkin & Jenrette, Inc.

East New York Savings Bank  
Ernst & Young  
First Nationwide of New York, Inc.  
Fleet Bank  
Fordham University School of Law  
Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson  
Hughes Hubbard & Reed, LLP  
Independence Savings Bank  
International Paper Company  
Jewish Fund for Justice  
Jobe Brothers  
Kelley Drye & Warren  
Kramer, Dillof, Tessel, Duffy & Moore  
Medgar Evers College  
Miracle Makers  
Morgan Stanley & Co. Incorporated  
Northeast Brooklyn Housing Development Corp.  
Oceanhill-Brownsville Tenants Association  
Parish of Trinity Church

Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler  
Pfizer Inc.  
Richards & O'Neil, LLP  
Ridgewood Bushwick Senior Citizens Council, Inc.  
Schneider, Kleinick, Weitz, Damashek & Shoot  
Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom  
Simpson Thacher & Bartlett  
Southside United HDFC, Los Sures  
Spodek & Barrett, LLP  
St. Nicholas Neighborhood Preservation Corp.  
Starrett at Spring Creek  
State Bank of India  
Strook & Strook & Lavan  
Sullivan & Cromwell  
Thacher Proffitt & Wood  
Urban Health Plan, Inc.  
Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz  
Warner Fund  
Zwerling Schachter Zwerling & Koppell

Asger Aaboe  
Hon. Sheila Abdu-Salaam  
Joanne Aloupis  
Stanley Arkin  
Paris Baldacci  
Stephen Barrasso  
Anna Battaglia  
Jacqueline Bausch  
Alice Simon Berger  
Charles Berry  
Stephanie Bershad  
Harold Bluestone  
Hon. Henry Bramwell  
Jack Calechman  
James Callaway  
Hon. Margaret Cammer  
Michael Cardozo  
Hon. Denny Chin  
Richard Clifford  
John C. Coffee, Jr.  
Hon. Steven Cohn  
Norman Cosenitino  
Roger Curtis  
Mary Daugherty

Anne Davis  
Evan Davis  
William Dean  
Margaret Douglas-Hamilton  
Laura Effel  
Nancy Englander  
Larry Enkin  
Arthur Field  
Stanley Fisher  
Alexander Forger  
Henry Freedman  
Edgar Freidenberg  
Peter Galeano  
Sheldon Geller  
Ahuva Genack  
Joseph Genova  
Hon. Anthony Genovesi  
Harrison Goldin  
Alvin Gonsalves  
Marilyn Gore  
Daniel Greenberg  
Anne Greenfield  
Clifford Grood  
Allan Gropper

Barbara Halley  
Ole Hansen  
Joan Harris  
Elizabeth Hay  
Douglas Henderson  
Helen Hershkoff  
Valarie Hing  
Leo Hurvich  
David Ichel  
Joan Jobson  
Dale Steven Johnson  
John Kachadurian  
Louis Kaplan  
Michael Katz  
James Kaufman  
Thomas Keller  
Judith Kleinman  
Josephine Kolenik  
G. Oliver Koppell  
Adele Kraus  
Shelley Kroll  
George Lamborn  
Lewis Lawrence

Hon. Joseph Lentol  
Ogden Lewis  
Susan Lindenauer  
Joseph Lipofsky  
Valerie Lippman  
Robert MacCrate  
Lawrence Marcus  
Emmanuel Margolis  
Hon. Marty Markowitz  
Hamish Maxwell  
K. Ann McDonald  
Winston McIntosh  
Gertrude Michelson  
Helaine Miller  
Ellen Mishkin  
Akiko Mitsui  
Abraham Monges  
Vincent Montalbano  
John Mulhern  
Katherine Mulhern  
Frances O'Crombie  
Peter Olney  
Gregory Page  
Margaret Paradis

Russell Pearce  
Robert Peck  
Franklyn Perez  
David Perlis  
Eugene & Barbara Pero  
Stanley Piltch  
Hon. Cheryl Pollak  
Deborah Rand  
Joan Reed  
William Roberti  
Sharryn Ross  
Daniel Rothenberg  
Jeffrey Rudsten  
Naomi Rudsten  
Narcisa Ruiz  
Terry Sauer  
Fern Schair  
H. Richard Schumacher  
Carol Schwartz  
Janet Selzer  
Calvin Siegal  
Henry Siegal  
Franklin Siegel  
Mary Sills

Abraham Silverman  
Ted Silverman  
Michael Steven Smith  
Turner Smith  
Hamilton Stockton  
Lee & Byron Stookey  
Brian Sullivan  
Vera Sullivan  
Henry Talbert  
Nadine Taub  
Hon. Darryl Towns  
Joan Ttee  
Benjamin Tucker  
Hon. Harold R. Tyler, Jr.  
Ann Tyson  
William Volckhausen  
Henry Von Damm  
Charles Webb  
Rebecca Weiss  
Madeline Welch  
Ira Wheeler  
Rand Wilson  
Ethan Wohl  
Gloria Yanuck



Photos by Marian Goldman

**LEFT:** More than 300 people attended Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A's Annual Partnership Awards Benefit honoring Henry L. King, (front row, third from left) former managing partner, Davis Polk & Wardwell, and Angela M. Battaglia (front row, third from right), Housing Director, Ridgewood Bushwick Senior Citizens Council, Inc. Also attending the reception at the Bankers Trust World Headquarters in Manhattan were (back row, from left): Rev. Peter A. Mahoney, Board Chair, Brooklyn A; Gary S. Hattem, Vice President, Bankers Trust; Omer S.J. Williams, Thacher Proffitt & Wood; Archibald R. Murray, Board Chair, The Legal Aid Society; Martin S. Needelman, Project Director, Brooklyn A; Paul J. Acinapura, Deputy Project Director, Brooklyn A; Barry Garfinkel, Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom; Ogden N. Lewis, Davis Polk & Wardwell; Peter Cobb, Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson; William E. Jackson, Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy; (front row, from left) Kenneth J. Mahon, Vice President, The Dime Savings Bank of Williamsburgh; Margaret Gram King, Assistant Corporation Counsel for the City of New York; Mr. King; Ms. Battaglia; Anna Battaglia (Ms. Battaglia's mother); and Robert Sheehan, Skadden Arps.

**RIGHT:** William Josephson, Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson; Judge Harold R. Tyler, Jr., Patterson, Belknap, Webb & Tyler; Martin S. Needelman; Dale Steven Johnson, Legal Services for New York City; and John M. Imperiale, Chase Manhattan Bank.



## PROFILES



**BARBARA SAMUELS**, *Staff Attorney, Brooklyn A's Williamsburg Office; Disability Advocacy Project Coordinator; Legal Services for New York City.*

Barbara is the epitome of a community-based lawyer. She has devoted twenty-five years to the practice of poverty law, both in Chicago and here in New York.

In Chicago, she worked in legal services programs, taught clinical courses at Northwestern Law School, and had a brief stint in private practice. Her specialties are social security law and elder law, and it's no stretch to say she wrote the book. She is the author of a three-volume treatise, *Social Security Claims, Practice and Procedure* and a contributor to the *New*

*York Elder Law Handbook*. Brooklyn A is fortunate to have the benefits of her talents, although the modest Barbara would be the last person to say so. She appreciates the freedom Brooklyn A gives her to pursue key issues affecting low income and elder clients. Of her decision to join Brooklyn A twelve years ago, she says, "I never regretted it for a minute."

She commutes from Cobble Hill to Williamsburg on the M train, the same train that squeals underneath her office window every five minutes. With Zen-like understatement, she says, "You learn to tune it out." She shares her home with a hound dog, a sheep dog, a forthright 15-pound Chihuahua, and a cat.



**PARIS BALDACCI**, *member, Brooklyn A Board of Directors; Associate Professor of Clinical Law, Cardozo Law School.*

Paris is one of those Renaissance types whose accomplishments simply cannot be compressed, with justice, into a few paragraphs. He is currently a professor at Cardozo Law School, supervising law students on cases involving disability rights, elder law, and housing matters. He has written, lectured and litigated widely on issues ranging from HIV screening of newborns to the housing rights of non-traditional family members.

Paris had another career before the law as a (secular) scholar of religious studies, teaching courses on ethics, myths, and the canons of Western civilization.

He first encountered Brooklyn A in Housing Court as a staff attorney for the Legal Aid Society, protecting tenant rights. He was impressed with the aggressive group representation done by Brooklyn A's attorneys, like Wayne Saitta, seeking sustained, affirmative improvements in housing. He tells his students at Cardozo that Brooklyn A is a model for community law offices, with lawyers embedded in the community and interacting on a daily basis with community activists and residents.

Paris' partner is an architectural historian, born and raised in Brooklyn. They enjoy informal walking tours in the neighborhoods of Brooklyn, admiring the glory of days gone by and reveling in today's heady mix of styles, classes, and cultures.



**DAVID PAGAN**, *Executive Director of Southside United H.D.F.C. ("Los Sures").*

David Pagan is a community leader who has literally left his mark all over Williamsburg. As head of Los Sures, he oversees one of New York's major grass-roots housing rehabilitation programs. Currently, Los Sures directly manages 1,000 units in the neighborhood. Many of these have been brought back from uninhabitable squalor to decent, well-maintained apartment buildings. In addition, Los Sures works with tenants who are struggling to upgrade building conditions in 600 other units. Besides overseeing all operations, David spends a lot of time on development work.

David has had a long career in community service. Before joining Los Sures in 1979, he worked with several community economic initiatives. He was there in the

1977 black-out, helping merchants recover from the devastation. Over the past 35 years, David has also managed a non-stop education, racking up three degrees, the latest an MBA in finance from St. John's University.

David's whole family is passionate about education. He and his wife, Rosa, take turns combining job responsibilities with university classes. Aside from their own drive to learn, David and Rosa have always wanted to show their kids, Vanesa and David, that education is a lifelong process.

David has been in and around Williamsburg since 1956, when his family arrived from Puerto Rico. What he loves most about the neighborhood is its intimate, almost village-like quality. A two-block stroll can take an hour, meeting and greeting his many friends and colleagues.



**ELLEN SPODEK**, *member, Brooklyn A Advisory Committee, and partner in Spodek & Barrett, LLP.* Bubbly and down to earth, Ellen is proof that a "nice trial lawyer" is not necessarily a contradiction in terms. One of New York's seasoned women trial lawyers, Ellen has successfully handled multi-million dollar claims with a lethal combination of quiet skill and breezy charm. She specialized in negligence defense of insurance companies and municipal clients, and has saved the bacon of many an anxious defendant, even in Bronx County!

Networking is her middle name, and she is never far from a phone. Joining Brooklyn A's Advisory Committee this year, Ellen quickly started fund-rais-

ing. She reached out and gently touched the plaintiff's bar, which responded generously. (Special thanks to Tom Moore and Phil Damashek.)

Ellen is active in alumni affairs of Fordham Law School and in various women's professional groups. Although she lives hard by the Morgan Library in Manhattan, her roots are strictly Brooklyn, as deep as the oak trees' in her native Midwood. She grew up steeped in Brooklyn politics, thanks to her father, Hon. Jules Spodek, a Presiding Justice in Kings County Supreme Court. Asked what she loves best about Brooklyn, the ever-diplomatic Ellen smiles, "My family and friends."

*Profiles are written by Advisory Committee member Jane N. Barrett who is a partner in the firm of Spodek & Barrett. She disavows any objectivity when it comes to her law partner, Ellen Spodek.*

## Nuestros Niños

*Continued from page 1*

the provider-mothers, who are trained by a state certified educational assistant director and supervised by two educational aides. It has its own director who supervises all aspects of intake, educational training of the teacher-mother, as well as health and safety and food service for the children.

The second program, Nuestros Niños Child Development School, is a pre-school for 150 children ages two to 6 years in a private school setting. It has its own principal and at least three teachers in each classroom, one of whom is a state certified head teacher.

In addition, there are school-age programs for 150 children, ages six to 12 years, at two sites. The mission is to provide a safe and educationally active place for young children after school.

Now, the greatest challenge facing Nuestros Niños is that it does not meet all the needs of the Williamsburg community. There are over 800 children waiting for service.

In just the month of September, 1996,



Photo by Marilyn Pabon

Head teacher Concepcion Bosque (seated) and teacher aide Altagracia Martinez (back row, third from left) with their Nuestros Niños kindergarten class.

there were 44 new applications for family day care. This waiting list will greatly expand as women seek, and are obligated to find, jobs in the community rather than remain on welfare. Nuestros Niños is planning to expand in a way that will be beneficial to the children as well as their

mothers who are looking for work experience. Nuestros Niños will cooperate with the city to expand access to child care for many of these families. •

*Jennifer Mulhern is a student at Haverford College in Pennsylvania and a volunteer at Nuestros Niños for many years.*

## Brooklyn A Friends

**YES!** ENCLOSED IS MY  
YEAR-END GIFT.

Please make your check payable to  
Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A, for:

\$50  \$100  \$250  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Contributors of \$50.00 or more will receive a bright red Brooklyn A T-Shirt. All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail your check to:  
Brooklyn Services Corporation A  
256-260 Broadway  
Brooklyn NY 11211

## Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A

256-260 Broadway  
Brooklyn NY 11211

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
New York, N.Y.  
Permit No. 8629