

NOV 2021

# NWSLTR

## HARLEM UNITED ISSUE 14



Harlem United Marathon Team member Santiago at the 2021 TCS NYC Marathon

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## Dear Harlem United Family,

Thank you for reading the November 2021 Edition of the Harlem United Staff Newsletter! It's been an exciting fall at Harlem United, and I'm pleased to share updates on several developments important to Harlem United and those we serve.

At the end of September, Harlem United joined [COVID-19 Working Group New York](#) to send a letter to Governor Hochul with recommendations for addressing the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The recommendations were:

- Establish a Statewide COVID-19 and Long COVID-19 Community Advisory Group
- Increase vaccine access and equity by partnering with community-based organizations
- Ensure meaningful access to vaccines for justice-involved New Yorkers
- Reinstate emergency measures to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on New Yorkers experiencing homelessness
- Enact the Vaccine Confidentiality and Immunity Passports Privacy Bill
- Veto S.4516-C/A.7536-B, the Vaccine Card Falsification Crime Bill

These proposals are important steps toward fixing inequitable systems of care by advocating for more evidence-based models of care to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

For a full outline of each recommendation, [read the full letter on our website](#).

Also, after years of advocacy, I'm happy to report that in mid-October, Governor Hochul and Mayor de Blasio announced an [agreement to transfer incarcerated women and trans individuals out of Rikers Island Jail](#). The deplorable conditions at Rikers [have recently made headlines](#), with activists, elected officials, and community members speaking out after five suicides and eight additional deaths within the jail complex so far this year.

The City and State have agreed to transfer nearly all of the women and transgender individuals currently incarcerated at Rikers Island to other State facilities. This is a positive step to protect the most vulnerable individuals currently incarcerated at the notorious city jail. At Rikers, [most of the 5,700 people being incarcerated have not been convicted of a crime](#), but are awaiting trial and unable to pay bail. Rikers is slated to be [permanently closed in 2027](#), but more must be done in the meantime to improve conditions for those inside.

Finally, we are gearing up for the NYS 2021 Ending the Epidemic (ETE) Summit and the 23rd Annual World AIDS Day (WAD). The events will take place on November 30, December 1 - 2. The theme for this year is "Building Health Equity and Resilience in the Face of Two Pandemics." All virtual ETE Summit and WAD activities will be available and free for all attendees. Harlem United will be an active participant in the activities and I encourage all staff to [attend the events themselves](#).

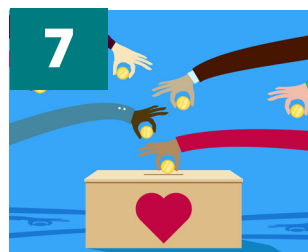


Thank you,

Jacqui Kilmer, CEO







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### **Employee Assistance Program**

Licensed counselors are prepared to take calls from employees or household members who are experiencing fears or anxieties related to COVID-19 and other life stressors. Call: 800-386-7055; Visit: [www.ibhworklife.com](http://www.ibhworklife.com)





## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Harlem United is in the process of ramping up our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives! DEI has grown in prominence in workplaces across the country in recent years, as employers actively work to create meaningful change to address injustices that have marginalized underrepresented groups within the workplace. For Harlem United:

**Diversity** includes all the ways in which people differ, encompassing the different identities and experiences that make one individual or group different from another.

**Equity** is fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that prevent the full participation of marginalized groups.

**Inclusion** is the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can fully participate and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued.

Recently, [Shaneequa Parker](#), Director of Compliance, received her accreditation as a [Certified Diversity Executive](#). As a subject matter expert on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Shaneequa is spearheading Harlem United's efforts to craft a DEI strategy in collaboration with the Executive Team's Strategic Planning process.

In a recent DEI audit of Harlem United's culture, we found that the agency is an exceptionally diverse and equitable workplace. [Our Evaluations and Population Health department has also shared the results of a separate staff diversity survey](#), which offered many insights into our staff make up and attitudes. According to the survey, more than 90% of staff agree or strongly agree that Harlem United values diversity. We're very proud of our culture of inclusivity and are committed to continuing to foster an environment where staff can achieve their professional goals and safely express their authentic selves.

Several new and exciting projects are on the horizon. A DEI staff survey is in active development, to measure staff attitudes and differences at Harlem United. The results of that survey will be used to inform the DEI strategy for the organization. Additionally, DEI trainings are in development, to empower staff to understand their role in fostering the diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture at Harlem United.

For additional information on DEI in the workplace reach out to [Shaneequa Parker](#), Director of Compliance.





Tamisha McPherson, Chief External Affairs and Development Officer & Executive Director of URAM, and Governor Hochul at the bill signing for the opioid crisis legislation package



## New Legislation to Address the Opioid Crisis

In October, New York State lawmakers passed a legislation package aimed at combatting the opioid crisis. Harlem United applauds these measures, which seek to eliminate barriers to access to services for vulnerable community members. Below is an overview of what this new legislation yields:

1. Promotes the use of opioid antagonists in preventing drug-related overdoses. This law decriminalizes possession of drugs like Naloxone that can reverse opioid overdoses. Harlem United's Integrated Harm Reduction Program is an authorized provider and for years has conducted overdose reversal training and saved hundreds of lives.
2. Establishes a program for the use of medication assisted substance use disorder treatment (MAT) for incarcerated individuals. According to the most recent available data, more than half of the individuals in state prisons and jails meet the criteria for substance dependence or abuse. This program will offer incarcerated individuals access to proven treatment for substance use disorder.
3. Decriminalizes the possession and sale of hypodermic needles and syringes. Criminalizing syringes encourages sharing needles, which increases HIV and hepatitis transmission. Harlem United offers syringe exchange and other safer-use supplies, a proven public health solution that decreases transmission of infectious diseases.
4. Establishes an online directory for distributors of opioid antagonists. Making opioid antagonists like Naloxone more accessible to New Yorkers saves lives. The directory will be maintained by the Office of Addiction Services and Supports on their website.
5. Expands the list of eligible crimes that may be considered for diversion to a substance use treatment program. This ensures judges can order an individual to treatment instead of incarceration, allowing them a greater chance for successful, long-term health and wellbeing.

Harlem United has long advocated for evidence-based approaches to public health to be codified into state law. We recognize and appreciate the tireless efforts of countless advocates and elected officials that contributed to these much-needed changes in policy.





## Client Satisfaction Survey

Once a year, Harlem United administers a Client Satisfaction Survey to all persons receiving care. The survey's goal is to elicit feedback and recommendations for service improvements. This year, we launched our survey in October, and it will remain open through mid-December. Please encourage as many clients as possible to participate. The more surveys we receive, the more we learn about how we're doing. Client feedback is instrumental in helping us improve and provide quality care.

Client Kevin at Willis Green Community Health Center

## Top Social Media Posts

As we continue to grow our social media presence, we invite all staff to follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#) and share our posts with your personal networks.



**Facebook:** In September, Tamisha McPherson, Chief External Affairs and Development Officer & Executive Director of URAM, was interviewed for OPEN on BronxNet Community Television. The video posted to our Facebook page garnered 29 engagements.



**Twitter:** The last week in October was NYS PrEP Aware Week, and a video we posted sharing a personal story from a PrEP patient was the top performing tweet for the month, with 261 impressions.



**Instagram:** We shared a screenshot of a Tweet explaining that Mental Health providers have expertise that family and friends don't, to illustrate why Mental Health Care is essential; 49 people engaged with the post.



## Strategic Advancement Updates

This September, we celebrated the second anniversary of Strategic Advancement's launch as a department! We're excited to report on a few of the projects we've been working on in the past two months.

### Administration

We are in the midst of an exciting software transition, moving our donor database from Raiser's Edge to Salesforce Nonprofit SalesPack (NPSP) and its correlating solutions, Elevate and Pardot. Salesforce is the modern industry standard, with seamless integration across our fundraising and marketing systems that will allow the entire Strategic Advancement team to work more efficiently and effectively. We anticipate that this project will be completed by the end of 2021.

### Program Development

We are so pleased to welcome Sareh Afshar to the Strategic Advancement Department as our new Director of Program Development! Sareh comes to us with over a decade of experience in strategy, communications, and grant writing. She has a PhD, MPhil, and MA in Performance Studies from NYU, and an MA in Communication from Purdue University.

In September and October, we submitted eight applications, for program areas including general operating support, Housing, Prevention, and Supportive Services. In total, the applications amount to \$666,247. We are proud to report that in September, we were awarded \$552,360 for renovations at Willis Green Community Health Center! We are awaiting decisions on other pending applications while continuing to craft new ones.



Harlem United staff and interns at 2021 TCS NYC Marathon

### Individual Giving

We were proud to have participated in the 2021 TCS NYC Marathon on November 7. It was a wonderful day of cheering on our amazing runners and celebrating their contributions to Harlem United. **In all, we beat our \$24K goal, raising a total of \$24,485!** We so appreciate the generosity and hard work of the stellar

athletes who ran on Team Harlem United.

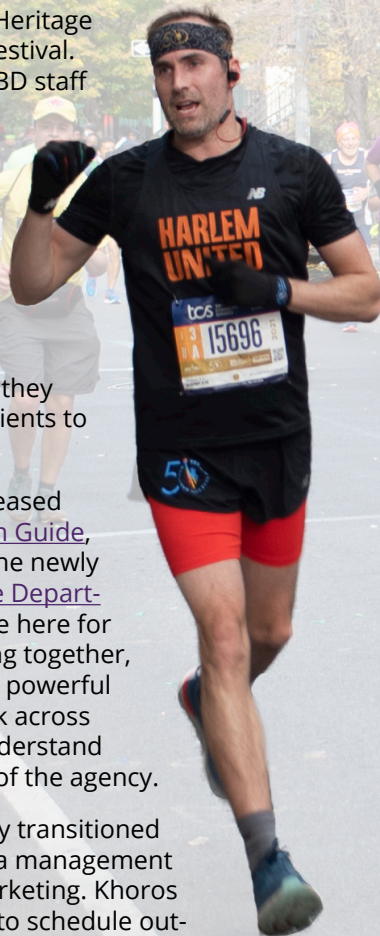
Though we are only one month into the second quarter of FY22, we've already raised \$27,213.15, almost as much as we raised in all of Q2 FY21! We are on track to set a new record as we head into the holidays and end of the year giving, which are traditionally popular donation months, both at Harlem United and across the nonprofit sector.

### Communications

In September we partnered with Business Development to sponsor the African Heritage Month Parade and Festival. Thank you to all the BD staff and peers who represented Harlem United at the event to provide outreach to African immigrants in our community. We ensured that the outreach team had all the materials they needed to connect clients to our services.

In September we released the updated [Program Guide](#), followed shortly by the newly reimagined [Resource Department Guide](#), available here for the first time. Working together, these two guides are powerful tools for staff to work across departments and understand holistically the work of the agency.

We have also recently transitioned to a new social media management software, Khoros Marketing. Khoros offers efficient tools to schedule outgoing posts on our social media channels, monitor incoming messages to our accounts, analyze our social media performance, and gain insight into our audience and broader social media conversations. Khoros offered Harlem United this in-kind software gift valued at \$150,000 as part of their initiative to give back to organizations working with communities of color.



Harlem United Marathon Team member Kohler at the 2021 TCS NYC Marathon





Since 2016, Harlem United's Veterans Housing has provided a chance to build a new beginning for homeless veterans in NYC. Wishing a very happy Veterans Day to the 100+ formerly homeless veterans who call Harlem United home. And special thanks to the many program case managers, mental health specialists, clinical staff, housing and vocation specialists, and maintenance staff members who provide high quality support to our veteran residents.

*Photo: Jerome Lawrence (left), Managing Director of Veterans Housing, and Frederick Kinney (right), Mental Health Specialist, outside of Veterans*





## Dental

Dr. Alexandra Frankel, Dental Director at Harlem United's The Nest Community Health Center, recently shared a powerful success story of a patient at the clinic.

*A patient needed an upper front tooth extracted and was missing several other teeth. He really did not want to be walking around without any front top teeth—he wanted an immediate denture, so that when we gently removed that last upper front tooth, he would have the denture inserted as soon as possible.*

*Well, everything that could possibly go wrong with his case did. On the day of the procedure, the lab made the wrong type of denture, so a new impression*

*had to be taken. I personally spoke to the lab tech numerous times, a member of our Executive Team coordinated with the lab, and our jitney driver drove to the lab in Brooklyn to personally pick up the denture so we would have it in time.*

*The procedure went off without a hitch, and the patient was so excited he literally could not stop smiling! Of course, the patient had no idea how many hoops we had jumped through to make this happen.*

Our stellar Dental Team has countless stories just like this one, illustrating their commitment to their clients and their willingness to do whatever it takes to give clients a smile they

can be proud of. Many of our clients have not had access to quality dental care throughout their lives and have experienced damage to their teeth because of chronic homelessness or drug use. Our dental care can make a huge difference in their overall health.

If you have questions about Harlem United's dental services, please contact [Dr. Frankel](#), Dental Director.

## BEFORE



## AFTER





## Welcome to All New Staff



Left to right: Hope Johnson, Diana Francisco, Carlos Maldonado, Augustus Smalls



Left to right: Artimedes Velasquez, John Sanders, Anthony Broughton, Egypt Wolfe, Ana Torres



Left to right: Deion Thomas, Crystal Cardona, Kester Marcus, Sareh Afshar, Justa Bernardez, Shia-Asia Cooper



Not pictured: Samantha Lester, William Parker, Leidy Guevara, Dana Hagans, Julia Cordero

## Anniversaries

Congratulations to everyone who celebrated anniversaries at Harlem United in the past two months! We are thankful for all of our staff's long-standing commitment to bring healing and support to our community.

### 3+ Years

Camilo Gonzalez, Social Worker  
Dasly Jimenez, Referral Specialist  
Alhousseyne Samoura, Patient Office Assistant  
Kristin Smith, Psychologist  
Grace Sserwadda, Data Analyst  
Jose Velez, Prevention Navigator

### 5+ Years

Durwin Alladin, Senior Billing Specialist  
Qiana Allen, Program Coordinator  
Aisha Babilonia, Director of Special Projects  
Brandi Brown, Billing Specialist

Sonia Frias, Dental Assistant

Myron Fulton, Maintenance Worker/Driver

Danita Matthews, Case Manager

Maria Mena, Data Manager

Joseph Owens, Prevention Navigator

Orlando Perez, Senior Care Manager

Albert Pleasant, Education/Wellness Counselor

Trinae Romaine, Senior Data Entry Special

Tiffany Stewart, Patient Office Assistant

Stephanie Young-Geye, Nurse Practitioner

### 10+ Years

Eugene Hill, Senior Janitor

Mohammad Karim, SVP IT MIS

Vernon Mosley, Senior Mental Health Specialist

Shaneequa Parker, Director of Compliance

Orlando Serrano, Clinical Director

Jenifer Tiburcio, Dental Assistant

And a very special congratulations to Christine Rivers, Senior Case Manager, for 23 years with Harlem United! Thank you all for your many years of dedicated service!



## Upcoming Events - November/December 2021



### Upcoming Events

#### November is... Diabetes Awareness Month

November 4<sup>th</sup>

[Diwali](#)

November 7<sup>th</sup>

[TCS NYC Marathon](#)

November 8<sup>th</sup>

[Intersex Solidarity Day](#)

November 11<sup>th</sup>

[Veterans Day](#)

(Harlem United Closed)

November 20<sup>th</sup>

[Trans Day of Remembrance](#)

November 25<sup>th</sup>

[Thanksgiving](#)

(Harlem United Closed)

November 26<sup>th</sup>

[Day after Thanksgiving](#)

(Harlem United Closed)

November 28<sup>th</sup> – December 6<sup>th</sup>

[Hanukkah](#)

#### December is... HIV/AIDS Awareness Month

December 1

[World AIDS Day](#)

December 5<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>

[National Influenza Vaccination Week](#)

December 21<sup>st</sup>

[Homeless Persons' Memorial Day](#)

December 25<sup>th</sup>

[Christmas](#)

(Harlem United Closed)

December 31<sup>st</sup>

[New Years](#) (Observed)

(Harlem United Closed)



Tamisha McPherson, Chief External Affairs and Development Officer & Executive Director of URAM, attended Housing Works' Fashion for Action fundraiser to celebrate the release of Bevelations, Bevy Smith's new memoir. In addition to being a beloved TV personality, Ms. Smith is a longtime Harlem United supporter.