

Introducing Elizabeth Trebony and Aston Glaves

As we mark our 40th anniversary, we turn to our founders and former Executive Directors, Elizabeth Trebony and Aston Glaves, to share their memories about the early days of Project FIND. Their recollections tell how, through a rich collaboration of many individuals, Project FIND took form and grew. We honor Elizabeth and Aston for being at the forefront of the drive to create better lives for older New Yorkers and we continue to be inspired by their persistence, foresight, and vision. The excerpts in this newsletter just begin to tell the story of their work with Project FIND. Look for longer profiles of Elizabeth and Aston upcoming on our website. ■



Early organizers fight for housing in Clinton neighborhood.



SPRING 2010

A PUBLICATION OF PROJECT FIND



Elizabeth Trebony and the Creation of Project FIND



ike many Americans who came of age in the 1960s, Elizabeth Trebony was inspired by John F Kennedy's call to service. Elizabeth was already involved in anti-poverty work in New York when the National Council on Aging launched its initiative in 1967 to develop a national picture of the elderly poor. Although Elizabeth was working full-time as a writer, her heart was in her volunteer work with the underprivileged.

With funding from the NCOA, Elizabeth and other local activists worked for eighteen months to track down seniors living on Manhattan's West Side and help them respond to questionnaires about their lives. When the federal project ended, the twelve other demonstration programs around the country disbanded. But a small, determined group of New Yorkers led by Elizabeth Trebony decided to continue their work on behalf of low-income seniors, and to fight for the funding necessary to help them improve their lives.

The first goal was urgent: help seniors in the Times Square area facing eviction by corporate landlords eager to renovate and rent their apartments for a lot more money. But where were the low-income residents to go, and how could they afford to move?

Elizabeth and her fellow activists fought to publicize the plight of these seniors. "We demonstrated all over," Elizabeth recalls, "at City Hall, in Times Square, near Rockefeller Center." She attributes their success to these public protests, and to their relentless. "We were the only ones trying to embarrass the City!" she adds.

It worked. Elizabeth and her fellow activists succeeded in getting legislation passed that required landlords to pay relocation allowances to displaced tenants. In January of 1968 Elizabeth (then named Elizabeth Stecher) organized a press conference to announce the legislation. None other than Ed Koch, then a City Councilman, was there to celebrate the new law. He told the 150 seniors in attendance, "The people with leases have been getting a lot of money, while you've been getting nothing." Councilman Theodore S. Weiss echoed the activists' views: "Our treatment of the aged is one of the many scandals of city life."

Project FIND incorporated in 1969, the year that Mayor John Lindsay signed the landmark Rent Stabilization Law. At the invitation of the mayor, Elizabeth, then Project FIND's first Executive Director, proudly attended the signing ceremony. ■



Elizabeth Trebony

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Tough times are challenging to say the least, Project FIND is delighted to be celebrating its 40th Anniversary, continuing its tightly defined mission to provide older New Yorkers with the services and support necessary to achieve on-going independence.

Emerging from a two-year research project on underserved elderly, Project FIND has sought from its inception to convert words into deeds. Though hard fought, it was a modest beginning. In 1969 there was an information desk in the Port Authority Bus Terminal and a small meal program in the basement of the Sacred Heart Church. Then in 1971 Project FIND expanded to include a tenement storefront where it opened the Coffeehouse; our operating budget that year was \$26,841!

During the balance of the 1970's, Project FIND enjoyed considerable growth, acquiring three apartment buildings, and combining meal programs with integrated social services to create a blueprint for what became known as supportive housing. By the end of the decade, with service infrastructure established, our organization looked ahead at the work needed to continue meeting the challenges of serving a growing segment of the population, our elderly.

Between 1995 and 2009, Project FIND completed over \$25 million in major renovations at our three properties. Moreover, at Hargrave House, we bought out nine limited partners in order to ensure that the building would remain an affordable housing resource for seniors.

As we enjoy our anniversary celebration, we look back with a sense of pride. We have grown from a desk in The Port Authority, to a small storefront to a sizeable enterprise including three supportive residences housing 600 people and five senior centers with over 5,000 members. Each year, we serve over 225,000 meals and offer vital, life-nurturing programs to our residents and center members. Today, our efforts are focused on strengthening the quality and responsiveness of our social service and healthy aging programs to meet the evolving needs of our elders.

During this period of great fiscal uncertainty, while we celebrate our 40th, we are reminded of the struggles we have faced before and the lessons gleaned from them. This newsletter contains first hand accounts of our early days as experienced by two of our founders, Elizabeth Trebony and Aston Glaves. We hope you enjoy sharing in their memories as much as we have.

As always, we thank you for your interest and support. ■

DAVID GILLCRIST



MISSION STATEMENT

Project FIND's mission is to provide low- and moderate-income and homeless seniors with the services and support they need to enrich their lives and live independently.

Project FIND was a pioneer in dealing with underserved elderly. From its inception, Project FIND sought to assist seniors as they faced the challenges of aging in New York City. Today our offerings include three supportive residences housing 600 people and five senior centers with over 5,000 members. Each year, Project FIND serves over 225,000 meals and provides vital programs which help seniors to lead active, independent lives.

Our members and residents range from healthy and active to frail and homebound to homeless. In service to all, Project FIND seeks to foster community engagement and activities that promote healthy living.

Apartment Beautiful Comes to Hargrave House

Following the roaring success of Project FIND's first ever Apartment Beautiful contest held at the Woodstock (See video footage at www.projectfind.org, click on Videos), we're excited to announce Apartment Beautiful is now at Hargrave House! That's right, 25 of our seniors have signed up to present their apartments and compete in four categories: Cleanest, Most Beautiful Studio, Most Beautiful One Bedroom and Most Improved. The lucky winners will earn prizes ranging from \$150 to \$500 applied to one month's rent. Three discerning non-Hargrave staff will choose the winners. Then, on May 25 at a special awards ceremony held at the Hargrave Senior Center, we'll present the awards. Joe Franklin will reprise his Woodstock role as Celebrity Guest Host.

Woodstock participants taught us a lot about how to live large in a small space. Now we look forward to learning from our Hargrave residents and to sharing with you their ingenuity. Keep checking the web site for announcements and photos. ■

Aston Glaves Remembers



rom the start, Aston Glaves was an integral part of Project FIND. He served first as adviser, then as Chairman of the Board of Directors, and finally he took on the job of Executive Director. Aston's involvement with social issues long predicated his work at Project FIND. From his work as Director of Community Services at the Broadway United Church of Christ, Aston knew the West Side's neighborhoods all too well.

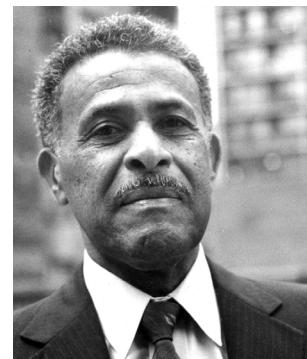
"It was pretty run-down at the time," he explains. "Hell's Kitchen" — now known as Clinton — "was full of tenement buildings and a growing population of immigrants. Times Square was full of seedy hotels." Despite their intimate knowledge of the neighborhood, Aston and his colleagues were shocked by the results of Project FIND's research which revealed the untenable conditions of the area's older inhabitants.

"We realized early on that housing was a pressing need," says Aston. "The quality of life was getting worse and worse. It was clear that unless we were able to corner a little piece of real estate, we were never going to be able to solve these problems." Aston recalls that conditions in the Times Square and Clinton neighborhoods at that time were particularly difficult. In 1975, Project FIND signed a management and operating lease on the Woodstock Hotel near Times Square. The building was in such disrepair that most of it was uninhabitable. Aston and his colleagues sought government grants to cover the costs of rebuilding Woodstock.

While they continued to work on the housing issue, Aston and his colleagues confronted another pressing need. Where would seniors go during the day? Many stayed in their apartments. Some spent hours at the Horn & Hardart, a local automat. Others sat in the waiting room at the Port Authority. "They needed meals, housing, recreation," says Aston. To meet this challenge, Project FIND secured funding from the Port Authority to run a unique meeting space for older adults called the Coffeehouse.

From meetings in church basements and deteriorating housing to five busy centers and three residences, the growth of Project FIND is a great story. How did the organization's early directors and organizers persist in the face of such daunting obstacles?

Aston explains that the many churches in the neighborhood were an important part of Project FIND's success. They provided everything from moral support to financial assistance. "Most of all," Aston says, "it was the people involved. We all believed in what we were doing. It was never just a job. We were driven by our belief!" ■



Aston Glaves

How You Can Help



ost experts agree, we are living through one of the most difficult economic periods since the Great Depression. As New Yorkers, we never back down from a fight! At Project FIND, we believe this period affords us the opportunity to band together as a community. We are challenged to help those most vulnerable among us. Our elders, those who have fought our wars and hold our collective memory, need our help and support. They need access to good nutritious meals and activities that keep them engaged and healthy.

At Project FIND, we are privileged to serve such an important group of citizens and we feel proud of our ability to do so much within our small budget.

We work hard to minimize administrative costs. Eighty-five percent of our budget goes to direct service for the elderly. This significantly surpasses the seventy-five percent considered as the standard for excellence in this area.

At this time, we face significant cuts in our government funding and we must seek outside support. Your gift would help us continue offering vital and life-enhancing programs and services to the elders in our community. Won't you take a moment now to make a contribution? We promise we'll do our best to help our seniors as they strive to remain healthy and happy. Thank you for your generosity. ■



FIND Aid for the Aged, Inc.
160 West 71st Street • Suite 2F
New York, NY 10023

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE
P A I D
NEW YORK, NY
PERMIT #4799



PUBLISHED BY PROJECT FIND

FIND Aid for the Aged, Inc.
160 West 71st Street, Suite 2F
New York, NY 10023
(212) 874-0300 • FAX (212) 724-4163
www.projectfind.org • info@projectfind.org

DAVID GILLCRIST, *Executive Director*

MARY QUINLAN, *Editor*

Spring 2010

Monday, June 21, 2010

JOIN US FOR

We Are Family: Project FIND's Annual Gala

To purchase tickets please call (212) 874-0300.



R E S I D E N C E S

The Hamilton
141 West 73rd Street
New York, NY 10023
(212) 595-3385

The Hargrave
111 West 71st Street
New York, NY 10023
(212) 579-7881

The Woodstock
127 West 43rd Street
New York, NY 10036
(212) 730-1442

C E N T E R S

Clinton Senior Center
530 West 55th Street
New York, NY 10019
(212) 757-2026

Coffeehouse Senior Center
551 Ninth Avenue
New York, NY 10018
(212) 947-5466

Hamilton Senior Center
141 West 73rd Street
New York, NY 10023
(212) 787-7710

Hargrave Senior Center
111 West 71st Street
New York, NY 10023
(212) 580-0888

Woodstock Senior Center
127 West 43rd Street
New York, NY 10036
(212) 575-0693

Your Support Counts

Thousands of elders enjoy a wide range of services through Project FIND, from housing to recreation, from counseling to day trips. Many of our programs rely entirely on private support. Please consider making a gift today. Your donation will help Project FIND continue to meet the growing needs of our seniors.