

2016 WINTER ANTIQUES SHOW

EAST SIDE HOUSE SETTLEMENT

East Side House Settlement is a community resource in the South Bronx. We believe education is the key that enables all people to create economic and civic opportunities for themselves, their families, and their community.

Our focus is on critical developmental periods—early childhood and adolescence, and critical junctures—points at which people are determined to become economically independent. We enrich, supplement, and enhance the public school system and place college within reach of motivated students.

We provide services to families to give other family members the opportunity to pursue their educational goals. We provide technology and career readiness training to enable students to improve their economic status and lead more fulfilling lives.



2016

1891—2016
CELEBRATING
125 YEARS
OF COMMUNITY
SERVICE

EAST SIDE HOUSE SETTLEMENT

A Vanguard of Progressive Education

One of New York City's oldest social service organizations, East Side House Settlement was established on the Upper East Side of Manhattan in 1891. In 1963 the organization moved to the South Bronx, where it remains a beacon of hope in the nation's poorest congressional district. Its reputation for successfully providing quality educational opportunities and resources has achieved national recognition and accelerated the organization's growth. As East Side House celebrates its 125th anniversary in 2016, it continues to expand its reach and build on its commitment to strengthen communities and help New Yorkers in need.

The work of East Side House extends far beyond the red brick walls of its headquarters on Alexander Avenue in the Mott Haven neighborhood of the South Bronx. The organization's services spread to twenty-eight sites throughout the Bronx and Manhattan, including public schools; community, early childhood, and senior centers; career service centers; and colleges. The programs at these sites serve residents from two to one hundred years old—the age of East Side House's oldest current participant.

East Side House has a dual focus: it is both a direct service provider delivering highly effective programs in its schools and neighborhood centers, and a community convener that enriches the work of partner organizations and rallies other service providers around the needs of the citizenry.

The organization's impact is dramatic, and continues to grow. East Side House reaches over ten thousand individuals each year, helping each of them—and their families—to lead more fulfilling lives. Through its schools and programs, East Side House serves five thousand students every time the school bell rings, while thousands more are assisted each day in dozens of other programs. Notably, East Side House has a talent for reaching young adults who have fallen behind in school, or dropped out of high school entirely. Each year, East Side House helps hundreds of students earn high school diplomas and enroll in college and professional training centers in pursuit of goals they once thought impossible.

East Side House continues to grow in size, scope, and ambition, pioneering innovative new programs designed to address the needs of New York City's poorest communities. As the lead provider in the United Way of New York City's ReadNYC initiative, East Side House seeks to double by 2020 the number of children in Mott Haven schools who can read at grade level by the end of third grade. As a principal partner in Mayor Bill de Blasio's NYC Community Schools Initiative, East Side House is also at the forefront of a citywide effort to improve failing schools. The organization's energy is unflagging, and each of its initiatives is launched with the spirit of service that has marked East Side House Settlement since its founding.

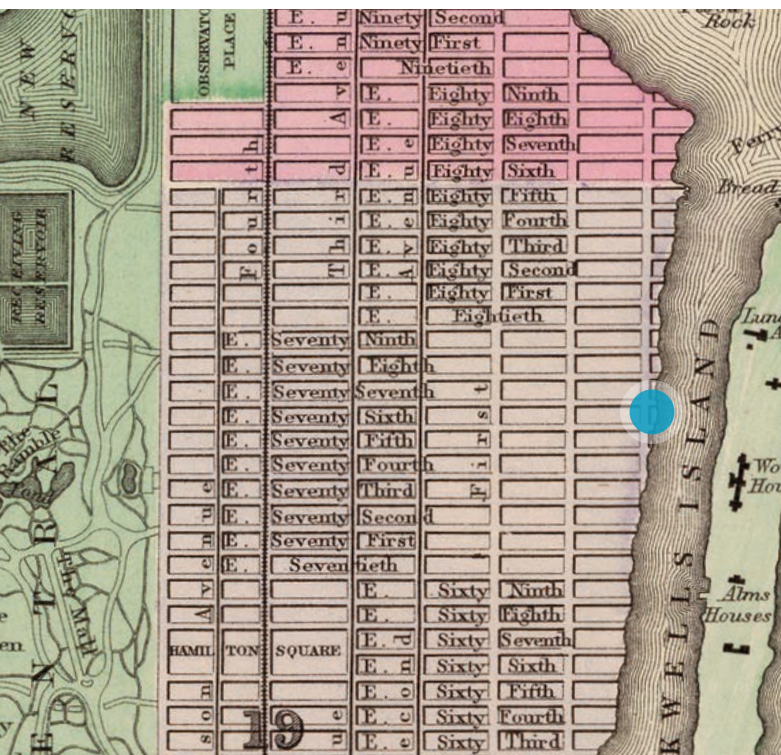
1891—2016
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1891

AN OUTPOST OF FRIENDSHIP, LEARNING, AND HOPE:

THE MAKING OF EAST SIDE HOUSE SETTLEMENT

by Michael Diaz-Griffith



On June 5, 1891, a daring experiment in community service was incorporated under the name of East Side House. The organization was aptly named. A frame house at the East River foot of East 76th Street, East Side House was described in the initiative's *First Annual Report* as "an old country residence" without "a pound of plumbing in it." After standing derelict for six or seven years, the building needed "a thorough cleansing from top to bottom," a cast-iron range for cooking, and a supply of "Croton water," from the reservoir on 42nd Street. It also needed books and a bookcase, a writing desk, and a gymnasium—for East Side House was to be a settlement house, an outpost of friendship, learning, and healthy living in one of the city's most impoverished districts: the Upper East Side.

Upper East Side tenement life at the turn of the century. *Library of Congress.*

Top: The first site of East Side House Settlement, "an old country residence" at the East River foot of East 76th Street.

EAST SIDE HOUSE SETTLEMENT

The rapidly developing area straddled two worlds. Along Fifth Avenue, America's wealthiest families built mansions on newly laid blocks. During the sweltering summer months, when these affluent New Yorkers took up residence in Newport or St. Augustine, their houses sat empty. In contrast, across Third Avenue between 59th and 86th Streets, as many as a quarter-million residents—mostly Czech, German, Irish, Italian, and Polish immigrants—teemed year-round in tenement houses, tent cities, and the gutter. Only eight houses of worship served the population at a time when local churches filled the roles of school, hospital, library, and social hub. According to some accounts, a saloon or "gin palace" stood on every corner in the neighborhood. The only places for recreation were the streets and the East River.

Progressive lawyer Everett P. Wheeler lamented the plight of the "great multitude" of East Side residents. After exploring the area on foot, he noted, "There was not a single public library . . . not a picture gallery, not a lyceum" for the education and amusement of locals. He was determined that something should be done for the area's underserved population, and drew inspiration from the growing Settlement House movement in England. Recent graduates of Oxford and Cambridge had begun to "settle" the slums of London's East End, helping to relieve poverty while learning about the practicalities of life. At Oxford House and Toynbee Hall, both founded in 1884, rich and poor residents commingled in pursuit of a single goal: eradicating poverty.

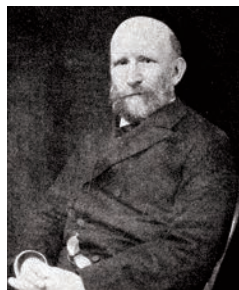
After visiting Toynbee Hall in 1889, Wheeler wrote a proposal to the Church Club of the City of New York advocating the establishment of a settlement house on the Upper East Side. On February 2, 1891, after months of discussion, the club's Committee on Social and Economic Questions resolved to establish a "new Toynbee Hall," allocating \$250 for the purpose. A true believer determined to "live among those we seek to help," Wheeler would become the house's first Headworker.

What was life like at the original East Side House? Like the university men in London, Wheeler and a small group of fresh-faced volunteers (known as "residents") lived in the building. Visitors to the house were called "neighbors." At first, activity centered on a Men's Club and a Boys' Club, but the doors of East Side House were open to all comers: the settlement's mission was geographically specific but universal in scope. As Wheeler wrote in the venture's *Third Annual Report*,

Those who are unemployed are helped to find work. Those who are in trouble are comforted and counseled. Where houses are unhealthy, the occupants are aided to obtain redress. Where streets are neglected, the proper authorities are appealed to. In short . . . those who help . . . strive to promote the moral, intellectual, and physical welfare of their neighbors.



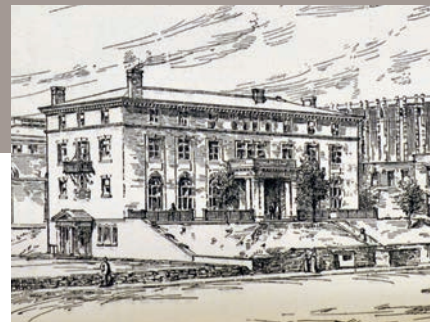
The Astor House at 840 Fifth Avenue, designed by architect Richard Morris Hunt to recall French Renaissance chateaux, built 1894-96. The "dual mansion," large enough to house two generations of the wealthy Astor clan, sat empty for much of the year.



Everett P. Wheeler (1840-1925), founder of East Side House Settlement.



Homeless children photographed c. 1890 by Jacob August Riis (1849-1914), a social reformer, "muckraking" journalist, and documentary photographer who revealed how "the other half" lived in late-nineteenth-century New York City.



Inside East Side House, an ambitious array of programs offered the “amusement and instruction” that were lacking on the East Side. From the very beginning there were “dances and concerts, lectures with stereoscopic views, classes in mechanical drawing, and preparatory courses for those wishing to pass the Civil Service examination,” according to one record. A kindergarten was run by a female resident between 9 a.m. and noon each day, and hot food was cooked to fill the children’s bellies. As alternatives to gambling, wholesome board games were ordered for the men and boys from the shops downtown: backgammon, checkers, chess, dominoes, and a new game of strategy, Halma. The bluffside lot was fenced to form a safe playground and the foundations of an old greenhouse were used in the construction of the wished-for gymnasium. Later, a sliver of the East River was roped off to form a swimming pool.

The Men’s Club grew swiftly. Dues were 50 cents per month (to encourage commitment), and by 1893 the club boasted over 150 members. All neighbors were encouraged to take part in the

management of East Side House, on equal terms with the residents. When the men were not listening to—or organizing—lectures such as “The Eight Hour Working Day” or “Brotherly Citizenship” (speaker: Theodore Roosevelt), they could relax in the library, smoking room, reading room, billiard room, or sparring room.

In East Side House’s *First Annual Report*, Wheeler cited the question posed by skeptics of the settlement movement: “What good do you expect to accomplish?” His response was decisive. The residents of East Side House expected to:

become acquainted with the people among whom we live, to understand their wants, their desires, and to become in sympathy with them, so that we can gain their confidence, and may be able not only to give them, but to teach them something better than they have yet known.



Children learn the fundamentals of woodworking in a class at East Side House, c.1905.



Public lectures at East Side House drew large crowds. By the turn of the century, women had become involved in the organization’s many activities.

Top: The first purpose-built home for East Side House Settlement, designed by Howells & Stokes, Architects, constructed in 1902 on the organization’s original 76th Street site.

EAST SIDE HOUSE SETTLEMENT

Today, one hundred and twenty-five years later, East Side House continues its important work, but in a different neighborhood.

By the end of its first summer, East Side House was doing just that. Each day, from dawn until dusk, the old frame house was filled to capacity with neighbors seeking help and hope. Over the next few years, East Side House's facilities expanded and its reach extended. The reforming spirit that had produced East Side House only intensified as the Progressive Era (1890-1920) matured. In 1896, extension classes for women were offered for the first time, and to further assist local mothers, Wheeler's daughter opened the Winifred Wheeler Day Nursery that same year.

Wheeler retired in 1901. By 1902, when East Side House opened a commodious brick building on its old site, the settlement was serving five hundred neighbors daily—and approximately twice that number on gala occasions. John Jacob Astor and Andrew Carnegie were supporters. At the urging of East Side House's Board of Managers, John Jay Park was established on the banks of the East River, a public bathhouse was opened in 1906, and a public library began operation in 1907.

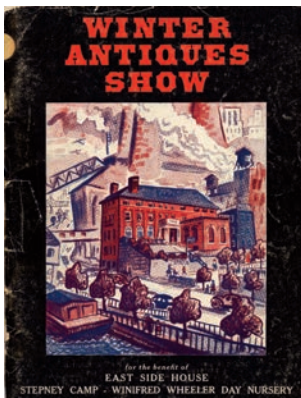
Today, 125 years later, East Side House continues its important work, but in a different neighborhood. In 1963, East Side House moved four miles north, from the gentrifying Upper East Side to the Mott Haven section of the South Bronx, one of the nation's poorest neighborhoods. "The move to the South Bronx was an unprecedented instance," says current Executive Director John Sanchez, "of a large community service organization packing itself up and following need wherever it led."

Many things have changed since 1963, much less 1891, but need remains. The following stories provide a few examples of the multiple ways East Side House Settlement continues to bring hope, help, and results to its neighbors—125 years after first opening its doors.

SOURCE MATERIALS

East Side House Records: 1851-1991.

Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Butler Library,
Columbia University, New York.



The cover of the first Winter Antiques Show catalogue (1955) featured a print by artist and educator Woldemar Neufeld (1909-2002) depicting East Side House's second building. Neufeld taught at East Side House in the 1940s.



South Bronx rowhouses in 1963 before being converted into East Side House's new home on Alexander Avenue.



A view of East Side House by Woldemar Neufeld, 1969. The organization is still headquartered at the site today.

East Side House Settlement changes lives. Meet five East Side House graduates who struggled to break the cycle of poverty—and through education, succeeded.



At East Side House's High School for Excellence and Innovation, Jennifer "immediately fell in love" with an entire community.

JENNIFER MANCEBO

When Jennifer Mancebo moved from Pennsylvania to New York City at the age of sixteen, she was a high school senior. After her arrival, however, she was told that she could not transfer her out-of-state academic credits and would have to start high school all over again. Jennifer felt hopeless, and her homelife offered no comfort. She and her family had just been forced into a shelter, where Jennifer became one of the city's twenty thousand homeless youths.

Jennifer was motivated to finish high school, but felt alone in her quest. When her cousin told her of a school designed for students like her, she decided to visit. At East Side House's High School for Excellence and Innovation, Jennifer "immediately fell in love" with an entire community. Staff warmly welcomed her, meeting with her one-on-one to develop a graduation plan; friendships were swiftly formed with peers; and school became the home she no longer had.

Life was still hard. "I was in school from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. every day, then I would have to travel back to the shelter," explains Jennifer, who also came to school—a refuge—on weekends. Battling depression, for which she received support from East Side House, she sometimes felt like giving up. But Jennifer persevered because she believed that as long as she remained at the school, there was hope. Staff members were always available to help provide "a totally new experience" for her. For all their kindness, they never stopped challenging her to achieve her goal of earning a diploma.

Jennifer did not simply graduate—she was valedictorian of her class, honored by New York City's First Lady Chirlane McCray, who highlighted her accomplishments. Last fall she began her studies at Hofstra University, where she majors in psychology, a field she chose because "nobody should have to deal with things on their own." Instead of a shelter, she now lives in a cozy dorm room and no longer thinks of herself as homeless. She never will again. For Jennifer, after her experience at East Side House, now "problems are just new challenges to get past." They don't define her.



SHAWNA THOMAS

Simply getting out of bed to attend school was once a struggle for Shawna. “I stayed home all day and never went anywhere,” she says. When she did attend school, she often fell asleep in class or went home early. So sporadic was Shawna’s attendance that she twice showed up at class to discover her teachers did not even know she existed.

When her cousin and fellow-student was shot within feet of her school building, Shawna officially dropped out. She felt like a failure, she recalls, but she saw no other option. Her school was dangerous, and with an attendance record like hers, a diploma seemed impossible. Out of school, Shawna worked up to three jobs at a time. “I felt that if I was earning money, I was being productive,” she says. Then she hit a ceiling. Without a high school diploma, she realized, she would never be promoted—no matter how hard she worked.

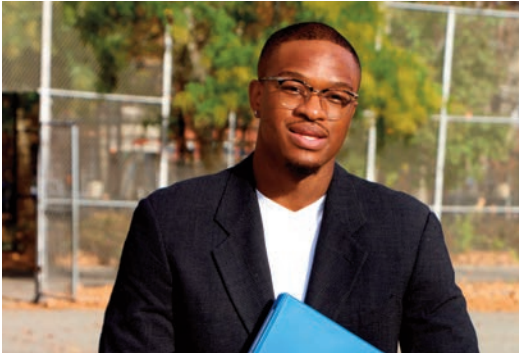
Back at her Mott Haven housing project, Shawna’s friends suggested that she check out East Side House’s high school programs, which had helped many of them. She was inspired by what she heard and saw, and decided to make a new commitment to herself. “I didn’t want to settle for a GED. Nobody could tell me I wasn’t getting a diploma,” she recalls of her choice to enroll.

Shawna graduated from East Side House’s Alfred E. Smith Young Adult Borough Center (YABC) program with an award for Perseverance and Most Improved Student, along with a college scholarship.

What was different about East Side House?” Everybody had the same mentality I had—this is our last chance, so let’s do something.” Instead of missing school, she scored well on tests and spoke up in class discussions, which boosted her confidence. “I felt like I made it. I could set an example here like I couldn’t at my old school,” she says. She felt smart. She felt hopeful.

In 2013, Shawna graduated from East Side House’s Alfred E. Smith Young Adult Borough Center (YABC) program with an award for Perseverance and Most Improved Student, along with a college scholarship. She now studies at Hostos Community College and will graduate in 2016. Shawna plans to continue her studies at a four-year college, where she will focus on math and the sciences.

As a principal partner in Mayor Bill de Blasio’s NYC Community Schools Initiative, East Side House is at the forefront of a citywide effort to improve failing schools.



OMARR HENRY

In the South Bronx, many adolescents never graduate from high school, much less college, and few travel beyond the limits of New York City's subway system. Omarr Henry was one of those adolescents. After enrolling in East Side House's Bronx Haven High School, however, Omarr was able to find his passion and direction—and broader horizons. Staff provided individual attention and helped him to develop goals and a plan for achieving them. With a clearer image of his future to guide him, Omarr became unstoppable. He graduated from high school, enrolled in college, and tenaciously pursued every opportunity that would lead to a career in fashion and design—including a life-changing internship in London.

The student described as “unmotivated” when he entered Bronx Haven High School worked hard and studied diligently in college. At The College of St. Rose in Albany, New York, Omarr worked in the kind of retail clothing jobs that any student might have, but he aspired to understand every part of the apparel business as he delved into marketing courses at school. After gaining retail experience, he pursued an internship in product development at Converse, where he learned about market research, product design, fabrication, and more.

Omarr continued to broaden his education to support his burgeoning career. He took heavy-hitting courses such as International Marketing and Economics while studying abroad at London's Regent's University last spring. Omarr was recently awarded a scholarship by the Shawn Carter Foundation, and will graduate with a bachelor's degree in 2016. His future could take him anywhere.



CURTIS HARRIS

When Curtis first came to East Side House, he felt powerless to decide his direction in life. He had dropped out of a poor-performing high school in his freshman year, doubtful of his chance to succeed as a student. Yet Curtis felt isolated and disconnected as he sat at home all day, and something in him began to shift when he saw friends graduating from high school and going to college. That was when he knew he had to go back to school to earn his diploma. After taking the first step of enrolling in East Side House's Alfred E. Smith Young Adult Borough Center (YABC) program, Curtis began to realize that this was no ordinary program, and a world apart from his former school.

He recalls a time in gym class when he was having trouble shooting the ball and an East Side House staff member promptly approached him to help with his technique. For the first time in a school setting, he felt understood and supported. “It was a moment that showed me these people cared about me and wanted to see me succeed in every way.”

Curtis graduated in 2015, and after working a summer job with East Side House, he enrolled at Bronx Community College. He is proud of his accomplishments: he spoke at East Side House's spring board meeting and delivered the keynote speech for the June graduates of Smith YABC.

East Side House enabled Curtis to pursue a career. Its emphasis on social service also instilled in him a desire to give back to his community. He helped organize a blood drive and continues to donate platelets to help support cancer patients. Curtis says he never could have imagined he would be where he is today. “The opportunities that were given to me in the program changed my life.”



NATALIE LOZADA

While she was growing up in the South Bronx, Natalie Lozada admired her parents and hoped to follow their path in the education field. She was forced to postpone her dreams when she became a mother at the age of fifteen, but through an internship at East Side House she gained valuable experience that offered a chance to rebuild stability and rekindle her career goals. The support she received there enabled her to overcome personal obstacles, and afterwards she was able to complete college and go on to obtain a master's degree in organizational leadership.

Natalie returned to East Side House in 2008, when she was hired as a College Counselor at Bronx Haven High School. She rose in the ranks and eventually became the Program Director. Under her management, the school became a model for working with urban youth hoping for a second chance at graduation. From this position, Natalie was able to positively affect the lives of thousands of young people with experiences similar to her own.

Natalie's trajectory at East Side House offered her a career path and the skills and training to pursue it. It also fueled and defined Natalie's most deeply held values: her belief in education and her desire to improve her own community.

"I am thankful to East Side House for providing opportunities for me to pursue a career in which I can help others pursue their dreams in the very community I come from."

Today, Natalie is a Deputy Director of East Side House, one of the highest levels of leadership within the organization. In this capacity she oversees programs that serve thousands of vulnerable youth every day, and she knows that her contribution will help tap the potential and shape the lives of those who have been forced by circumstance to give up on their dreams.

She says, "I believe education and opportunity are key to the success of any young person. I am thankful to my parents for instilling in me a deep appreciation for learning at a young age. But I am equally thankful to ESH for providing opportunities for me to pursue a career in which I can help others pursue their dreams in the very community I come from."

The organization's energy is unflagging, and each of its initiatives is launched with the spirit of service that has marked East Side House Settlement since its founding.