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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Phillip Morrow, CEO, SoBRO

In 1995 after working in Harlem for fifteen years, I moved here and soon after became head of the South Bronx Overall Development Corporation (SoBRO). During the same period, I met Ana Pereira and was convinced to join the Board of Heritage Health and Housing. Though SoBRO's principal thrust was economic development and Heritage's was providing health and mental health services, both organizations were in the midst of change and in need of new energy and direction. At SoBRO we began to expand into the realm of housing development, while at Heritage Housing planning was underway on several new residential projects.

In 2000, I became Chairman of the Board of Heritage Health and Housing with a mandate to see the agency into the new millennium as a continuing and expanding force for community service, development and change. I think we are already well down that road. The Health Center has received a significant Federal 330 grant to provide community health services well into the future. At the same time, Heritage Housing has completed and moved into its own new office facility, has received funding to expand its ongoing housing programs including \$3.7 million in tax credits for its Morris Avenue projects, and is involved in the development of three new residences which will greatly expand its services, clientele and staff.

Of course I am particularly excited about the Jasmine Court project on East 138th Street in the Bronx as it represents the first cooperative venture between SoBRO and Heritage. The 115-unit facility for 75 individuals with HIV/AIDS and 39 persons with mental illness (and one super's apartment, if you are doing the math), will be operated by SoBRO with program services provided by Heritage. The project is now more than 50% complete and should be in occupancy this fall. Particularly in the aftermath of 9/11, the need for community-based agencies providing critically needed community services, expanding job and economic development opportunities, and providing local leadership in helping to revitalize urban neighborhoods has become even more apparent. One of our tasks in the year ahead will be to help legislative leaders in Albany realize the need to fairly compensate the workers funded through our government programs for the critical jobs they perform.

I am pleased with the accomplishments of Heritage during my first year as Chairman, and look forward to many more to come as we all work together to help Heritage maintain and expand its reputation as one of the premier service agencies in the country.



M. Rodell

COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

by Robert Espier

Heritage Housing has operated a food service at the Simmons Residence for Single Adults since 1994. The residence, our flagship, provides housing for 140 individuals, in three transitional housing programs.

In addition to preparing three meals a day, seven days a week, for tenants of the building, meals are also prepared for Heritage's Pathways program, which houses persons who had been homeless. Food Services also prepares sumptuous meals for special holidays and Heritage program activities. Our Food Pantry is operated out of the Food Service Department. Approximately 500 bags of groceries are distributed monthly to community residents.

The Food Service Department has become pivotal in Heritage's employment training initiative. The New York State Department of Labor has predicted that the restaurant trade is one of the local industries that will rebound most strongly, after the damage done to the economy by the 9/11 disaster. A significant portion of the state and city's economic redevelopment effort is aimed at revitalizing the tourist and service trades. This is evident in the number of restaurants reopening and new ones in operation throughout the city.

In line with these efforts, Heritage has partnered with The Creative Training and Development Company to develop a proposal and seek funding to establish a formal food services training institute based in our Food Service Department. The institute will prepare Heritage residents and members of the community in generic customer service skills, state of the art food preparation, and culinary arts skills. This program will not only augment the training that is presently available to employees in the Food Service Department, it will provide formal curriculum-based in-depth training in restaurant operation and management.

In this way, Heritage's Restaurant Training Institute will expand the city's infrastructure for preparing skilled labor for the food trades in Harlem and other parts of the city.