

Examples from Resident Council President, Norman Bloomfield:

“During my seven years as president of the resident council, we created our own agenda, independent of management, and accomplished things for the benefit of the residents that had never been done before.

EQUAL GRANT:

We fought long and hard for full resident council participation in the EQUAL grant process (then called QUIP). We held a meeting about QUIP, came up with a list of requests, and took a vote. A majority of residents voted for air conditioning in all the rooms as their highest priority. The administration said they would not apply for the grant unless they could charge for air conditioning. We resisted that demand, and DOH supported us. Today, thanks to our efforts, every resident has air conditioning.

STIMULUS CASH REBATE:

In 2009, Congress passed an economic stimulus bill that provided cash rebates to citizens. SSI recipients were eligible for \$250.00. As president of the resident council, I arranged for a free service called VITA — Volunteer Income Tax Assistance — to come to the home. The VITA volunteers were Baruch College accounting students. They helped residents fill out the tax rebate forms. At first, staff refused to give residents' Social Security numbers to the volunteers. We complained to DOH, won the complaint, and residents got their checks.

SCHOOL TAX CREDITS:

One of the VITA volunteers told me that New York City residents can apply for the NYC School Tax Credit every year. She gave me a School Tax form and showed me how to fill it out. So we started a project to help residents fill out School Tax forms.

The administrator balked at this too. He claimed residents were not eligible for the school tax credit. DOH contacted the NYS Department of Taxation, which affirmed that residents were eligible. DOH then advised all NYC adult homes that helping residents fill out School Tax Credit forms was part of their case management duties. Now applying for the School Tax is a routine undertaking, not just in this home, but in most NYC adult homes.

METRO CARD DAY:

We contacted the MTA Mobile Sales Unit and asked them to come out to the facility. They said they would do so if we promised 12 to 15 applicants. Our resident council announced a MetroCard Day, and promoted it with flyers. The MTA representatives came out and signed up dozens of residents.

FLU SHOT DAY:

We were not offered flu shots one year, so I called our state assemblyman and his chief of staff arranged for a local city hospital to do a flu shot community outreach event right in the adult home. 81 residents and 6 staff members were vaccinated that day.