

# UNION SETTLEMENT CHRONICLE FALL 2018



**Our College Readiness Program  
sees a new class off to school.**

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**Undocumented immigrants may be  
avoiding services like ours.**

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# UNION SETTLEMENT CHRONICLE

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**Union Settlement** is an on-the-ground resource for East Harlem residents of all ages, and a passionate advocate for the needs of underserved communities. Since opening our doors in 1895, we have brought **education, wellness and community-building** programs to our neighborhood, empowering New Yorkers with opportunities to better their lives. With a staff of over 450 and services that impact **10,000** people each year, Union Settlement is building the vitality and success of East Harlem.

**Executive Director**  
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## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Undocumented immigrants are avoiding vital services that help them survive.



**David Nocenti**  
Executive Director

 @DavidNocenti

**The fear is real...**  
it is no wonder that undocumented immigrants are choosing to disengage.

**P**eople across the country and around the world have been appalled at how our federal government is treating immigrant families. We have watched helplessly as the government implemented a sweeping policy separating children from their parents at the border, and cringed as we read individual cases of anguish.

These are the reactions of many American citizens who have no reason to fear an ICE raid. **Imagine the stress and anxiety of our neighbors who are undocumented. What must they be feeling?**

What often goes unreported is how deep and pervasive the fear of deportation can become, and how it can adversely impact the lives of entire families.

**Union Settlement has been providing core social services to waves of immigrant families in East Harlem for over a century** – from the Irish and German immigrants at the time of our founding in 1895, to the Italian and Jewish immigrants in the early 20th century, to more recent immigrants from Mexico, Central America, West Africa, the Middle East and China.

Many of these immigrants arrived without required documentation, but they stayed and thrived. But never before have our undocumented neighbors faced such clear threats of deportation, and many of them are reacting by going even deeper underground, and limiting their interactions with government, schools and social service agencies.

The fear is real. Last year, Union Settlement hosted a workshop for immigrants regarding their rights (covering topics such as: “What do you do if ICE stops you on the street?”), and **we were counseled by immigrant advocacy groups not to post flyers about the workshop, and instead to rely on word-of-mouth communication**, because of the appallingly conceivable possibility that ICE would send agents to detain attendees at the event.



Charles Reed/U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement via AP.

Even more depressing, one portion of the workshop advised undocumented immigrant parents that, because they might get detained at any time, **they must create a plan for who will take care of their children if they don't come home one day.**

So it is no wonder that undocumented immigrants are choosing to disengage, and not accessing services that are available to assist them. This includes some parents not enrolling their children in early childhood education programs like those offered by Union Settlement – even if those children were born in this country and are American citizens.

The harm extends even to basic subsistence issues. Undocumented immigrants are entitled to receive food stamps to cover the cost of feeding their U.S.-born children. But given the constant anti-immigrant rhetoric from Washington, how many are forgoing those benefits because the application requires them to provide their name and address to the government, and they fear that information could lead to deportation?

Our social safety net should be available to protect everyone who falls on hard times and needs support. Unfortunately, the Trump administration's words and actions are forcing undocumented immigrants to walk along a treacherous path and avoid even core services designed to help them survive and lead productive lives.

## PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Your support helps students reach their college dreams.  
**Meet Bianca.**



**Bianca Andrada**

Recent graduate of Union Settlement's College Readiness Program.

**T**ell us... where are you headed this fall and what will you be studying?

I am going to Syracuse University where I will be majoring in Biomedical Engineering.

**Congratulations! How did Union Settlement's College Readiness Program help you achieve your college goals?**

Well, when I began attending Talent Unlimited High School, I quickly found Ms. Forbes, the College Readiness counselor from Union Settlement. I spoke with her almost daily. Throughout my four years at Talent Unlimited, I had the opportunity to visit colleges, attend workshops, receive SAT prep and access to just about any other help I needed. Without Union Settlement, applying to college would've been much harder and much more expensive. But ultimately, deciding on a college was difficult for me.

**What are some other ways Ms. Forbes gave you support?**

So many ways! She worked with me on my interview skills, which led to my three-year internship at Mount Sinai's neuroscience department. The internship is normally held by college students, so it was very intimidating applying as a high school student. But I got it and it has changed my life! Ms. Forbes also helped me navigate the entire admissions process. She even taught me how to stand out on a college tour - by being brave and asking questions and offering up information about myself.



Bianca held internship positions at Mount Sinai for three years while attending high school.

**You were also a volunteer in Ms. Forbes' office. How did you notice her helping other students?**

I remember one time a student came into Ms. Forbes' office crying because she was disappointed with her SAT scores. Ms. Forbes sat with her and made a plan about how to study efficiently. She set up tutoring after school, during lunch, and around extracurricular activities. She teaches students how to be vocal about their studying needs - even if that means requesting breaks to study during an afterschool practice.

**What do you think makes Ms. Forbes a good college counselor?**

Ms. Forbes always makes time and goes above and beyond for her students. She tailors everything to the particular student's needs. She's also really good at balancing a student's college dreams with blunt reality. She makes sure each student has a "stretch" school and a "fallback" school.

**How do you think your time with Ms. Forbes and the College Readiness Program will continue to support you as you attend college and beyond?**

One important lesson I'll take away from Ms. Forbes is that it is okay to change your mind about your life choices. This is nice to think about, because I know I'm always in control and can make my own path. If I want to head down a different path in college or beyond, I always can! Thankfully, I know I'll always have Ms. Forbes for advice just a phone call or email away.



Bianca and her internship supervisor Caleb Browne, Postdoctoral Fellow, Fishberg Department of Neuroscience, Icahn School of Medicine, Mount Sinai.

# Union Settlement's College Readiness Program enters its 55th year



**“This fall, so many of my students are headed off to wonderful schools.”**

Danese Forbes, *College Readiness Counselor at Talent Unlimited High School*

**D**anese Forbes' eyes light up when she talks about her students. A Union Settlement College Readiness counselor for over 10 years, Danese has helped over 1,000 students navigate the admissions process and get into college.

**“I am always so overjoyed when the kids end up happy and proud of their ultimate plans for college,”** said Danese. “This fall, so many of my students are heading off to wonderful schools. One student is off to begin a full scholarship at DePauw University.”

Founded in 1964, **Union Settlement's College Readiness Program has served nearly 23,000 students** with guidance and encouragement to pursue higher learning. This past year, we provided college and financial aid counseling to 179 public high school seniors in East Harlem and the Upper East Side, many of whom are prospective first-generation college students.



Being accepted into college is the culmination of years of hard work by the student. **“The process really begins as early as freshman year of high school,”** Danese explained. “I begin to counsel students from an early stage on how to build on their background, skills, and relevant experience so they are ready when it comes time to apply,” Danese added.

**Our College Readiness services include tutoring, SAT prep, college trips and summer enrichment programs.**

Students in recent years received acceptances from such schools as Macaulay Honors College at the City University of New York, New York University, Spelman College, the University of Connecticut, the University of Rhode Island, Syracuse University, Howard University, St. John's University, Fordham University, and numerous SUNY and CUNY schools.

“We have students who are attending four-year colleges like Syracuse, and we also have students attending two-year schools,” said Danese. “And sometimes, going to college doesn't make sense for a particular student, but we're still here to support them on their path to the workforce or vocational studies.”

**Edgar Sanchez**, recipient of the Walter Montgomery Scholarship, was one of seven high school students awarded scholarships at this past year's College Readiness Annual Scholarship Ceremony. Also pictured, Executive Director David Nocenti (left) and Walter Montgomery (right).



On June 13, 2018, we held our College Readiness Scholarship Ceremony at Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College in East Harlem.

**Our College Readiness Program also provides support to students who need additional assistance in managing the transition to college.**

During the summer before college and during their first year, students receive counseling to help them adjust to the academic, social and emotional demands of college life. Students also receive information and encouragement to help them identify and access on-campus resources that can help them achieve their goals.

“I keep in touch with so many of my past students,” said Danese. “Some for over a decade now. **I can't wait to see what great things are in store for this class.**”

# The van Ameringen Foundation champions mental health services

**E**stablished in 1950, the van Ameringen Foundation has been a loyal supporter of Union Settlement for over 20 years, awarding multiple grants supporting our work in East Harlem. **Most recently, the Foundation provided a generous multiyear grant to support our efforts to enhance mental health services for children** in our early childhood education program.

Union Settlement operates seven early childhood education centers in East Harlem, which serve over 400 children each year. The Foundation's support allows our mental health therapists to be placed in three of these centers, providing services in a familiar and trusted environment, and in a manner that minimizes disruptions to children's and parents' schedules and routines.

"Providing on-site mental health services to the children in our early childhood education centers is vital to our efforts to provide our most vulnerable children with the security and fundamental emotional skills they need for life," said David Nocenti, Union Settlement's Executive Director. **"Many of the children we serve have experienced trauma and/or have other significant risk factors.** Providing these services right inside the centers that they attend every day enables us to ensure that they can learn, socialize with their peers and develop trusting relationships with adults."

**"It is with the utmost gratitude for the generosity of the van Ameringen Foundation,"** continued Nocenti, "that we are able to continue to provide these essential services to children in our community."

From its inception, **the van Ameringen Foundation has funded prevention, education, and direct care in the mental health field**, as well as advocacy efforts to achieve systems change locally and nationally. Their emphasis continues to be on assisting people and communities with limited resources and opportunities to access preventive services, early intervention and effective mental health treatment.

**"The van Ameringen Foundation has long known of and admired the effective and much-needed programs and care provided by Union Settlement,"** said Ken Kind, President of the van Ameringen Foundation. "We are particularly impressed by the competence and commitment of Union Settlement's staff. They deliver a unique quality of service that helps to meet the needs of underserved communities."



## Recent Mental Health Services updates made within our program

- An electronic health records system was implemented, which will provide therapists and psychiatrists with improved access to patient records, and will enhance our ability to analyze data and ensure regulatory compliance.
- Satellite clinics at three of our Early Childhood Education sites were established.
- An expressive arts therapy component was added to our program, which includes drama, art, music and movement therapy as a means for transformation and healing.

PHOTOS

# Highlights of Summer at Union Settlement



It was a wonderful summer at Union Settlement!



Our summer camps helped hundreds of kids have a fun, educational and productive summer. They were lucky enough to be visited by NBA star Taj Gibson, who helped present a \$25,000 donation to our summer programs from Meyer Orbach and the Orbach Group.

Additionally, our seniors stayed active with workshops in dance, yoga, art and more! They also enjoyed a special BBQ event at a state park upstate.

Our Business Development Center's "Buy Local East Harlem" initiative held its first Taste of East Harlem event, a sold-out gathering highlighting some of the best food/drink purveyors that East Harlem has to offer.



We welcomed volunteers from companies like HBO, Morgan Stanley, Nielsen and Kind Bars, who delivered Meals on Wheels and helped clean up our community garden.



# UNION SETTLEMENT

David Nocenti, Executive Director

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## Toasting Union Settlement

**Tuesday, October 23, 2018 • 6:30 - 8:30pm**

**Vanderbilt Suites, 200 Park Ave in the MetLife Building**

[unionsettlement.org/toasting](http://unionsettlement.org/toasting)