New Yorkers are getting older, and it’s happening quickly.

There are one million people over the age 65 living in NYC. By 2030 this number is expected to increase by 50% — the most rapid increase in history.

(continued)
Creating programs that give older adults the prospect of aging with friends, community and dignity—that’s what makes the difference for so many of our neighbors. As I pass through Goddard Riverside’s Senior Center, located on the ground floor of our main offices, I am grateful for the daily reminder that behind every study or statistic, there’s a human face and a life story.

A message from our Executive Director

New Yorkers are getting older (continued from cover)

Goddard Riverside is at the forefront of the city’s initiatives to serve a rapidly growing population. Our life-sustaining programs address nearly every facet of the aging experience: housing, nutrition, social interaction and access to benefits. Goddard Riverside enables older adults to live healthy, productive lives in later years by assisting them with physical, emotional and everyday needs.

HOW DO WE DO IT?

Programming: We listen to the older adults in our community and create programs that engage them and support their independence.

Research and Policy Planning: We do the research and collect the data to impact policy and legislative agendas in order to influence citywide programs. We advocate with and for older adults and work closely with city officials to ensure that seniors have access to decision makers.

Encouraging Independence: Our Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC) provides on-site services to older adults in their own homes and encourages aging in place to keep seniors in the neighborhoods they’ve been a part of for years.

Intergenerational Interaction: Our Community Arts programs bring generations together for performances and activities. Young volunteers have taught social media skills to keep our older adults connected with family and friends far away.
Hunger in older adult communities is a pervasive issue that threatens the health and overall wellbeing of aging adults.

The factors that contribute to hunger among older adults often stem from other issues like poverty, lack of in-home support, mobility restrictions and other life challenges. As a hub of services, support and care for older adults, Goddard Riverside Community Center is committed to addressing this issue by providing meals to older adults through several touchpoints. The most dedicated program is Home Delivered Meals (HDM)—a six-day-a-week meal delivery service that serves 500 meals daily to homebound adults on the Upper West Side.

As part of our ongoing commitment to serving this growing population in our community, Goddard Riverside went a step further. Over a one year period, we visited 500 HDM recipients in their homes to assess varying levels of food security. Our team conducted in-depth interviews and made observations to assess hunger and to determine what additional support services would be needed for quality of life and independent living. In partnership with The Center for Long Term Care Research & Policy School at New York Medical College, that research resulted in *Nourish First: Food Initiative Resource Study*. The study confirmed that Home Delivered Meal recipients were experiencing a host of issues that were not being addressed through meal delivery alone.

The report revealed several key findings that made an immediate impact on Goddard Riverside’s programming. This year, Goddard Riverside added a licensed social worker to our food delivery program staff to better meet the needs of our HDM recipients. This will allow us to provide a more integrated system of wellness and care through an existing touchpoint, further enhancing our mission to help older adults to age well while remaining independent in their homes.

Our goal is to encourage and support healthy and active aging in place. With quality food, support and committed care, we will ensure that our older adults are cared for in the community they call home.

### Data from the report

- One in seven older adults are food insecure
- Food insecurity is more common among adults not receiving home delivered meals
- Food insecurity is a contributing factor in chronic illness and impaired functioning
1946
Goddard Neighborhood Center (GNC), a predecessor of GRCC, expands its mission to include serving all age groups. A proposal is floated to hire a social worker to work exclusively with the elderly population in the neighborhood.

1950
GNC initiates the Golden Age Club providing seniors with “lunch followed by hours devoted to music, sewing, games and parties.”

1954
Riverside Community House, the other predecessor of Goddard Riverside Community Center, begins a “Sixty-Plus Club”. Members have lunch, play cards, games, sing, and enjoy folk and social dances.

1959
After the creation of GRCC, the Sixty-Plus Club continues. Members meet three days a week for lunch, singing, dancing, and playing checkers or cards. A part-time case worker is on hand to work exclusively with members.

1960
The merger of GRCC with Pioneer Youth Camp allows for the beginning of week-long senior trips to camp in June and September.

1964
The opening of Stephen Wise Houses provides new space for GRCC. The new center at 647 Columbus Avenue (now the Bernie Wohl Center) is open for members of the Sixty-Plus Club five days a week.

1980
The Senior Center program, now funded by New York City, grows to a total membership of 1,448, with an average daily attendance of 168.
1983
The opening of Phelps House provides new housing for older adults in the GRCC community and a new home for the Senior Center.

1986
GRCC expands senior residential camping by merging with Camp Wel-Met.

2000
Westside neighborhood NORC was created to serve older adults in the community.

2001
The Senior Center forms its first outreach committee. Members of the center, together with a staff social worker, begin to meet on a regular basis to keep track of absent members and develop a system for checking in with those who stop coming regularly.

2006
GRCC incorporates the WEME Home Delivered Meals program into our programs for older adults.

2008
GRCC is featured in the New York Times for its Home Delivered Meals. After a food study on seniors cut from food delivery services, GRCC gets hungry seniors back on food delivery lists.

2014
GRCC establishes a pilot program for formerly homeless seniors in supportive housing.
Goddard Riverside’s Senior Center is a high-energy place bustling with creative personalities and educational, social, and recreational activity. At any point in the course of a day, one can walk into a dance party, a fitness class, a highly competitive Bingo game or a debate on current events and conversations with political leaders. This energetic hub is located at Goddard Riverside’s 593 Columbus Avenue headquarters on Manhattan’s Upper West Side and for nearly 30 years, has provided comprehensive support and wellness services to older adults from in and around the surrounding community.

The Goddard Riverside Senior Center has a membership of nearly 3,000 men and women, representing a variety of ethnicities and professional backgrounds. With an innovative programming model that includes performing and visual arts, classes and member-led advocacy initiatives, the Center responds to the immediate needs and interests of the 250 older adults that come through the doors every day. While the daily offerings are robust, the program is more than a calendar of events, trips and activities. Programming is structured around holistic, comprehensive care for older adults with the ultimate goal of supporting mental and physical wellness.

For some, daily attendance means a hot breakfast and lunch. For others, it is assistance and emotional support as they navigate the changing needs associated with aging. And for many members, it is an opportunity to join the council of peer-elected representatives who lead the Center’s governing body. This innovative model contributes to an overall sense of belonging and purpose for members as they assume leadership roles.

The older adult years are often associated with isolation and in many cases, financial challenges. The Goddard Riverside Senior Center is a place that offers solutions—a vibrant and multifaceted community and an antidote to the common feelings of loneliness and depression that can come with aging.

Senior Center Activities

- Music Lessons
- Acting Classes
- Computer Classes
- Tai Chi, Yoga & Zumba
- Financial Planning
- Fall Prevention
...and more!
The Faces of Goddard Riverside Seniors

**Wade Hampton, Age 78**
Wade is proud to say that he has been at Goddard Riverside longer than anyone else. He became a part of the Goddard Riverside family in 1943 when, at six years old, he attended the afterschool program, then located in midtown Manhattan. 60 years later, Wade came back to Goddard Riverside looking for an affordable place for lunch and got much more. “These people have become my family and I come here every day excited about having a great place to call home.”

**Rosa Flores, Age 75**
Rosa is known as a trusted counselor and dedicated leader. She is always stepping up to help out those in need: translating documents for Spanish-speaking friends and even helping as an aid when a fellow member was no longer able to feed herself.

Rosa joined the Goddard Riverside community in 2009 and actively follows politics. “People think that when you get old you can’t do anything... I know what goes on in my community and I fight for myself and others.”

**Rosalind Ortiz, Age 72**
Rosalind Ortiz left the sunshine state to make bustling NYC her retirement home and she’s never been happier. A resident of Goddard Riverside’s Phelps House, Rosalind is known for her fashionable style and creative flair. She has made her cozy apartment her own palatial escape. After some difficulty navigating the affordable housing market, Rosalind moved into Phelps House in 2010 and calls it home.

Rosalind’s life as a senior citizen in the city is active. She prioritizes style and self-care and stays current by watching design shows and reading fashion magazines. Every year, with the help of her son, she paints her home and spruces up her décor. She says: “I always feel like I have to look good. I like my home to look good. I do it for myself because it keeps my spirit up.”
At Home with NORC

For Kaitlin Nelson, no two days at the NORC are alike. “One day I’ll show a resident how to put batteries in their new camera, and another day I could be helping someone file paperwork for aid or talking them through loneliness issues. And then of course, there are those days where I get to plan the fun parties.” Kaitlin is the director of the Naturally Occurring Retirement Community at Goddard Riverside, a unique and active community on the Upper West Side.

Through the NORC, older adults and neighborhood residents can access health, wellness, recreational and social services right in their own buildings. This program enhances the concept of aging in place by encouraging independent living in communities of comfort. For older adults who’ve lived in their buildings for long periods of time, the accessibility to the NORC community is an added support to enhance the quality of their lives.

“It’s really about being present and available. We’re a safe place of community for people who are getting older and need the support, and wish to remain in their homes,” Kaitlin says.

Goddard Riverside’s NORC services three buildings on the Upper West Side: Columbus Park, Jefferson Towers and Strycker’s Bay.