2014
MAKE THE ROAD
NEW YORK
ANNUAL REPORT
MAKE THE ROAD NEW YORK BUILDS THE POWER OF LATINO AND WORKING CLASS COMMUNITIES TO ACHIEVE DIGNITY AND JUSTICE THROUGH ORGANIZING, POLICY INNOVATION, TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION, AND SURVIVAL SERVICES.
DEAR FRIENDS,

Thanks to supporters like you, thousands of low-income and immigrant New Yorkers are getting on their feet and paving the way for others to live with respect and dignity.

In 2014, in response to the work of Make the Road New York (MRNY) members and our allies across the nation, President Obama took action to address our broken immigration system with a life-changing program that will create work opportunities for millions of immigrant families and protect them from deportation. Tens of thousands of families in MRNY’s neighborhoods will be eligible.

That’s why we’re ramping up our outreach and legal counseling services to help 10,000 families apply in 2015. We’ll connect them to our intensive suite of services: adult education classes, support to access college, job training and placement, and legal resources to help families tackle poverty. Thousands of community members used these services to get on track to a better life in 2014.

Together, we also made important progress to establish a more just New York City and State. MRNY’s work resulted in policy transformations benefiting millions—from guaranteed paid sick days for low-wage workers, to a game-changing community schools model for New York City, to expanded human rights in Long Island, to IDNYC, a new City ID cards program in such high demand that our offices have been flooded with immigrant families eager to take advantage of this essential civic benefit.

We will build on these achievements in 2015 with your continued partnership. We are incredibly grateful for your support.

Sincerely,

Deborah Axt

Javier H. Valdés
OUR STRATEGIES

In 2014, MRNY connected each of our 16,000 member-clients to a tight network of support. Every week, we welcomed hundreds of families to each of our five centers to join in our campaigns, services, and a warm, sustaining community.
COMMUNITY ORGANIZING that builds the leadership of our 16,000 members and forges broad coalitions to win far-reaching reforms.

TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION that reaches 4,000 people every year with adult literacy classes, college access support, job training, and citizenship preparation.

LEGAL AND SURVIVAL SERVICES that provide tools for 10,000 families annually to lift themselves out of poverty.

POLICY INNOVATIONS that meet the needs of our members and improve the lives of millions more.

In 2015, for the first time, we are working to bring these strategies across the east coast—to Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and beyond.
We promote good jobs with a living wage and workers’ right to organize. MRNY’s work—including our landmark Wage Theft Prevention Act—has helped make New York’s worker protections a model for the nation.

**OUR IMPACT**

**WORKPLACE DIGNITY**

Trained 3,500 low-wage and immigrant workers how to ensure health and safety on the job, including Hurricane Sandy cleanup jobs.

Supported 700 people with job readiness training, employment counseling, and innovative, industry-specific training.

Recouped $3 million in unlawfully withheld wages.

Helped expand NYC’s paid sick days law to cover 1.5 million workers. Mayor de Blasio made this his administration’s first policy initiative and delivered the message standing with our community members in Bushwick.

Strengthened workplace protections for millions across the state through passage of improvements to the Wage Theft Prevention Act.

Continued transforming the exploitative car wash industry by making reform a City priority, organizing in car washes, and securing a $3.9 million settlement with an exploitative employer.

MRNY helped CARIDAD GUTIERREZ (left) and other low-wage workers launch a worker-owned cleaning cooperative that has created dignified jobs paying $20 per hour. MRNY will incubate two more co-ops in 2015.
PROTECTING WORKERS’ LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS

In 2014, MRNY provided health and safety training to 3,500 immigrant workers in Spanish. This need is tremendous: Latino workers are the most likely to be killed or injured on the job, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. MRNY members report persistent, dangerous violations in their workplaces and virtually no other access to training or safety equipment. With a severe shortage of accessible Spanish language OSHA training in the New York and New Jersey region, MRNY has stepped up to fill the gap.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy in 2012, MRNY began providing highly exploited clean-up workers with in-depth training and free protective equipment. However, we saw that much more was needed to ensure worker safety over the long-term. So, we built a strong partnership with the United Steelworkers, who enabled us to provide career-enhancing and life-saving OSHA-10 certification on a much bigger scale. Twelve of our worker-participants have become certified trainers themselves and will launch their own training cooperative in 2015. Stay tuned for the launch!
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

In 2014, through a competitive process, the New York City Department of Education selected MRNY to develop the Bushwick Campus high school into a community school. That means we’ll bring a fuller range of academic enrichment programs, training opportunities, and services—including health access, legal services, and adult literacy—to students and their families, while incorporating strong systems for student and parent engagement. Community schools across the country have demonstrated that serving the needs of the whole child inside the school building contributes to higher student attendance and achievement.

This work isn’t new to us. Back in the early 2000s, MRNY youth and families helped transform a severely under-resourced local school, Bushwick High School—where fewer than 30% of students even graduated—into four successful schools. Today, thanks to MRNY’s innovative college access program, the Student Success Center, 75% of graduating seniors at those schools are bound for college.

MRNY is also supporting Pan American International High School (PAIHS) in Jackson Heights, Queens, to become a community school. In particular, we are working closely with PAIHS’s leadership to engage the wider community and integrate MRNY’s services. We’ll work to make this level of engagement the standard for community schools nationally.

MRNY families are setting the precedent for transforming once-struggling schools into hubs of multi-generational learning, civic engagement, and holistic supports so entire communities can thrive.
We work to establish quality public schools and educational opportunity for all. Our participants are better able to obtain good jobs, finish school and engage in the civic life of their community. MRNY has helped thousands of parents and students improve their schools through policy change and program design.

Provided innovative, peer-led college access services that resulted in 85% of graduating seniors in the Bushwick High School Campus applying to college.

Won a competitive process to lead implementation of a community school in Bushwick, which will bring our services to thousands more youth and families.

Helped 1,760 adults learn English, computer skills, civics and prepare for their high school equivalency exams.

Ran a unique summer program that intensively engaged Long Island youth of color in non-partisan voter education.

Supported Gender/Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) in 10 Brooklyn and Queens high schools and provided LGBTQ sensitivity training to teachers and staff.

Supported parents of 110 immigrant families in Queens to deepen their engagement with their children’s school and access vital services.

MRNY helped CHEYANNE SMITH apply to college, access financial aid, and become a leading advocate for quality education. She is now a student at SUNY Buffalo and will spend her summer in Bushwick working as a College Bridge Coach to help other students get to college this fall.
We promote the civil rights of immigrant and LGBTQ New Yorkers of color and help disenfranchised communities engage in our democracy.

**Appointed to President Obama’s Taskforce on 21st Century Policing** after helping lead a citywide movement for police accountability, following the deaths of Eric Garner and Michael Brown.

**Engaged 55,000 voters of color door-to-door and registered 5,000 to vote for the first time.**

**Secured a new policy from the NYPD** to limit the use of carrying condoms as evidence of prostitution.

**Won City recognition of a Small Business Bill of Rights**, including the right to interpretation during inspections, by organizing immigrant business owners.

**Prevented discrimination by employers and creditors, and discrimination against low-income renters** by winning amendments to the Suffolk County Human Rights Law.
ADVOCATING RESPECT AND DIGNITY IN POLICING

In December 2014, President Obama appointed MRNY’s lead organizer José Lopez to the new Task Force on 21st Century Policing. José worked with the task force’s ten other members to formulate national recommendations for improving police-community relations.

José was well suited to the task. With MRNY members, he helps lead the work of the citywide coalition Communities United for Police Reform. He was a key organizer of the peaceful marches following the murders of Eric Garner and Michael Brown.

MRNY youth leader Christine Rodriguez was selected to sit on the Mayor’s Leadership Team on School Climate and Discipline. She’s one of the only young people on the team and joins representatives from policy and government to make recommendations for positive school discipline policies that treat all students with respect and dignity. These policies aim to reduce suspensions, summonses, and arrests and keep students in school and on the path to success.

MRNY is already a leader in this field. We led the campaign for the Student Safety Act, one of the most comprehensive and progressive school safety reporting laws in the country. We also launched our own restorative justice pilot program, housed at Bushwick High School Campus, which we hope to replicate in community schools across the city.

From left to right: José Lopez, MRNY board member Keeshan Harley, and Youth Power Project Director Sarah Landes lead a peaceful march across the Brooklyn Bridge.
In 2014, we worked with allies to keep immigrant families high on Washington’s agenda. The result: in November, President Obama announced a milestone initiative to provide millions of immigrants in the U.S. with work opportunities and protect them from deportation. MRNY launched a comprehensive outreach program that helped more than 1,800 people in the last weeks of 2014 to learn about the President’s executive action, prepare to apply, and protect themselves against providers peddling fraudulent immigration services. Although the program’s start date has been temporarily delayed due to politically motivated litigation, once it gets underway we expect to help 10,000 families apply in 2015 and 2016. In the meantime, we’re helping over 400 young people access Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and representing many others to obtain more permanent forms of immigration relief.

Thousands of immigrants came to us in the initial days after the President’s announcement, lining the streets outside our Queens, Brooklyn, Staten Island and Long Island offices to await one of our information workshops. In addition to making sure they are prepared for the opening of executive action, we’re connecting these families to our holistic program of legal services, workforce supports, and education opportunities—and we’re preparing to exponentially scale this work once the executive action application process opens.

Recognizing that executive action is not enough, since the President’s actions represent only a temporary measure, our members continue to elevate the importance of federal comprehensive immigration reform and lead local campaigns to make New York the national leader in pro-immigrant policies.

MRNY member Ruth Jara and City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito celebrate the President’s announcement.
MRNY’s work has made New York a national leader for immigrant rights by ensuring better access to government agencies, schools, and health care, while opposing inhumane immigration enforcement and promoting national reform.

Helped lead the national movement for President Obama’s Executive Action that ensures millions of immigrant families can work with dignity and live without fear of separation.

Provided full legal representation to help 300 people obtain U.S. citizenship.

Represented immigrants in 924 cases, including dozens of unaccompanied minors and recently-arrived families in New York City and Long Island, to prevent deportation, secure immigration relief, and achieve naturalization.

Evicted federal deportation authorities from Rikers jail and limited the inhumane collaboration with these authorities in New York City and Suffolk County.

Won crucial funding to establish the first public defender program in the country that provides legal representation for poor immigrants who are facing deportation.

JOSE VALLEJO was able to vote for the first time in 2014 after becoming a citizen thanks to MRNY’s integrated civics and English classes, citizenship applications support, and nonpartisan voter education.
OUR IMPACT

HEALTHY FAMILIES

We help families access health care, fight for safe housing, and expand local green space. Since Hurricane Sandy, MRNY has redoubled efforts to secure affordable, healthy housing for families.

Secured food stamps for 1,589 people, including 1,019 children.

Protected 76 families from homelessness through emergency eviction defense.

Preserved affordable housing through passage of the Quality Housing Act to repair dangerous housing code violations for thousands of tenants.

Won Medicaid coverage of essential healthcare for trans and gender non-conforming New Yorkers, including hormone therapy and gender-affirming surgeries.

Advised 638 tenants with one-on-one legal counseling and educated hundreds more about their rights.

Fed over 10,000 individuals through our food pantry.

Enrolled 2,750 individuals and small businesses in health insurance through the Affordable Care Act.

MRNY’s Bushwick farm produced 500 lbs. of produce thanks to member volunteers like ANTONIO LOPEZ who also educated his community about healthy eating to curb heart disease and diabetes.
MRNY’s health team had a banner year in 2014. Our peer educators, known as promotoras, alleviated hunger for over 1,500 people by securing food stamps for them. They referred many more to our health insurance team, who enrolled 2,750 individuals and small businesses in health insurance through the Affordable Care Act. Many had never had health insurance before!

Why are promotoras so effective? Promotoras are themselves community members who understand the culture and language of their neighbors. They undergo rigorous trainings that enable them to be health educators, food stamp screeners and more. People who are wary of government offices or mainstream service providers will often confide in a promotora, who are fixtures in hospital waiting rooms, church fairs, school yards and green markets. Whether they’re helping with food stamp applications, referring a young person for HIV testing or connecting a new immigrant family to health insurance enrollment services, promotoras know how to get the job done.
Young participants perform a skit at the first Ice Cream Social for Social Justice, a unique event to introduce kids to social justice and raise money to support MRNY’s youth program.
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Akenten Oti, Controller  
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June Clarke, IT Manager

AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

Long Island Civic Engagement Table  
Steven McFarland, Coordinator

Make the Road Action Fund  
Daniel Altschuler, Managing Director  
Walter Barrientos, Political Director

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