

POWERED BY HUMANITY

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

UNIVERSITY
us
SETTLEMENT





A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Human relationships can be a kind of alchemy. It's not just that we need one another – it's that there's really no limit to what we can do when we get together.

As a 21st century settlement house, we're always plugged into new approaches that can help us do our work more effectively – and we know there's no substitute for human connection.

Within every person, there's tremendous possibility we can most fully express in partnership with one another. **Powered by humanity**, University Settlement helps New Yorkers realize our full potential.

—Melissa Aase



University Settlement forges partnerships between neighbors on the Lower East Side and in Brooklyn, engaging more than 40,000 New Yorkers in efforts to build stronger communities every year.



OUR INTEGRATED PROGRAMS

University Settlement is One House – at each of our locations, our teams can connect our neighbors with every program and service across our network.

We engage our neighbors where they live and are guided by local priorities – evolving thoughtfully as we listen and learn. Our programs are available in English, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, and many other languages our neighbors speak.

We prioritize resources toward people in the most vulnerable situations, to ensure that all people in our communities have access to basic rights, necessities, and opportunities, while centering civic engagement, relationship-building, advocacy, and the arts.

**Early Childhood
Education**

**Mental Health +
Wellness**

**Programs for
Older Adults**

**Adult English
Classes**

**Youth Development +
Community Centers**

**Housing + Financial
Stability**

Arts

**Advocacy +
Community Action**

Established in 1886 as the first Settlement House in the United States, we bring the values of that movement into the 21st century by:

- Fighting poverty and systemic inequality with responsive programs & advocacy
- Engaging all members of our community, from newborns to elders
- Joyfully nurturing the whole person by addressing basic needs including food, education, culture, learning, and community.



**We operate 30+ sites
in Lower Manhattan
and Brooklyn.**

SOME DOORS INTO OUR HOUSE

- All-Ages Comprehensive Programming
- Early Childhood Programming
- Youth Programming
- Older Adults Programming

1) 184 Eldridge

Our mental health clinicians identified a critical gap in access to long-term mental health supports for domestic violence (DV) survivors entering safe housing, and they partnered with New Destiny Housing to build a streamlined and supportive referral process. In 2024, we connected more than 180 survivors to our comprehensive care – and won a \$250k grant from New York State to expand this work to additional partner organizations.



2) and 3) Dr. Susan S. McKinney Secondary School of the Arts, 101 Park Ave, Brooklyn; and East Side Community School, 420 E 12th St, Manhattan

Research demonstrates that emotional well-being is a key driver of academic success. At our two partner high schools, University Settlement's Wellness Bridge connected more than 200 students to mental health resources including individual and family therapy, social emotional workshops, parent support, and crisis avoidance, supporting their journey to graduation and onward to college!



4) Campos Plaza, 611 East 13th Street, Manhattan

Great first jobs set young people up for success. In 2024, our Youth & Community programs employed 20 high school students as paid interns in collaboration with Ladders for Leaders. Our interns gained valuable professional experience while serving our communities.



5) G.R.E.E.N.E. Center, 329 Myrtle Ave, Brooklyn

G.R.E.E.N.E. (Generating Real Empathy, Encouraging Nonviolent Engagement) is University Settlement teaming up with Switching Lifestylez to interrupt gun violence and keep Fort Greene neighbors connected and safe. G.R.E.E.N.E. also connects youth to job training and job opportunities and hosts a wide variety of events where community members of all ages can gather to celebrate culture and resilience.



Mental Health + Wellness

We are a leader in integrating robust mental health approaches into all our programs, democratizing access to emotional support and combating stigma. Our culturally sensitive professionals provide high-quality supports ranging from “light touches” to psychiatric services to **nearly 8,000 people** in our communities, helping individuals and families navigate the challenges life can present.

“My daughter wouldn’t talk to people at school, but we didn’t realize it was autism. It took years for her to be diagnosed, and we didn’t know how to handle it. But Baiyang from University Settlement, who worked with us, treated us like neighbors and it made me feel very warm. The people here make me feel like they care about what my family is going through, not just completing tasks. I sincerely hope that other families facing difficulties can be guided out of their struggles.”

– Ms. Chen, parent, Children & Family Treatment and Support Services (CFTSS)

Adult English Classes

Every year, **more than 450 people** build their English skills and knowledge of how to navigate life in New York with us, and more than 80% of our students advance by at least one English language level. Going beyond language instruction, our program helps students acquire valuable communication, technology, and lifelong learning skills, so our graduates can be more effective at home, at work, and in their communities.

“The settlement house model, and all the wrap-around services University Settlement offers, ensure that students are getting their needs addressed, and also uplifting what they’ve already had, what they brought over from their home countries.”

– Lucian Leung, Director, Adult Literacy Program



Housing & Financial Stability

Project Home combats homelessness by partnering with housing-insecure tenants to prevent evictions and by advocating for safe and affordable housing for all New Yorkers.

*"In 2024, **1,012 family members** were more stably housed because of our work, and we kept our neighbors in their homes in **more than 94% of the cases we took on.**"*

– Kayan Chiu, Director, Project Home

Early Childhood Education

Our early childhood education programs spark the imaginations of **more than 900 young learners in our neighborhoods, working to narrow the opportunity gap and ensure that every child is prepared for kindergarten and beyond.**

"[Early Head Start] is not just for your kid, it's for your family, it's for the growth of your family. It's making sure that you get the best possible outcome when your child is in the school and outside of it. It's opened up my eyes... This school will provide my child with what he needs to grow: mentally, physically, emotionally, and allow him to be the child he is."

– Sheena, parent, Early Head Start Home-Based Program

Youth Development + Community Centers

Our youth programs center young people's voices and choices, engaging **more than 6,000 children and young adults to create safe, fun, purpose-driven environments where they can explore their interests and begin building their futures.**

*"At College Passport, we worked with **more than 1,100 students** last year, many of whom will be the first people in their families to go to college. For our students, access to education is their best chance to break generational cycles of poverty. It's also our society's best hope for seeing their full human potential expressed."*

– Bintou Sankareh, Director, College Passport



Arts

Just like nutrition and education, creativity is fundamental to human thriving, and ensuring that it is accessible for our neighbors is a central pillar of our mission. In 2024, **nearly 13,000 people** participated in free or low-cost art activities through the Creative Center and the Performance Project.

"My work with the Performance Project was about immigrant stories. I am an immigrant myself, and I interviewed students from the Adult Literacy program and incorporated their stories into my work. Connecting with the community and incorporating new thoughts and new stories expanded the work in a beautiful way. As an artist, it was beneficial for me to connect with the community - and it's also beneficial for the community to see itself depicted in the work."

- Faustine Lavie, former Artist-in-Residence, The Performance Project @ University Settlement



Advocacy + Community Action

Community action is at the heart of our story, and we have partnered with our neighbors in efforts to create a fairer society for 139 years. Through advocacy, we secure access to resources for **thousands of our neighbors**, supporting policies that help build a New York City that works for everyone.

"In 2024, our advocacy focused on NYC contracting and payments, #JustPay for human services workers, and needed expansions of services for children, young people, and older adults."

- Jennifer Vallone, Associate Executive Director, Arts, Adults, and Advocacy

Programs for Older Adults

University Settlement's programs for adults over 60 first ensure that our older neighbors have their basic needs met and then go further to engage bodies, minds, and spirits. In 2024, Wellness Together, our program for homebound older adults, expanded significantly to engage **up to 1,000 of our neighbors**.

"Programs like this are an example of the good things that happen in this neighborhood. I know that I can reach out any time I need some support, and your team is very good at getting back to me. If I have a challenge, or if there's a problem that I'm not sure I can solve on my own, we can figure it out together."

- Jacqueline B., Wellness Together participant



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**In Memoriam*

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Charity Navigator gives University Settlement a 99% score and names us as a Four-Star Charity – their highest rating – based on our financial stability, efficiency, sustainability, and our commitment to strong governance practice and policies.

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