

Our Stories

Project Give Back

Pam Hall, a resident of Barrier Free Living's Transitional Housing Program in 2009, didn't want to just move on in her life, she wanted to give back.

"For me, Barrier Free Living (BFL) was a saving grace. I came to believe that whatever I want to achieve I can, if I work for it. If people say you can't, I say don't believe them," says Pam.

At BFL's Transitional Housing program, Pam gained the confidence and support she needed to get her life on track. Working with BFL's housing specialist she found her own home. She entered and won the Miss Wheelchair NY 2012 pageant and subsequently became Ms. New York American Nation.



She recently returned to the shelter to inspire and encourage current residents to reach for their dreams as a participant in Project Give Back. Pam ran a 6-week Give Back course (thanks to support from the Assurant New Growth Fund) teaching residents to use a loom and make hand-knitted hats and scarves. The course finished with a presentation of the participants' creations.

"Nobody can take from you what you earned. I learned to be an independent person at Barrier Free Living and to reach for my dreams," says Pam.

How to Reach Us

Information about our program eligibility and services are on our website at: www.bflnyc.org

Transitional Housing Shelter
(212) 677-6668

Secret Garden Domestic Violence Program
(212) 533-4358

Video Phone:
(646) 553-4346 (646) 350-2662
Callers with hearing loss can use the
State Relay Service at
711 or (800) 421-1220

Freedom House Domestic Violence Shelter
(212) 400-6470

Barrier Free Living Apartments
929-281-2260 Singles Building
929-281-2270 Family Building

Occupational Therapy Services
(212) 677-6668 (Ext. 145)



How You Can Help

Reach us at: info@bflnyc.org.

Volunteer, donate or join our team.

Learn about becoming a sponsor, what jobs are currently open, or how to donate your time.

Barrier Free Living

*Helping people with disabilities
help themselves, since 1981.*



Safe Shelter
Counseling
Advocacy
Hope

*We work with homeless and formerly homeless people
with disabilities and survivors of domestic violence
with disabilities and their children.*

Our Programs

Barrier Free Living Apartments



Thomas Obrzut, program director, with tenants, Thanksgiving, 2015.

Barrier Free Living Apartments, our newest vision in the Bronx, opened in the summer of 2015. Our two-building complex of 120 apartments provides safe, accessible homes to families whose head of household is a survivor of domestic violence and who has a disability. We also have studios for single survivors of domestic violence with a disability and veterans with disabilities. Our in-house support services include counseling, occupational therapy and support groups for adults and children.

Freedom House Domestic Violence Shelter

A domestic violence shelter bringing men, women, and families with disabilities from crisis to safety. At the shelter, we provide counseling for both adults and children, safety planning and assistance in finding housing.



Secret Garden Domestic Violence Program

We offer trauma-focused counseling, support groups, advocacy, case management, referrals (e.g. legal assistance) and safety planning for survivors of domestic violence with a disability (including Deaf/Hard of Hearing).



Transitional Housing Shelter

A homeless shelter for 48 disabled homeless men and women. Our team works with residents to find permanent and accessible housing and to develop the skills needed to pursue their life goals.



Occupational Therapy

Our Occupational Therapy team works with every program to help residents and participants develop or recover daily living skills such as cooking, financial management, parenting, or skills related to finding work.



Our Stories

Renewed Hope

The day Olga found a safe haven at Barrier Free Living's Freedom House Domestic Violence Shelter for herself and her three children is a moment she will forever cherish.

That moment, however, was only the beginning of a journey that would take several twists over the next several years. "My abuser beat me up very bad on the street. The police came and took him to jail. That was in 2012," says Olga, who is legally blind. "I went to Freedom House that year and that was the best thing I ever did."

By 2014 Olga had rebuilt her life piece by piece, and her family had moved into their own home. That was also the year her abuser was released from prison.

"He followed us and one day he stabbed me in the chest and tried to kill me," says Olga.

Her abuser again landed in jail, but Olga was

left with a strong desire to not only find safe haven for her family, but also an opportunity to strengthen her commitment to an empowered life.

"I had a call from Paul (Feuerstein, President/CEO of BFL) and Cynthia (Amodeo, Director of Social Services, Freedom House) and they told me about the agency's new Barrier Free Living Apartments. They had a place for me and my family. I was so excited."

Barrier Free Living Apartments opened the summer of 2015, and Olga and her family are one of the families living there as tenants and receiving such support services as counseling and occupational therapy.

BFL Apartments offer 50 family units for families with a disabled head of household who is a victim/survivor of domestic violence and 70 studio apartments for disabled victims/survivors of domestic violence, people with



disabilities who are being diverted from possible nursing home placement and veterans with disabilities.

"My family feels safe. We are learning to be strong and to love ourselves. I am so glad we are here," says Olga, who plans to enroll in a computer class and pursue job related courses.

"I would also like to work with people with a disability and people who have been through things like I went through," says Olga. "I want to send a strong message to people like me. So they can feel what I feel now. That is my goal. To help others."