Nurturing Communities
EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL

OCTOBER 6, 2022 • 6PM • ANNUAL GALA
MARINA DEL REY • 1 MARINA DRIVE • BRONX, NY 10465
Thank you for joining us for our Annual Gala. Our theme, **Nurturing Communities EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL**, speaks to our commitment to providing health and social services throughout New York to vulnerable and at-risk communities for 48 years. This is celebrated in 2022 by the addition of a dental clinic and an expansion of shelters in Brooklyn, Queens, and East Harlem.

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Dear Friends:

Thank you for joining our “Nurturing the Community” Gala. Congratulations to our distinguished honoree Larry Scott Blackmon, our award recipient Tomas Ramos, and Dr. Amanda Parsons for your exceptional support during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our gala is an opportunity to come together after more than two years of adjusting to a pandemic that uncovered the magnitude of the local and national disparities. The ongoing opioid crisis and the recent influx of asylum seekers to New York City all remind us daily that VIP’s work is needed now more than ever. The Bronx continues to have the highest rates of opioid use and overdose deaths in the city. In July 2022, over 50,000 people, including nearly 17,000 children, were sleeping in a shelter. These situations have resulted in a significant need for mental health services that disproportionately affect communities of color. The path ahead is challenging but necessary. We invite you to join us in our work to rebuild that which is broken and to find new and innovative ways to improve the health of the communities we serve.

How will we respond? We will draw on 48 years of experience and your support to prioritize the community's needs. VIP offers integrated medical, behavioral health, housing, shelter, job preparation and placement, and care coordination services. We operate an Access Center that allows us to provide around-the-clock entry to care for clients with substance use disorders. VIP is one of a handful of Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) in the nation that is also a Certified Community Behavioral Health Center (CCBHC). Our housing and vocational programs have expanded exponentially to add capacity; in addition to our 48-bed women’s shelter in the Bronx, we opened two shelters in Queens, one in Brooklyn, and soon we will open one in Harlem, expanding our capacity to nearly 1,000 beds. We will soon also add 65 units for supportive housing. We recently partnered with two schools in the Bronx to provide on-site mental health services to school children, and we are adding dental services in one of our supportive housing buildings. Additionally, we continue to provide COVID-19 education, testing, and vaccinations in the community, along with other health education and outreach, including HIV and Hepatitis testing.

We are motivated by the people we serve. Most of the clients we serve each year are diagnosed with chronic medical conditions, mental illness and/or substance use disorders. Ninety-four percent live in poverty, 25% are uninsured or underinsured, more than 50% are unemployed, and over 40% did not graduate high school.

Your continued support of VIP will help us change the current healthcare landscape and bring equitable services to the communities devastated by the twin pandemics and other social impediments. We are deeply grateful to our supporters, honoree and award recipients, event committee, development committee (chaired by Salvatore Gogliormella), Board of Directors, and staff, and importantly, to our clients for their trust and partnership.

Respectfully,

William Bifulco
Board Chair

Debbian Fletcher-Blake
Chief Executive Officer

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VIP Continues to Make an Impact

- In response to COVID-19, VIP held over **100 outreach events** and administered more than **9,000 vaccines** in 2021
- We served over **1,700 clients (over 32,000 patient encounters)** in our **Opioid Treatment Program** and obtained a grant to launch a Medicaid Mobile Unit that will serve patients in communities without medication assisted treatment programs
- We opened a shelter in Queens in 2021, and two additional shelters in 2022, one in Brooklyn and another in Queens. In total, **we have nearly 1,000 beds** in our shelters, soon to be increased again when we open a men’s shelter in East Harlem
- One of our recently opened shelters is a **Sanctuary Facility**, that houses nearly 500 adults and children
- Over **2,800 patients received services** through our Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC)
- We provided **HIV and Hepatitis C testing to nearly 70 youth** (ages 13 to 24) via our CBI Team Youth Project, and engaged nearly 160 participants into the program
- We held **job trainings** on resume building, food handling, security, and OSHA site safety for **roughly 250 people**. Each year we hold a job fair, connecting job seekers to employers
- To address the lack of oral health care in the Bronx, VIP will be opening its first **dental clinic** soon.
- Our commitment to the community extends to partnerships and community events, such as our annual **Community Resources, National Night Out** (with the NYPD), **AIDS Walk**, and **Gun Violence Awareness** (with the DA’s Office)
- VIP launched a **veterans’ support group** for clients who served in the military
- We have been approved by the Office of Mental Health to provide **mental health services to children in the school setting in partnership with CS44 and KIPP Freedom School** – the program was launched on September 19, 2022
- We engaged over **675 patients in mental health services**
- In partnership with the American Heart Association and the Community Health Care Association of New York, we launched a **remote blood pressure (BP) monitoring program**. Of the 80 patients who participated in the first year, 60% saw improvement in their baseline BP.
Dear Ms. Rivera,

Congratulations to VIP Community Services, now celebrating 48 years of service to the Bronx!

Since its opening in 1974, VIP has served as a critical resource for thousands that experienced economic hardship in the borough during the 1970’s and 1980’s that cleared neighborhoods, leaving behind rubble strewn lots.

Through VIP’s resiliency, they remained steadfast in their commitment to working with clients despite the shadow that redlining and urban blight cast across our beloved Bronx. But with diligence, faith and hope, VIP continued strong with a belief that better days were yet to come and that every person that crossed their threshold had value that extended beyond their zip code.

While many organizations shut their doors, VIP kept theirs open and saw firsthand the lives restored and thriving through the unique and specific care they continue to offer today.

For maintaining your services through some of the toughest years ever experienced, and your work today in helping our seniors, expecting mothers, survivors of domestic violence, those suffering from addictions, our LGBTQIA+ youths, and others, I join with countless other Bronx residents in saying thank you!

We are grateful for the care you provide and congratulate you, once again, and look forward to many more celebrations like this one!

Sincerely yours,

Vanessa L. Gibson

Bronx Borough President
October 6, 2022

Dear Friends,

I want to offer my heartfelt congratulations to VIP Community Services as they celebrate their 48th anniversary. In the almost five decades since its foundation, VIP Community Services has become an important player of The Bronx's healthcare delivery network. Through its work, this exceptional community organization has provided Bronx residents who suffer from substance abuse disorders the tools and environment needed to ensure their successful treatment and recovery.

I want to congratulate this year's awardees, Larry Scott Blackmon Jr, CEO of the Blackmon Organization as well as Tomas Ramos, Founder and President of the Oyate Group.

As Chair of the Senate Health Committee and a longtime partner of VIP Community Services, I look forward to all the work we will continue doing together and as the theme of this year's gala highlights, nurture our communities through our shared efforts to achieve an equitable and inclusive healthcare system.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Gustavo Rivera
New York State Senate
33rd District
Dear Friends,

It is an honor to join my associates in celebration of VIP Community Services’ 48th anniversary serving the Bronx. For almost half a century, the organization has helped Bronx residents lead healthier and happier lives, and we owe them an immense debt. On behalf of my constituents, I would like to thank VIP for their work.

For this year’s Gala, VIP Community Services has chosen to recognize two individuals: Larry Scott Blackmon for his work fighting hunger and nutritional deficiencies; and Tomas Ramos for his efforts to keep residents healthy during the pandemic. These two individuals are living examples of the excellence our great borough can inspire.

As some may know, many of my political goals center around health and wellness and for this reason, I appreciate the theme of this year’s gala: inclusive and equitable healthcare for the Bronx. It is undeniable that, over the past year, VIP Community Services has been one of the most dependent sources of health resources for underserved members of our community. I choose to support them because they have saved many lives in our borough.

With these words in mind, I take great pleasure celebrating this year’s Gala with VIP Community Services, and I look forward to continuing our work to make the Bronx a better place.

Signed,

Chantel Jackson, LSMW
AD79
Program

COCKTAIL RECEPTION

OPENING
Clifton McPherson, MC

WELCOME
William Bifulco, Board Chair

RECOGNITION AWARD
Amanda Parsons, MD

COMMUNITY BUILDER AWARD
Tomas Ramos

HONOREE
Larry Scott Blackmon

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CLOSING REMARKS
Salvatore Gogliormella, Development Committee Chair

DANCING AND NETWORKING
Clifton McPherson

Professor X (Clifton McPherson) is best known for hosting a weekly show on Primal Media Group (Primal4k.Com Radio). Primal4k is an inclusive internet radio station boasting an array of eclectic programing to reflect the international audience of listeners it attracts and retains in the Caribbean community. He is also an entrepreneur with his own logistic/trucking company for over 21 years. Born in Jamaica West Indies, Professor X quickly rose to become one of today’s most unique and compelling radio personalities. Professor X has been on the radio for over 25 years on various stations (Binghamton University Radio, Hostra Radio and WVIP 93.5 His point of view and celebrity interviews help drive his weekly international conversation about issues related to reggae music and society.

Featured Honorees:

TOMAS RAMOS  LARRY SCOTT BLACKMON  AMANDA PARSONS

Our MC
The 2022 Honoree

Larry Scott Blackmon
CEO, The Blackmon Organization; VP of Public Affairs, FreshDirect

Larry Scott Blackmon leads the Public Affairs division at FreshDirect, the leading e-commerce food grocer, expanding current partnerships, cultivating new relationships, and serving as a key company spokesman. Larry is also the C.E.O. of the Blackmon Organization, a public affairs consulting firm.

Larry’s work builds on FreshDirect’s existing community and charitable partnerships across a variety of issues including fighting hunger, nutrition education, and career development. Larry has 20 years of public service, community development, and government experience. He joined FreshDirect from the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation where he served as the Deputy Commissioner for Community Outreach.
Tomas Ramos is the founder and president of the Oyate Group, an organization dedicated to providing and distributing critical resources across New York City. Driven by his belief that residents of the community he loves deserve to not just survive but to thrive, he is committed to finding sustainable solutions to the challenges they face.

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Tomas temporarily suspended his campaign for New York’s 15th congressional district to support New York’s hardest-hit borough by launching the Bronx Rising Initiative, the first initiative of Oyate Group.
Amanda Parsons, MBA, MD is the Vice President of Clinical Services, Healthfirst; Assistant Professor of Family & Social Medicine, Albert Einstein College of Medicine headquartered in the Bronx. She oversees patient education, employee wellness, and community interventions aimed at improving health and wellness. Prior to that, she was Deputy Commissioner of the Division of Health Care Access and Improvement at the NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) where she oversaw the Primary Care Information Project, Correctional Health Services, Primary Care Access and Planning as well as IT, Finance, Admin and Legal bureaus. Dr. Parsons previously worked for McKinsey & Company as an Engagement Manager serving health care clients. She earned her M.D. and M.B.A from Columbia University. Dr. Parsons is passionate about improving health and health care quality, correctional health and reducing disparities for vulnerable populations.

Dr. Parsons also served on the Board of the Directors of the Vera Institute of Justice, VIP Community Services and the New York eHealth Collaborative, and was on the Chairman’s Council of the New York Restoration Project. She was also selected as one of Crains’ 40 Under 40 Class of 2015. She also served as co-leader of the Mayor’s Task Force on Criminal Justice’s Release Re-entry Workgroup.
Retired as Vice President of VIP in 2003

Dr. Carway was ordained to the priesthood in 1957 and was among the first bi-lingual clergy sent to Puerto Rico to study the Spanish language to better understand people living in inner city communities. He remained a priest for 13 years, until 1970.

John married the love of his life, Carmen, in 1970 – it was a union that would last 52 years. It was also in 1970, that that he assisted Father Louis Gigante in his run for Congress.

Dr. Carway worked with the State of New York, Department of Substance Abuse Services for 24 years. Along the way, he received his PhD in Psychology from St. John’s University. Following his employment with the State of New York, he began a career with VIP Community Services. He retired as Vice President of VIP at age 72.

People who knew John would agree that he never lost his calling to serve people from his years as a Catholic priest. He combined his sense of mission, calm demeanor, years of experience in the area of addiction services, and his training in psychology to become the heart and soul of VIP’s treatment and recovery programs.
In 2005, VIP Community Services opened Albert Walsh Apartments. Over the last 17 years these apartments have served as a valuable homeless shelter for families served by VIP in the Bronx.

These apartments were named after long-time VIP friend and advisor, Albert A. Walsh. Albert Walsh championed the effort to create housing opportunities for low-income New Yorkers and left a lasting legacy of enlightened housing policy and housing development throughout New York City. As chair of the NYC Housing Authority and as Administrator of the Housing Development Administration under Mayor John Lindsay, Mr. Walsh believed that government had the responsibility to provide housing for its poorest citizens. He knew that families would thrive in safe and appropriate homes and, as a result, would contribute to the prosperity of the city.

Mr. Walsh was also a friend and mentor to the late Sandra Ruiz Butter, former President of VIP. Due to that relationship, he was fundamental to the creation, success, and legacy of housing and shelter programs at VIP.
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Larry Scott Blackmon

Tomas Ramos,
Community Builder Award

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Congratulations to our honorees

Honoree

Larry Scott Blackmon

VIP Community Builder Award

Tomas Ramos

Special Recognition

Amanda Parsons

Deep and heartfelt thanks to

The Staff of VIP

For its tireless work and unflinching commitment

With respect and admiration for the courageous clients of VIP

Derek Dorn

&

Salvatore Gogliormella
Congratulations to 2022’s VIP Honorees

Larry Scott Blackmon | Honoree
Tomas Ramos | VIP Community Builder Award
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LAURA PARSONS

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48TH ANNIVERSARY GALA

We Appreciate Your Ongoing Support and Commitment to the VIP Mission

October 6, 2022
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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE HONOREES

We are grateful to all the staff at VIP for continuing to exceed expectations and provide an amazing experience to both consumers and the Bronx Community

Dana & Neil Leibowitz
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VIP COMMUNITY SERVICES

and congratulate the honorees
Larry Scott Blackmon
and Tomas Ramos

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CEO, THE BLACKMON ORGANIZATION;
VP OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, FRESHDIRECT
HONOREE

AMANDA PARSONS
VICE PRESIDENT OF CARE
MANAGEMENT, HEALTHFIRST
SPECIAL RECOGNITION
Montefiore Einstein is proud to support the 2022 VIP Community Services Gala, Nurturing Communities. We salute your 48-year history of providing equitable and inclusive services to communities in the Bronx and now across New York City.

Congratulations to all the honorees.
Thank you to the staff and board of VIP. We appreciate your amazing commitment and outstanding service to the community.

Sincerely,
John and Danielle Nero
Congratulations To This Year’s Community Builder Award Recipient
Tomas Ramos

When we lift up the most vulnerable neighbors, we lift up the entire nation.

~ Tomas Ramos
Founder of the Oyate Group

Our Gratitude To VIP Community Services

The Oyate Group's Rising Initiatives

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provides to improve the lives of
the men and women of our New York City community.

Congratulations to this year’s Honorees,
Larry Scott Blackmon and Tomas Ramos

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We at Good Eats are enthusiastic about the possibilities within our collaboration with VIP. Together, we plan to build a job training program where people can gain the skills and confidence to transition out of the shelter system. We look forward to growing with VIP.
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VIP Community Services
2022 Gala

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Thank you to all staff for your hard work, dedication, and commitment to VIP.

Much appreciation to VIP’s Board of Directors for your continuous support and guidance.

Much gratitude to all VIP partners, supporters, donors, and friends for allowing us to continue providing services to our patients and the Communities we serve.

DEBBIAN FLETCHER-BLAKE, CEO
VIP Community Services
COMMENDS

VIP Community Services

at its

Annual Gala
“Nurturing Communities – Equitable and Inclusive Healthcare for All”

We also congratulate the Honorees

Larry Scott Blackmon
CEO, Blackmon Organization &
Leads the Public Affairs Division of FreshDirect

Tomas Ramos
Founder and President, Oyate Group

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VIP Community Services, Inc

on their 48-year history of demonstrating continued support to under-resourced communities across the city.

Congratulations to tonight’s honorees: Larry Scott Blackmon and Tomas Ramos

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VIP COMMUNITY SERVICES ANNUAL GALA

Nurturing Communities: Equitable and Inclusive Health Care for All
A SPECIAL
CONGRATULATIONS TO
ALL 2022 HONOREES

Larry Scott Blackmon
Tomas Ramos
Amanda Parsons

Best wishes and continued
success to all
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Wishing

VIP Community Services
continued success
thank you for all you do in
our community

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CONGRATULATIONS VIP ON ANOTHER INCREDIBLE YEAR!

Many thanks to the wonderful VIP staff & leadership, the dedicated board, and the amazing patients.

- Amanda Parsons -
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Ponce Bank was born in The Bronx in 1960, where our Puerto Rican founders saw nothing but the potential of proud, diverse neighborhoods, anchored by a strong immigrant work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit.

Today, we are a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) & a Minority Depository Institution (MDI), promoting social, health, economic and climate equity for all our neighbors.

Ponce Bank. Dreamers Welcome.
RUTH DELORES SMITH

Support of VIP’s 2022 Gala, made in memory of Father Robert Banome, Founder of VIP & Sandra Ruiz Butter, his successor

Continuing the founder’s vision and taking it to the next level.

For their vision and commitment and for their willingness to fight for equity for members of the community.

May they rest in peace knowing their work continues as VIP grows under new visionary leadership.

“IF YOU CAN’T RUN, THEN WALK, IF YOU CAN’T WALK, THEN CRAWL, BUT ALL MEANS, KEEP MOVING.”
- MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

VIP IS KEEPING IT MOVING!
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Tress Capitol Advisors congratulates VIP Community Services on their 2022 Annual Gala and Gala Honorees Larry Scott Blackmon, Tomas Ramos and Amanda Parsons.
CONGRATULATIONS TO VIP’S 2022 HONOREES

Larry – Tomas – Amanda

&

Thank You VIP

For

48 Years of Service to the Bronx Community

The Trust Family
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Nancy & John Johansem
Jane & Richard Ryan
Cindy & Kevin Cassady
Matt Trust & Mathias Maisonnier
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Congratulations to Honorees
Larry Scott Blackmon
Tomas Ramos, Community Builder Award
Amanda Parsons, Special Recognition

Humanizing the Digital Healthcare Experience

Congratulations to Healthfirst’s Amanda Parsons, M.D., and all the 2022 honorees!

NTT DATA supports a holistic approach to health and wellbeing.
Urban Health Plan salutes VIP Community Services and celebrates Nurturing Communities Equitable and Inclusive Healthcare for All

Congratulations to all of the 2022 Honorees:

Tomas Ramos
Founder/President
The Oyate Group

Larry Scott Blackmon
CEO, The Blackmon Organization
VP Of Public Affairs, FreshDirect

Amanda Parsons
VP, Clinical Services
Healthfirst

PHOENIX HOUSES
OF NEW YORK AND LONG ISLAND
congratulates

DEBBIAN FLETCHER-BLAKE
for her exemplary service to
VIP Community Services

We celebrate all of the dynamic honorees!

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<td>In memory of Father Robert Banome &amp; Sandra Ruiz Butter</td>
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<td>In loving memory of D. John Carway</td>
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<td>In loving memory of Alexis Heron</td>
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<td>In honor of Dr. Amanda Parsons and Debbian Fletcher-Blake</td>
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Thank You!