

LIVE OUT LOUD
PRESENTS THE 17TH ANNUAL

Young Leaders Start Here.
Give back and Advocate.

Young Gala Trailblazers
June 11th
The Times Center
New York City

LIVEOUT LOUD
For more information please visit our website at www.liveoutloud.info

Home | Calendar | Contests & Sweepstakes | Our Staff | In Print | Get updates | Ad Info
 Classified Advertising | Jobs

Search in site...

The People That
You Meet When
You're Walking
Down the Street —
Or Avenue

Chelseanow



The Good, the Bad
and the Groovy:
Rediscovering the
Music of Hugo
Montenegro

HOME NEWS EDITORIAL HEALTH WHY PINK? ARTS SPECIAL SECTIONS JOBS ADVERTISE
 Calendar Contests & Sweepstakes Our Staff In Print Get updates Ad Info Classified Advertising Jobs Wednesday, May 30, 2018

Neighbors Say BRC Clients Harass, Intimidate

Added by admin on May 15, 2013.
 Saved under News

Share This Post

15
 Like Tweet

BY WINNIE McCROY | Almost two years have passed since the Bowery Residents' Committee (BRC) opened their 12-story, 328-bed homeless shelter at 127 West 25th Street (between Sixth and Seventh Avenues) — and while the BRC continues to rehabilitate the homeless as well as those with substance abuse problems and mental illness, some neighbors say they have had enough of the street harassment and quality of life infringements.



Photo by Scott Stiffler

This BRC vehicle frequently shares space outside the facility with an ambulance and police cruiser — but neighbors say rude and intimidating clients are also a constant presence.

“Since our doors on 25th Street first opened in 2011, BRC has appreciated the support of so many in the community, as we work together successfully to provide a hand up to those in need,” BRC Executive Director Lawrence “Muzzy” Rosenblatt told Chelsea Now. “We have and will continue to work with our neighbors, our community leaders, elected officials and government agencies to maintain the highest standards of excellence and collaboration, in service to our clients and to the community.”

According to Rosenblatt's statistics, the BRC “graduates” about four clients per day, moving them on to housing, employment or further treatment. For the months of January through March, Rosenblatt cited “388 positive client outcomes.” This puts this shelter (along with other BRC facilities) at the top of Department of Homeless Services' Adult Services Performance Incentives Results Card.

“It's much harder to see the success stories, because they are the ones who leave the block, who have graduated and are integrated into society,” said Rosenblatt. “We are going to do the work we do, and work to improve upon it.”

Rosenblatt views it as forward-thinking to have an ambulance and police cruiser parked in front of BRC's doors, to more easily respond to the recurrent incidents among the average population

Socialize



Sponsored Content

DTV Installations LLC
 SMART HOME FOR SMART PEOPLE
 Since 2007

Kick off Pride Month at the
2018 Community Leadership Awards & Gala!
 June 14th 6:30–11:30 pm
 26 Bridge St., Brooklyn NY
 Dinner, Drinks & Dancing!
Get Tickets Now!

All proceeds directly support activities at
brooklyn COMMUNITY PRIDE CENTER
igotbrooklyn.org

Artwork by
 12th & Ave

of 400 daily clients (including outpatients) that the shelter serves. The latest figures estimate 38 incidents for the month, both EMS- and NYPD-assisted cases.

FROM OUR SISTER NEWSPAPERS

Although some view this number as excessive, Community Board 4 (CB4) District Manager Bob

Sufatto noted, "A population like this is going to have a lot of medical issues"

LOCALS ACCUSE BRC RESIDENTS OF ONGOING HARASSMENT

Si It rained on their parade, but they danced on

B) We got the ball rolling; How Pr. 40 fight brought us Hudson River

Currently, four time posts several dozen videos or images of BRC clients engaged

in From splintered piers to fancy park of today, we've come a long way

In the great outdoors, they don't a man in a wheelchair blocks a man in a suit w

pe Keeping cool on the West Side, 1940s style

M Fish, forests and fields coming to Tribeca pier

themselves. The only thing I might add is that it wasn't like this in the ten year

back prior to the BRC's arrival."

DOWNTOWN EXPRESS

Lazarus said he had confirmed with Rosenblatt that most of the videos depict

herding such a huge shelter on the block. People come every night in the hope

ni Cacophony of colors brings harmony at Governors Island Holi Hai

nc celebration

La Wave vs. glacier: Slow pace of resiliency plans will leave Downtown

la at risk for many years to come

Tl Once upon a moral panic...

se All booked up: CB1 worries zoning change will push more hotels into

sa crowded Downtown

When asked to respect the govt program and its responsibility, Rosenblatt encourage

incident to the police. Gallagher-Lilly replied that she had called the police, but that the harasser

left the area before they arrived.

HOME CALENDAR CONTESTS & SWEEPSTAKES OUR STAFF IN PRINT GET UPDATES AD INFO CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING JOBS RSS

"Your lack of interest, responsibility and response to the concerns of the neighbors regarding your clients who are in crisis is alarming," she wrote to Rosenblatt. "You lied to all of us when you said that your clients would be adequately monitored and that there would be no loitering on our street...if anyone is hurt by your clients, it will be your fault."

LOCAL VOLUNTEERS SPEAK IN SUPPORT OF ROSENBLATT AND THE BRC

Some local residents — notably those who have spent time volunteering at the BRC — are quick to defend Rosenblatt's methods and clientele. CB4 Member Pamela Wolff told Chelsea Now that she was aware of Gallagher-Lilly's allegations, adding, "Very few of these cases have turned out to be residents of the BRC, and those who are have been removed immediately. There are a number of other shelters in different boroughs for homeless people with various kinds of problems in residences that are focused specifically toward handling those populations."

Wolff said that during her time as a member of the BRC's Community Advisory Committee, she had heard from Rosenblatt of the initial education BRC clients are given upon intake, outlining their expected behavior while in the shelter.

"I know there are legitimate problems around the facility and the civil rights of the clients, but they have a right to be on the street," added Wolff. "It may not be a presence most people want to see, but they have as much a right to be there as anyone else."

Shelter volunteer and longtime area resident Muriel Beach agreed, remembering the large number of homeless people she said used to flock to the area in the '60s. Wolff said that before the shelter opened, these homeless people would sleep in doorways and under stoops. Now, at least, this population is off the street and getting some help for their problems.

"These guys live on the street. They have nothing. Give them some slack," said Beach. "Also, most of these men are black, and I think race has a lot to do with it. When I emailed [Chelsea residents] to say that I felt safer now that there were people on the block at night, I got the nastiest replies you ever heard."

However, numerous local residents and business owners have raised concerns about the quality of life issues that the shelter has created since opening. They have taken these issues to

GAY CITY NEWS

Sheltering Homeless Youth 21-24 Gets \$1MM in New City Budget

Connie Kurtz, Lesbian Activist, Artist, Dies at 82

Albany LGBTQI Advocacy Day Draws 250

Band of Brothers

HOP: Nabe Complaints Led to New Parade Route

EAST VILLAGER NEWS

Among powerful friends, Chin enters her second term

Top cop says special unit, outreach can cut thefts

Muscle-headed gym keeps flouting regs with illegal signage

Judge says city broke the law by approving N.Y.U. superblocs plan

De Blasio seems on same page with evicted news vendor

Advertisement for Guardianships, Trusts & Estates, (212) 867-3520, burnerlaw.com

Rosenblatt, to CB4 and to their local elected officials.

City Council Speaker Christine Quinn has long expressed her opinion that the size of the shelter is too big, even signing on to a lawsuit that argues that the BRC's 328 beds violates the city's Administrative Code that limits shelter residences to 200 beds. In response to recent requests from Chelsea Now, the Speaker's office has noted that they are working to address these ongoing concerns.

"Speaker Quinn and her staff continue to work with community stakeholders to ensure that relations between the shelter and the neighborhood are respectful, addressing any and all concerns when they arise," said Zoe Tobin on behalf of Speaker Quinn's office.

Rosenblatt acknowledged that many of his clients who have just left jail or lost their home are angry and don't like being told what to do. But he also said that for those unwilling to get with the program, less savory alternatives were readily available.

"If they won't work to achieve the goals we have at BRC, they can go to a place where they don't have goals," said Rosenblatt, referring to some of the city's lower-ranking shelters. But this is cold comfort for local residents, in light of the steady influx of homeless, mentally ill men who flock to the block. Said Benfatto, "I know they are frustrated and I understand their frustration, but [Rosenblatt] chose to put the shelter there, so he becomes the target."

ATTEMPTS THWARTED TO HIRE ADDITIONAL SECURITY?

Rosenblatt has touted the transparency of his work and the BRC since before it even opened, and has made attempts to address issues around the shelter — to an extent. In response to community concerns, Rosenblatt has worked with CB4 and the Speaker's office in an attempt to hire off-duty NYPD paid detail to patrol 25th Street. Several off-record sources said that Commissioner Ray Kelly had rejected this proposal (apparently, most of these paid detail occurs indoors, at venues such as department stores and special events).

"My understanding is that BRC has not gotten a yes or no on that, so I don't know where it stands," said Benfatto. "The 13th Precinct commander did support the idea, so I don't know why the Commissioner hasn't supported it. It seemed like a good solution to the problem." Wolff added that the request went up the chain of command with the support of the community, but was denied after a year, adding, "This block has been treated badly by the police department."

Commissioner Kelly also denied proposals to redraw boundary lines (aka "coterminality") so that the BRC would fall under the auspices of the 10th Precinct — the headquarters of which are located on West 20th Street, much closer to the shelter than the zoned 13th Precinct offices, which are way over on the east side of town.

"We were trying to change the boundary lines but Kelly denied our request," said Borock. "We wanted the BRC to become part of the 10th Precinct, which is closer and makes for better service. But we can still pursue it with the new mayor and police commissioner. Quinn is running for election, and with all these people upset about it, she might cull together a task force and call a mini-summit with CB4 and representatives from the shelter, to look at the controversy and problems that still exist."

Rosenblatt has said that the BRC is constantly monitoring their clients via regular sweeps of the block, and is adapting new strategies so that these sweeps don't become predictable. Across the board, community members appear to be supportive of efforts to install additional street security officers, be they paid NYPD officers, private security guards or even just additional BRC employees patrolling the block.

"The presence of authorities is important, so perhaps we can look at other alternatives," said Dale Riehl from the BRC-adjacent business, The City Quilter.

CITY COUNCIL AWAITS APPEAL IN ONGOING LAWSUIT

From the very beginning, many residents and business owners were opposed to the BRC building such a large shelter in Chelsea. Even before clients occupied the building, an ad hoc group called the Chelsea Flatiron Coalition had mounted a lawsuit (Chelsea Business & Property Owners Assoc. v. City of New York) charging that the BRC violated the City's Administrative Code § 21-312, which limits homeless shelters to 200 beds — opposing their definition of the shelter as a "transient hotel" and maintaining that the shelter violated the area's M1-6 zoning district (which does not permit medical facilities).

The New York City Council shared this opinion. In August 2011, it cited the excessive size as a violation of city policy. New York State Supreme Court Justice Joan A. Madden ruled in February 2011 against a preliminary injunction to prevent the shelter from opening, but she did allow the City Council to intervene in the case. In the Council's legal memo, they argue that the BRC's operation of a shelter this size "reflects either ignorance or arrogance that cannot be excused by its financial interest in operating an oversized shelter."

Speaker Quinn has held fast to her belief that "this proposed facility exceeds the legal limit of beds. A super-sized warehouse style shelter is a disservice to both the homeless and the

community-at-large.” CB4 shares this opinion. “The problem is the size,” said Benfatto. “The Board’s position has always been that more than 200 beds in a shelter building is too many. We haven’t changed that opinion. Even if it runs great, the excess beds will cause problems. Lots of shelters have 60-80 beds, and we don’t get that many problems. The BRC is well-run, but it’s too big.”

Wolff was not blind to the quality of life issues the BRC has caused, but she did speak against malicious allegations some area residents have made against Rosenblatt for the behavior of his clients. “He’s responsible, very devoted to the facility and people it serves,” said Wolff. “It is his mission, and clearly it is his life. I have the deepest respect for that, and believe it is entirely genuine, despite slurs cast at him.” She added, however, that Rosenblatt has to balance being responsive to the community and protecting the civil rights of his clients, noting, “I guess that’s the rub — people in neighborhood want him to have full police powers to go out and handle it. But he is here to rescue people and establish them as functioning, viable, useful members of society.”

Borock said that Wolff had always been more accepting of the shelter than his group. “This should have been a decision that was reached between the BRC and the local neighborhood to come to an acceptable compromise,” he maintained. “It shouldn’t have been built before this consensus was reached, and there should be no legal questions about whether it is or isn’t technically a hotel, just to get around certain zoning restrictions.”

Over time, the lawyers have changed and details of the cases have been altered, but oral arguments on the City Council’s case were held in late January, and the case now sits in Appellate Division First Judicial Department, under appeal. For the time being, Chelsea residents must find a way to coexist with their new neighbors, whether they like it or not.

“This is not a city-run shelter. It’s a non-profit, so they don’t have to listen to the community saying that there are too many people,” said Borock. “But they do get their funding from city services, and this could be a means to have the city sit down with them and say that this is all is too much, and that the BRC has to do something about it. The BRC company line says they will handle patrols and security. But in the meantime, the community suffers.”

Comments



NIMBY

says:

May 15, 2013 at 3:02 pm

So over the top. Of course Muzzy wants to make money and of course the shelter is way too big and completely ILLEGAL. Chris Quinn NEVER stood up for residents when we were trying to stop the BRC from opening such a huge and illegal facility. She barely puts her name on it anything that takes a stand. Quinn could have had an impact but was politically driven not to. As a lifelong New Yorker I have never been so disappointed in our mayor, city council, and legal system that allowed such an illegal thing to open. We were thrown to the wolves and I resent it mightily as a resident trying to live peacefully on this block. Shame on Bloomberg and Chris Quinn. (Notice there are no shelters on their residential blocks.) Now — I would NEVER vote for Quinn for mayor. She failed badly and I am pissed. It really cost me. No more donations to anything homeless. I have donated too much UNwillingly and most importantly UNFAIRLY!! All my donations now go to animal shelters, for 4-legged animals, not 2-legged. Signed, NIMBY



Wolff has Dementia

says:

May 16, 2013 at 5:53 pm

I concur! Quinn has been a complete FAILURE on this issue and so many others. Our neighborhood was thrown to the dogs without any support from Quinn, our elected official who is supposed to represent our district. This is a complete outrage — sticking 400 mentally ill and drug afflicted men at our doorstep. Just last night one of the residents was rolling a joint by the light of our doorway. WHEN WILL THIS END? WHEN SOMEONE GETS SEVERELY HURT? St. Vincents, CLOSED, BRC OPENS. You can bet as long as it’s illegal and lucrative, you will get Quinn’s attention. If only she’d stop promoting herself she might accomplish something!



andrew8665

says:

May 27, 2013 at 3:16 am

BRC is an extension of the Prison system, mixed with street thugs who have been thrown out there homes. There is very little difference between the staff and the clients and unless your of color, Transexual, or a freak of some sort, your treated like garbage 24 7 by EVERYBODY

there. Staff included- will be Racist towards you every time there is a problem. The bathroom stalls are Drug dens where drugs and masterbation happen 24 7 in every dorm, and theft is a contest. I could go on and on and on, since I stayed there I know, I wont because I am getting sick to my gut— Sorry folks unless the person there is SLOW or RETARDED there are there because there are no good- Thats the truth— UUCCKK- enough- If there is evil to be found volunteer there for a couple of days and find out for you self.....



antonio

says:

August 21, 2013 at 1:59 pm

i live at this brc and i can tell you this much its all an scam !



Bob

says:

May 15, 2013 at 6:01 pm

Quinn failed to help with our fight against our greedy landlord Laurence Gluck here in Tribeca as he took Independence Plaza out of the Mitchell Lama program and proceeded to systematically harass the long time tenants out of the building so he could re-rent their apartments and charge ridiculous market rates. Quinn was useless and by her inaction, she helped Gluck devastate so many middle income folks. I will never vote for her.



C Quinn

says:

May 15, 2013 at 7:51 pm

HEY NIMBY – you are a racist idiot.



NIMBY

says:

May 16, 2013 at 7:51 am

C Quinn – That was articulate. NIMBY.



C Quinn

says:

May 18, 2013 at 6:06 pm

Yes move out the poor; don't let anyone who cannot afford million dollar homes in Manhattan! It's your island right? People don't deserve a place to live? give your money to animal shelter! Sir you sound like an idiot and a racist. Not in your back yard; then the question is where? Outer boroughs is generally the answer you and the lower iq racists say.



andrew8665

says:

May 27, 2013 at 3:27 am

BRC is an extension of the Prison system, mixed with street thugs who have been thrown out there homes.

There is very little difference between the staff and the clients and unless your of color, Transexual, or a freak of some sort, your treated like garbage 24 7 by EVERYBODY there. Staff included- will be Racist towards you every time there is a problem. The bathroom stalls are Drug dens where drugs and masterbation happen 24 7 in every dorm, and theft is a contest. I could go on and on and on, since I stayed there I know, I wont because I am getting sick to my gut— Sorry folks unless the person there is SLOW or RETARDED there are there because there are no good- Thats the truth— UUCCKK- enough- If there is evil to be found volunteer there for a couple of days and find out for you self.....



antonio

says:

August 21, 2013 at 2:01 pm

FACTS ! I have lived there for the last 6 months !

**Walter77777**

says:

May 16, 2013 at 9:32 am

It might be nice if the C Quinn post was investigated to see if it was really posted by Christine Quinn. I suspect it wasn't.

W.

**FYI**

says:

May 16, 2013 at 1:15 pm

FYI: Pamela Wolff and Muriel Beach are not actual residents or business owners on the block of W 25th Street between 6th/7th Avenues yet insist they're experts on the 24/7 happenings on the block as well as issues introduced by this "shelter" and drug abuse/methadone clinic (or is it three shelters? as Muzzy positions it enabling him to skirt the law limiting shelters to 200 beds).

Wolff and Beach's attendance at the monthly BRC Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings serves as an ongoing infuriating distraction. At each CAC meeting these women divert attention from discussing genuine quality-of-life issues and illegal activities of BRC residents. When 25th Street residents and business owners, residing within arm's length of the BRC front door, voice concerns at the CAC meetings both Wolff and Beach strike-back with absurdities such as Beach's brazen comment suggesting that upset residents are racist: "most of these men are black, and I think race has a lot to do with it." Shame on you, Muriel, you are dead wrong. Shame on you.

**FYI**

says:

May 16, 2013 at 1:16 pm

The issues and concerns mentioned in this article from Maggie Gallagher-Lilly, Jeff Lazarus (both are actual residents on the block) and Bob Benfatto are genuine. The city, Ray Kelly, Department of Homeless Services and the BRC should be held accountable. Would be great if Wolff and Beach kept to their own blocks and allowed actual BRC neighbors to "find a way to coexist with [our] new neighbors, whether [we] like it or not"

**dmarie**

says:

May 16, 2013 at 2:02 pm

Christine Quinn is useless to the residences of Chelsea but, she's a big supporter of real estate developers with hefty campaign contributions (I wonder how much she get from BRC or there affiliates) I feel for the residents and business owners of 25th st. That block is just dangerous and I avoid it at all cost....

**No Friends of Mine**

says:

May 16, 2013 at 6:28 pm

Pamela Wolff and Muriel Beach do not live on the block, but they both do share something else. They are both senile. I am guessing that they are both racists too-but maybe it is just Muriel. What loaded, unfounded and irresponsible comments- I am African American and I live on the block. This is a matter of safety, for me, my children and my wife (who is white). Muriel Beach, I invite you to come over tonight, at about 10. I am sure you will feel very safe with drug addicts and the mentally ill (who are pink, green and magenta) who take over our street en masse.

**Really.....**

says:

May 27, 2013 at 7:18 pm

Yes, at 10pm is exactly when all types of degenerates from all over the city come to Chelsea.....TO PARTY!!! (Wearing pink, green and magenta)
Did it ever cross your mind that moving your family to a historically known CLUB area would bring you closer to displays of public drunkenness, urination, drug culture, and all forms of wild behavior. Up until the time it recently shut down The Shadow Nightclub was being blamed for all the mayhem in this neighborhood for years. (<http://www.change.org/petitions/close-shadow-night-club>). Now that it is out business its time to refocus on this homeless shelter? And if that gets shut down believe me the finger pointers will find someone else to blame. Grow up, you live in

New York City, love it or leave it!

**No Friends of Mine**

says:

July 1, 2013 at 1:12 am

Dear Really, a real @\$\$no doubt. I have lived on this block for 12 years. I love our club revelers, I was one of them! I am talking about a 24-7 swell of drugging and other inappropriate behavior at my doorstep. Grow the F up yourself. Last time I checked, adults have the right to peace and safety at their home.

**Janis Gunn**

says:

August 8, 2013 at 6:01 pm

Just wondering about the guy who jumped from the buildings rooftop, 13 stories, to his death....? No news coverage for that one eh? Oh?! My bad.... Who cares? You so-called newspaper people are totally L. A. M. E.

**Wren**

says:

August 8, 2013 at 6:07 pm

That is such a lie about MUZZY being "forward thinking" in having an ambulance and cop cruiser outside this place! I work across the street, it's a chore walking to my office through the groups of men standing around smoking and carrying on like this is some kind of night club! NO WHERE in the news do we see how a young man of 19 years old jumped to his death from the (clearing my throat) 13 story building on W. 25th Street, throwing out money on his way down to his death right in front of our UPS Man, who, by the way, is STILL Traumatized! The cops and ambulances roll up to this place DAILY and sometimes MULTIPLE TIMES! There are drugs being dealt, booze being drank and women being hit on, in BROAD DAYLIGHT! Thanks a lot BRC! This is a neighborhood buzzing during business hours with all of the companies on the block, hustling and bustling, Nanny's walking with babies, Blind people walking to take their service dogs out to relieve themselves. The theft rate has climbed at the local CVS on 6th Avenue and W. 25th Street thanks to these loiterers. Even stealing bags from a local merchant and turning around and returning the goods in the bags for CASH! This is true, and someone needs to shine a bright light on this time bomb over here! We that are on this block are concerned with the fact that every incident that happens over here seems to get swept under the rug. Is the BRC paying off the NYPD??? I heard rumor that this place, BRC, was Bloomberg's cash cow. Every homeless person they collect off the street and bring over here that stays, the city gets 3 grand a month! Some reporter really needs to look into this serious situation.

**antonio holmes**

says:

August 21, 2013 at 2:11 pm

I have been living at this same brc for the last 6 months and there has never been any security on the roof of brc on 25th street, ANGEL NUMEZ could had been saved, but as usual muzzy dropped the ball again.

Those people at that brc don't give a f#ck about the homeless and some of the employees are no better than us !

**Criminal Justice**

says:

December 9, 2013 at 8:01 pm

i hope that after all that has happened everything today will be okay. i ma y have not read the whole story before but reading this content will leave a mark in my mind how awful it was before. But rise and shine because the world doesnt end not untill we are not breathing.

**Antonio**

says:

December 10, 2013 at 4:07 pm

the fact that i have wrote a few comments about BRC I'M waiting for them to retaliate against me voicing what i thing about the place i personally don't want to be in any shelter i was doing fine without them and all i want to do is go back to my home state but NYS PAROLE is not allowing me to do so.

2 Comments

Sort by **Top**



Add a comment...



Anna M Maus

I grew up on 25th street. I am now raising a daughter on 25th street. There are still many registered sex offenders with recent updates showing the brc shelter as their address. Several listed as violent and/or repeat offenders. Rehabilitated? Hardly. That's why most of them are lifetime registrants. We can't walk home on our own street due to the disgusting comments. At the very least Muzzy could have kept the shelter to the legal size instead of illegally claiming he's running a hotel. Hotels cannot contain medical facilities. Sneaky enough to break multiple city laws but stupid enough to claim he didn't know the rules? Thought you went to Hunter, Muzzy.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2y



Diane Schwartz

there's a person here who "thows tissues to clod all "toilets up"like to open stove &leaving it on so it can start a fire "the microwave open to when the stove on putting everyone in danger "

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 2y

[Facebook Comments Plugin](#)