

Mothers on the Move (MOM) – South Bronx – New York, NY

SNAPSHOT

Overview

Mothers on the Move/Madres en Movimiento (MOM) is a member-led community organization which was founded in 1992 as a vehicle for low-income people of color to take strategic leadership in campaigns to transform ourselves and our communities.

Mission

“MOM envisions a society where resources and benefits are equally shared, and where people play a role in community decision-making in proportion to the degree they are affected. We are fighting for a South Bronx where future generations have clean air, well-resourced & community-controlled schools, safe streets, green space, good jobs and more control over the wealth that their labor creates.” – MOM website



Constituency

- African Americans
- Latinxs (Puerto Rican, Dominican, Mexican, Garifuna, Guatemalan, Cuban)
- Ages 18-65+
- Homeless
- Immigrants & Undocumented
- Formerly Incarcerated

Local Conditions & Critical Issues Impacting 0-5 Childhood Health in the South Bronx

Safety Concerns

Including fear that children will become involved with gangs and the lack of City-run community centers for kids to go to after school.

College Access & Affordability

Especially for immigrant parents and their children.

Poor Air Quality & Associated Asthma Risk

“We get a lot of trucks that go in and out of the peninsula, especially Hunt’s Point area [neighborhood in the South Bronx]. So, we get at least close to 20,000 trucks and cars a day. We are surrounded by a lot of different highways and that’s also a trigger to asthma in the area. We had a company that was taking human waste and turning it into pellets and we tackled that company and were able to get that company sewer shut down. We sued the company and sued the city, and they closed the company down. But that company was polluting our area so much that it was giving a lot of people asthma attacks, especially the youth.” –Wanda Salaman, Director of MOM

Gentrification

The elderly and families are being displaced from their neighborhoods due to high and increasing rent.

Poverty

43% of residents in Bronx Community District 2 live below the federal poverty line. Bronx Community District 2 comprises the Hunt’s Point and Longwood neighborhoods, where MOM is located.^{1,2}

“[Stress is a trigger for poor health and obesity]... I’m worrying about rent, I’m worrying about this, and we’re worrying about so much other stuff that in the end we’re not worrying about ourselves.”

Key Indicators of Childhood Health in the South Bronx



During 2015, Bronx Community District 2 experienced 88 **asthma** hospitalizations per 10,000 children ages 5-14, ranking 3rd among all New York City neighborhoods.¹



7.8 per 1,000 live births result in **infant death** before age 1, ranking 5th out of New York City neighborhoods.¹

23.5%

of Bronx county children are **obese**, compared to 17.6% statewide.³

Current Wellness & Safety Efforts

- **Childcare Business Development Program** offers childcare classes for immigrant women to help them become certified childcare providers (in partnership with the Pan-African Community Development Initiative)
- **Tenant Associations** help ensure that building owners make the necessary repairs to people's apartments
- **Highway Removal Campaigns** aim to turn an expressway into a boulevard by reducing the number of trucks passing through the neighborhood in order to reduce traffic and improve air quality
- **Implementation of Energy Management Systems** in public housing developments will help the city save money on oil or gas consumption and create jobs (tenants doing the installation and the monitoring usage level)
- **La Canasta**—food buying club where members pay \$15 for a large bag of fresh fruits and vegetables (in partnership with Mary Mitchell Family and Youth Center)

MOM Accomplishments in Wellness & Safety

- **Support for new immigrant moms** – Provided undocumented Honduran mothers and families with a space to meet and discuss issues, and help access legal advice and representation.

"They all came here with kids. Most of the kids that came [were between 0-15 years old]. There were more children under the 5 year-old mark. And now you know these kids have a different life here. Some of them themselves were telling me how scared they were when they were living in the country because of the gang activity that was going on. So, it did impact a lot of the children in the way that they learned. I'm so happy that a lot of those kids are going to school, you know, they're doing different things than when they were back home. They also had a lot of trauma. So [the children and]... their families are trying to deal with trauma."

- **Building repair court case** – Mobilized residents and won case against negligent building owners.

Allies Working on Children's Health

- Mary Mitchell Family and Youth Center (La Canasta) – New York, NY <http://themarymitchellfyc.org/>
- Pan-African Community Development Initiative – New York, NY <http://www.panafricanctdi.com/>
- BLK Projek – New York, NY <http://www.theblkprojek.org/>



Community Defined "Best Practices" to Improve Childhood Health

Create a space to connect with community members and "just listen"

"My meeting with the ladies every Thursday [does not have] an agenda. These women, we could talk about anything and everything. Everything was on the table, you know? So, there were meetings where we would have somebody to do healing circles. There will be another meeting where we bring someone in to help us on an issue that night, like a lawyer or whatever, or there was a meeting that we would just talk. And sometimes in the organizing world, we just think about turnout and who's the target, this, that, and the other but we don't [check in] on this person next to us. 'Did you eat today or did you eat yesterday? What is going on with your life?'... [We make sure] that we're present, and we see what's really going on in our neighborhood and with our members. So for me, it's not about numbers."



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1. Bronx Community District 2 comprises the Hunts Point and Longwood neighborhoods, where MOM is located.
2. Community Health Profiles 2015 Bronx Community District 2: Hunts Point and Longwood (Rep.). (2015). Retrieved December, 2016, from The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene website: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/data/2015Schp-bx2.pdf>
3. New York State Department of Health. (2014, February). Bronx County Indicators for Tracking Public Health Priority Areas, 2013-2017. Retrieved April, 2017, from https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/prevention_agenda/2013-2017/indicators/2013/bronx.htm