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Jamaica Hospital workers receive housing tips

By Ivan Pereira

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A housing advocacy group made a house call to Jamaica Hospital last month to give the medical staff a lending hand at preparing to own their first home.

The Housing Partnership Development Corp. held a symposium Dec. 7 at the hospital, where housing experts answered questions on home ownership from doctors, nurses, technicians and other interested people. The corporation, which works with the federal, state and city governments to build new affordable homes in the five boroughs, has 1,000 new houses available for sale and decided to offer the buildings to professionals at the medical center.



Jamaica Hospital's staff members get information on how to buy their first home from experts at the Housing Partnership Development Corp. Photo courtesy Housing Partnership Development Corp.

“It’s really difficult to get the word out because they work different hours and different shifts, so we go to them,” said Noemi Vega, the director of home ownership for the Housing Partnership.

Some 50 staff members participated in the event and took advantage of the expert advice on hand, according to Dr. Andrew Rubin, director of community affairs at Jamaica Hospital. Rubin said the event was great for the staff because they are yearning to own

their first home but want to get the process right before making a commitment.

“We have many people in the hospital who are looking to buy homes, and there are many questions to be answered,” he said.

One of the most asked questions at the symposium was about credit, according to Vega. First-time homeowners are cautious about their spending history, especially if they have a large debt, the director said.

“They don’t know what’s on their credit and they don’t know how they can get rid of it,” she said of bad credit.

The Housing Partnership has hundreds of low-cost homes available to qualified applicants, including several in Jamaica. Vega said the new houses are great not only for new homeowners but also for the community, which has seen a sharp decline in home prices due to a surge of foreclosures in southeast Queens.

“There has been a problem getting the houses appraised, but little by little it’s starting to change,” she said.

Rubin said he is working with the Housing Partnership to have similar events at Jamaica Hospital and other medical centers in the borough in the future.

“They will come back and catch people who didn’t come the first time,” he said.

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