

Hunter College's school moves into East Harlem

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HUNTER College's venerated School of Social Work has moved on up to East Harlem, pledging to "engage the community" and make a difference in the lives of the struggling families who live there.

"Hunter is committed to this neighborhood. The need is urgent," said College President Jennifer Raab in remarks to several hundred educators and officials who gathered for Tuesday's ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Citing the neighborhood's daunting rates of poverty, asthma and diabetes, Raab added, "This is not just a relocation but a recommitment and reengagement with this rapidly changing community."

The modern eight-story, \$135 million building, located on Third Ave. between E. 118th and 119th Sts., features glass-walled classrooms and an auditorium which look out onto the teeming streets. The school had been located on E. 79th St. since 1969.

The eco-friendly building also houses a library, art gallery and rooftop garden.

The school, now called the Lois V. and Samuel J. Silverman School of Social Work at Hunter College, was renamed in honor of the couple who donated \$30 million to its construction.

Some 1,500 graduate social-work students began classes there last month. Nearly 100 of them have already been placed in internships with community and social service organizations.

Second-year student Nadine Beshai has been placed at Hot Bread Kitchen at La Marqueta. The nonprofit bakery creates opportunities for professional advancement in the culinary industry for low income and immigrant women.

Beshai is helping bakery trainees navigate the social service system and teaching them how to access government benefits and other resources the city offers.

The new East Harlem campus also houses CUNY's School of Public Health at Hunter College, the library and archives for Hunter's Center for Puerto Rican Studies, and the Brookdale Center for Healthy Aging and Longevity.

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Hunter College's new Lois V. and Samuel J. Silverman School of Social Work is now in East Harlem. Photo by Chuck Choi

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