

FOREST HILLS GARDENS CORPORATION

HOME GALLERY CONTACT DISCLAIMER RESIDENT LOGIN ABOUT US



Whether covered in snow, or bathed in sunlight, the Gardens is a beautiful place to behold.

Resident Spotlight



Each month, FHGC will shine a spotlight on one of our residents (or a family, or a group) in an in-depth interview feature article for the Website. Some of the subjects will be featured first in the FHGC print newsletter, but their Web stories will be longer and include more pictures because of the space limitations of an 8 page newsletter. Still others will be featured first in **Resident Spotlight** online before appearing in the print newsletter. In any event, the features will strive to be informative and fun so that old friends of the subject will chuckle and nod in approval as they read it, while new neighbors will learn a thing or two about the Gardens through the subject's responses.

July 2009 – Heidi Chain of Greenway South

Heidi Harrison Chain, longtime Security Committee member and resident of Greenway South, was profiled in the Spring issue of the FHG Newsletter, discussing security issues and trends impacting us in the Gardens with FHGC Board Member Sid Rose. This is the full interview.

Heidi on Heidi:

For those residents who do not know me, please allow me to introduce myself. I have been a member of the FHG Security Committee for many years. I have been President of the 112th Precinct Community Council for over 13 years. I am one of the founders of our local community emergency response team (CERT) and serve as Chief of the team. I am a member of Community Board 6, Chair of the Youth and Economic Development Committees and co-chair of the CERT committee. I am First Vice President of the Forest Hills Community and Civic Association.

I am also your neighbor. I am married to Herb (34 years and counting!) and we have one son, Bradley. You often will see me walking in the neighborhood with our Airedale, Kalley. In addition to my civic volunteer activities, I have expertise in city government as I am a Director in the Office of Legal Affairs of the New York City Department of Finance. In my 20 years of city service at Finance, I have worked with all city agencies. As a City attorney, I have drafted legislation and also been responsible for making sure that our agency complies with new laws and rules that have been passed. From this experience, I have gained an understanding of the finances of New York City, and how the city operates – knowledge critical in these economic times

Q: We are pleased to hear that you are a candidate for City Council. If elected Councilwoman, what changes are you proposing to improve security in our community?

A: As councilwoman, I would have budget priority to increase the number of officers in the NYPD. For over 13 years, I have worked closely with the NYPD on implementing changes to improve security and safety in our community.

Starting in 1998, I implemented a special auxiliary program to have auxiliaries help people cross Queens Boulevard. As councilwoman, I would try to enhance that program by assigning city employees to help direct traffic and help people cross Queens Boulevard.

On a related matter, the assignment of school crossing guards is an important component of our security – protecting the lives of our children and our parents. I have worked to try to have a school crossing guard stationed by our schools and will, as councilmember continue to work to try and protect our children.

RESIDENT'S MENU

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I would continue to encourage the sharing of information between the NYPD and the community. This is vitally important for the community to let the NYPD know about a problem as soon as possible. It is also very important for the police to share with us when they become aware of a crime pattern in our area. Currently, I am in daily contact with our precinct and often with the Patrol Borough. I work with them to help provide safety information to our community.

As councilwoman I would encourage the MTA to install cameras in our subways. In the past, I have written articles and letters encouraging the MTA to give us this needed protection now.

I have worked with the police department and our community members on block watcher programs. As councilwoman I would encourage such police /community programs. The more that there is community input the better ability there is for the NYPD to be able to protect our community.

I will continue to work with the police department in the very important program to take illegal guns off the streets.

All of my positions are available online at <http://www.heidichain.com>

Q: Your close ties with the local police precinct have enabled you to provide us with timely notice of reported crimes in the Gardens. What are the most significant steps residents can take to protect themselves outside and inside the home?

A: I have informed our residents not only of reported crimes, but of the ways that they can better protect themselves from crimes and emergencies, and of steps to improve their safety.

To Protect Valuable Personal Information:

Residents should create a personal financial information sheet and file it in a secure place (with a copy in their safe deposit box). This financial information sheet should include their credit cards numbers, their checking and savings accounts, the bank, and the account numbers. The information should list the toll free number to contact the bank. For each credit card include: the account number, the expiration date, and the toll free number to contact the credit card company. The resident would also want to include the contact information for the three credit bureaus:

Equifax
P.O. Box 740241
Atlanta, GA 30374
1-800-685-1111

Experian
P.O. Box 2002
Allen, TX 75013
1 888 397 3742

Trans Union
P.O. Box 1000
Chester, PA 19022
1-800-888-4213

Our residents would then be prepared in the event that they lost or had their wallet stolen. In addition, this information would be valuable in the event that someone tries to steal their identity. In the event of any problem with identity theft, the resident must contact the above credit bureaus.

To Protect Yourself

People should be alert and aware of their surroundings at all times. The criminals watch people and often confront people who are distracted. So residents should

be careful when walking in the street and talking on cell phones. People in our community have had their cell phone taken from them as they are walking from the subway.

Residents must be careful if someone tries to distract them. Strangers have no reason to ask your advice or talk to you while shopping. If people they do not know start to talk to them or start to surround them, they must be very careful. They may be trying to distract the person to take their pocketbook or wallet.

In addition, you should limit the number of credit cards that you carry. For men, do not carry a wallet in the back pocket. For woman carry the purse close to your body.

To Protect Your Residence:

Residents can have our precinct provide a free security survey of their particular property and get specific suggestions on how to best protect their house or apartment, or apartment building. The precinct's Crime Prevention Officer, P.O. Vailles, provides these surveys by appointment. She can be reached at (718) 520-9319.

For everyone, here are some tips to best protect their residences:

- Be sure to lock windows and doors. Residents do not want someone climbing into their apartment. In addition, residents do not want someone reaching into an open window and taking possessions even while they are outside the apartment.
- Make sure that windows by the fire escapes are locked so that no one can climb the fire escape and enter the apartment.
- Do not open the door to strangers. Be aware that there is a scam that has been used in our community: There is a couple with a child – who indicate that they used to live in the house / apartment. They want to come in and show the residence to the child. RESIDENTS SHOULD NOT LET THEM in. The child goes to one room and the parents go into another – and there have been reports that items are missing
- Ask for identification if an individual claims to be from a utility company or doing repair work. The resident can then call the company to see if they are real before letting them in. Residents of an apartment building should check with the super before allowing someone to come in to see if repairs are needed.

- Residents should not allow people they do not know to enter the apartment building. There are people who will ring each buzzer in an attempt to gain entry into the building. DO NOT let an unknown person into the building.

- Residents should leave lights on outside your home.

- Residents should use a timer throughout their house or apartment

Residents should call 911 if they see suspicious activity on their block, or inside their apartment building.

Additional suggestions regarding residences:

- Residents should take pictures of the possessions in their homes or apartment. This will help in the event that there is a disaster or a crime committed. They can give the pictures to the insurance company or to show to the officers responding to the crime. In addition to the pictures, it could be advantageous to keep an inventory of valuable possessions and keep appraisals of valuables. This can help regarding insurance claims in the event that there is a fire or if the items are stolen. It would be helpful to keep a copy of this information at a safe place away from the home. In the event that a resident has work done on your house, they should save the

records so that if the resident ever had to prove what was work was done and at what cost, they would have the information.

When planning a vacation, have a great trip and try to do the following to secure property at home while you are away:

- Leave drapes or shades in their normal position.
- Arrange to have someone remove flyers that people leave on the lawn
- Make sure that someone will pick up your newspapers
- Arrange with the post office to hold your mail
- Be sure to use automatic timers with a radio and lights

Q: We are aware that the Department of Homeland Security is installing cameras on lamp posts to deter crime in New York City. Are there plans to implement this program in our community?

A: The NYPD has advised me that at the current time the NYPD and the Office of Emergency Management have no current plan to implement this program here. Presently, the plans are to implement the program in Manhattan only. The NYPD indicated that some communities and businesses may collect money and set the cameras up privately.