



## Hattie Fernandez

### *Housing Success*

**“Caring. Loving. Family-oriented.”**

That’s how Hattie Fernandez describes herself, and it’s the thread that runs through every part of her story.

For Hattie, everything begins with her children. A mother of three and a grandmother of two, she speaks about her family with a deep sense of pride

and purpose. Even during some of the most uncertain moments in her life, that connection never wavered. **“My children mean the world to me. I am alive because of them.”**

Before experiencing homelessness, Hattie had spent years building a life for her family in the Bronx, where she raised her children as a single mom. But in 2025, after becoming ill and losing her ability to work, she fell behind on rent. **For over a year, she tried to access rental assistance programs that could help her stay in her home but found herself ineligible. It wasn’t until she lost her apartment that she became eligible for the very support that could have prevented homelessness.**

What followed was a period of instability where she hopped between couches and entered the shelter system. It was an experience she approached with fear, unsure of what to expect. But within that system, she found something she hadn’t anticipated: support.

“I became eligible as soon as I lost my apartment, which made no sense because the voucher was way more than what I would have needed to keep my apartment and not have to go through those struggles”

Surrounded by women who were also navigating their own challenges, Hattie found strength in shared experience. There was structure, encouragement, and a sense of accountability that helped her stay focused on moving forward. **She leaned into that support, taking each step as it came and prioritizing her health and stability along the way.**

Today, Hattie is living in her own apartment. **A space that represents both safety and a new beginning. After months of uncertainty, having a place of her own has brought a sense of stability that once felt out of reach.** “I feel safe,” she said. That sense of safety shows up in the small moments like being able to cook in her own kitchen, sleep through the night, and move through her day without constant uncertainty.

Despite this momentous step, the transition hasn’t been without its challenges. After spending months surrounded by a community with shared experience, living alone again has been an adjustment for Hattie. She misses the familiar faces, the shared routines, and the quiet ways people showed up for each other. Still, those relationships haven’t disappeared. **Hattie stays in touch, welcoming friends into her new home and continuing to nurture the bonds that helped her carry through.**

Her experience has shaped how she sees the world and her place in it. Through participating in advocacy spaces, she has begun to use her voice to reflect not only her own journey, but the broader gaps she encountered along the way.

**Looking back on Hattie’s journey, what stands out most is not the hardship, but the strength she showed along the way.** Hattie takes pride in the fact that, even amid instability, she held on to what matters most: **her family, her sense of purpose, and her belief that something better was possible.**

*“Hattie has a quiet kind of power. She never demands attention, but when she speaks, people listen. From the first story she shared with the Consumer Advisory Board, it was clear that she had a gift for turning lived experience into something meaningful, helping others understand not just what happened, but what it felt like to live through it.”*

Chelsea Rose, Policy & Advocacy Manager

