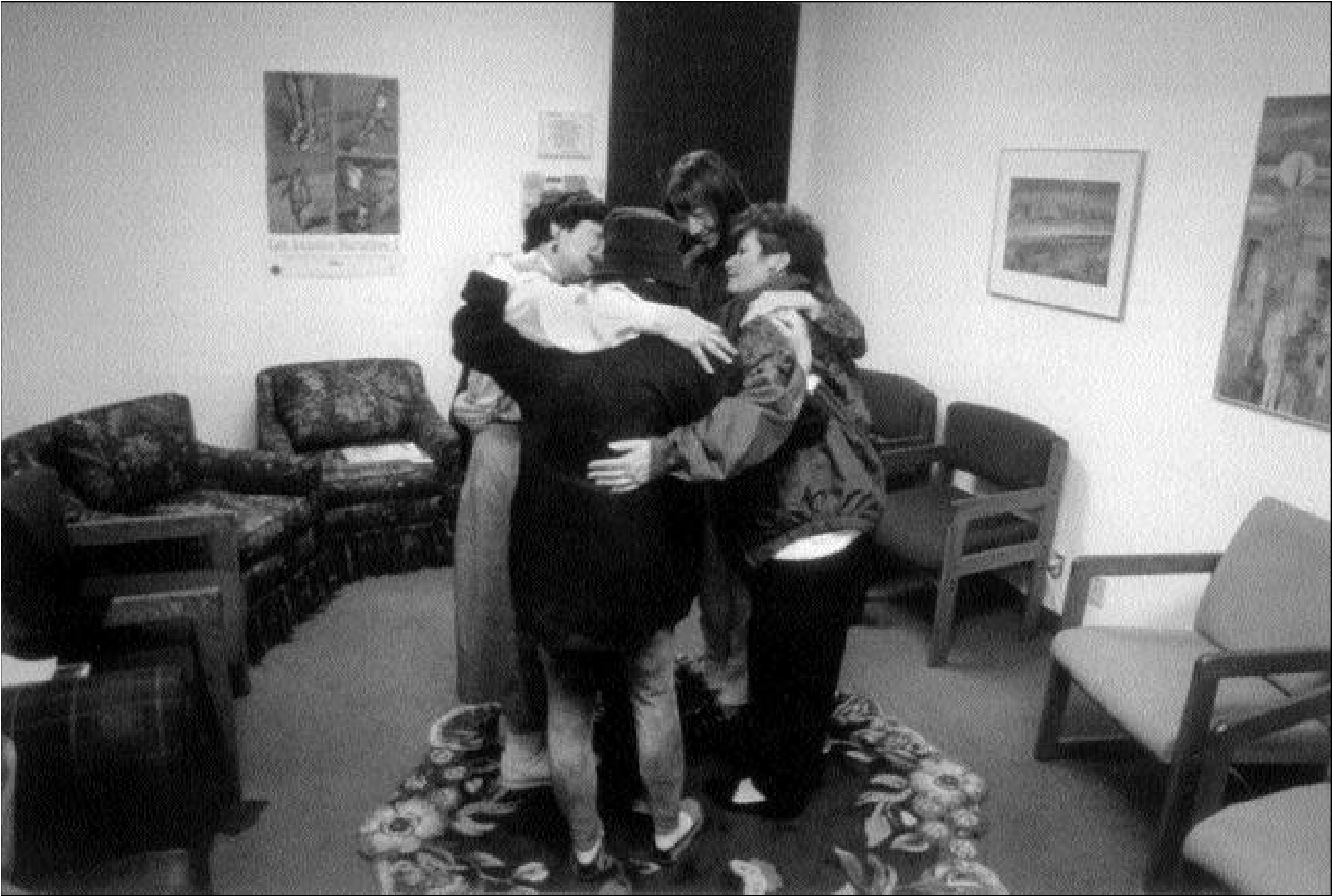


Women's Shelter Plan Upsets Residents

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FILE

Plans to set up a women's shelter in the central Bronx angered the residents who expressed their opposition to the project at a recent community board meeting

Many residents in Bronx Community 5 attended the meeting to voice their concerns. "In board 5, we are saturated. We have many, many, many [of the same type of] programs," said Kenneth Forgarty, District 5 Chairperson. Mr. Forgarty's opinion is similar to other residents' point of view. "We will not accept this shelter in this community. We always accept every program that wants to be located in our community; but we have had enough," said Louella Hatch, 46th Precinct Community Council President. "If this project is accepted, we're going to rally," she said, causing

the audience to applaud.

Bronx Community Board 5 is located at the central Bronx. It is comprised by the neighborhoods University Heights, West Tremont, South Fordham, and Morris Heights.

According to plans presented at the meeting, the new center would house a Drop-In center for homeless women that was previously based at the Kingsbridge Armory, located at the corner of Kingsbridge Avenue and Jerome Avenue. The center was administered by the two non-profit organizations Care for The Homeless and Tolentine-Zeiser Community Life Center (CHTZCLC).

Negotiations were held with New York City Department of Homeless Services, Care for The Homeless and public officials to relocate the Kingsbridge Women's Shelter to the Franklin Armory in Morrisania; but the two organizations that ran the center turned down the site because they thought it was unsuitable. According to them, women would have to take the train and a bus to get to this place, which would be difficult for them.

The proposal of this center was submitted to the NYC Department of Homeless

Services last August by Care for The Homeless and Tolentine-Zeiser Community Life Center. The proposed 150-bed Women's Assessment Center and Drop-In Center would provide homeless women with support groups; recreational activities; medical help; psychiatric and mental health services; food; and a place to sleep.

The meeting was held at the South Bronx Job Corp, located at 1771 Andrews Avenue (corner of W. Tremont Avenue), in University Heights, and lasted approximately two hours. More than twenty community leaders—including board members—were present and about forty-five community residents attended the meeting.

In addition to this general board meeting, a special public meeting was held on March 27th to allow the public to comment on the proposed shelter. The open meeting was the third time the two organizations listened to the public's complaints on the project. At this meeting, CHTZCLC went before the board and the public to seek support for this project. But instead of support, they found disapproval; neither the board members, nor the community supported it.

At the general meeting, board members voted 13 to 0 against this project; two

members did not vote because they did not have enough information on this issue. Board members and residents brought up several objections to the shelter project. One of the main reasons why this project was opposed is the proposed location. "The location they gave us is not the right one," said Dr. James Fairbanks, a Bronx electe official. In addition, District Manager Forgarty said, "The location is not appropriate, there are some drug rehabilitation programs nearby, a school around the corner, and we all know about the bad reputation Jerome Avenue has because of the great predomination of prostitution in the area." He also expressed that he believes this project would bring stress to the community.

On the other hand, Sister Margaret, a catholic nun who is the executive director of Tolentine-Zeiser Community Life Center, said that they picked this site because the elevated train nearby makes it easy to reach. She also said that they would make sure to have a secured place to prevent problems with the community.

Moreover, board 5 members are concerned because they have not seen a budget for the project. Sister Margaret said

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