

# Two Shades of Green Spotlight



## Green Cleaning

ST. NICKS ALLIANCE TRANSITIONS TO GREEN CLEANING PRODUCTS AND PRACTICES



### The Benefits

- 25% average reduction in cleaning costs
- Over 50% cost reduction in one building
- Cleaning staff reports less hand irritation and fewer breathing issues
- Tenants report fewer chemical smells and breathing issues linked to cleaning products

### Our Story

St. Nicks Alliance, which owns and manages 850 affordable housing units in 55 buildings, transitioned from traditional cleaning products to green cleaning supplies in 2013. With a goal of reducing tenant and building maintenance staff exposure to harsh cleaning products, improving the performance of the cleaning products, and enhancing the overall cleanliness of their properties, St. Nicks rolled out its new program in two buildings with a total of 59 housing units, primarily rented by families. At the core were concerns about resident and worker health. St. Nicks manages the properties, employing 32 staff, including 23 building maintenance staff who clean common areas. The owners hoped that this transition could also reduce cleaning cost, which had varied over the years.



“The switch to greener less toxic cleaning products has made it easier for me to breathe in my apartment.”

*Daughter of Jimmy Lugo, Building Super*



“After trying out green cleaners in 2 buildings, we were sold. We saved money, the cleaners really worked, and we see health benefits.”

*St. Nicks Staff*



Green products created healthier conditions, particularly for those with asthma, allergies, or emphysema.



NYC COALITION  
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## The Process

St. Nicks worked with the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) of New York City to select a green cleaning vendor, Crown Janitorial. The team chose appropriate products, provided cost-effective dilution systems, and participated in maintenance staff and tenants trainings to explain the benefits of green cleaning products.

To ensure everyone understood the project, St. Nicks met with the entire staff from the Executive Director to maintenance staff and tenants to discuss the new products, their expected benefits, and the reasons for going green. The team trained all staff to ensure workers and managers understood their roles and the appropriate use of the products. The training emphasized the importance of removing conventional cleaning products, thus avoiding weakened results, as well as the environmental and health benefits of the switch.

### Challenges Overcome

Green cleaning supplies can require upfront costs to fund dilution systems and new equipment (e.g., mops and dispensers). The costs are recouped once the program is in place because ongoing product costs are lower. In properties with limited reserves it can be difficult to fund this initial outlay. At first, some tenants complained that the buildings didn't "smell clean"; green cleaners typically do not carry a pungent odor. As the program continued, tenants learned more about the green products lack of an odor and recognized that new green cleaners were effective.

## Two Shades of Green Project Team

The [New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene](#), [The Local Initiatives Support Corporation \(LISC\)](#), and the [NYC Coalition for a Smoke-Free City](#), partnered to assist affordable housing owners in New York City adopt green and healthy property management practices that both reduce operating expenses and create healthier living environments for residents and staff. **Two Shades of Green** focuses on water conservation, smoke-free housing, integrated pest management, green cleaning, and active design. For more information contact: Colleen Flynn at [cflynn@lisc.org](mailto:cflynn@lisc.org) or go to [http://www.lisc.org/nyc/programs/green\\_and\\_healthy\\_neighborhoods/two\\_shades\\_of\\_green.php](http://www.lisc.org/nyc/programs/green_and_healthy_neighborhoods/two_shades_of_green.php).

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