

# HABITAT

June 2020

## Community

vendors, tightening accounts payable. Now, with the return of warm weather, the board has turned its attention to redoing the landscaping. "Aesthetically, the building has greatly improved," Roa says with pride. "We're getting a lot of feedback from people saying they're enjoying what we're doing."

### A Brush With Failure

Enrique Roa's current status – a co-op officer with a college degree, a marketable skill, a steady job and a bright future – did not arrive without struggle and setbacks. After graduating from Thomas Edison High School in Queens, he won a scholarship to Pace University's campus in Westchester County. He was the first person in his family to attend college, and he thought he was on his way. But he had trouble fitting in with the upscale student body, and his grades suffered. Eventually, he forfeited the scholarship and came back home, feeling like a failure.

He got a job as a busboy at Le Cirque, the celebrity-magnet restaurant in Manhattan. One night, some students from Pace arrived for a graduation party, and the headwaiter introduced Roa to the group as a former Pace student. If the introduction was meant as a goad, it worked.

"I was humiliated," Roa recalls. "I vowed I was never going to let that happen again.

I decided that night I needed to go back to school and figure my life out."

He spent two years at La Guardia Community College, earning straight A's, then won a half scholarship to St. John's. This time Roa didn't take any chances. "I was extra-motivated," he says. "I was breaking my head studying. I was in the library all the time." In May, he graduated – remotely – near the top of his class.

As he waits for his break into the insurance business, Roa keeps working to improve his co-op, and he keeps working his doorman job at International Plaza, near the United Nations. "There are a lot of diplomats in the building," he says, "so I meet people from Canada, Turkey, France, all over the place. I like it because I get to see different cultures and perspectives, different ways of treating people."

In his role as treasurer at Compton House, Roa tries to treat people in a way that lets them know that they're the ones who matter most. "When you're on a co-op board," he says, "you're not doing it for yourself. You're doing it for the shareholders. They put their trust in you, and you have to make sure you do what's right for them and the investment they made with their sweat and hard work. A lot of the shareholders think we're moving in the right direction." ■

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## Off the Market

LINCOLN SQUARE

331 W. 71st St., No. 2

6BR/5.5B co-op, 331 W. 71st St. is one of eight Renaissance Revival houses built in 1895 by the architectural firm of Hogan & Slattery. Located on a quiet, tree-lined cul-de-sac that was designated a historic area in 1989, this building has a brick facade with elaborate terra-cotta ornamentation. This unit has five floors with three terraces, a large south-facing living room, formal dining room and an eat-in kitchen. There are six wood-burning



fireplaces with detailed mantels. The top floor has two terraces.

*Maintenance: \$6,700.*

**Seller's Agent:** James Manning, DJK Residential

**Buyer's Agent:** Fabienne Lecole, Compass

THE ASK: **\$3,999,999**

THE GET: **\$3,775,000**

THE WAIT: **107 weeks**



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