

DAILY NEWS

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Harlem tent city protest



With tent city in the background, police arrest the Rev. Frank Morales for his role in the protest. Photo by Jefferson Siegel

'They say gentrify, we say occupy'

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DAILY NEWS WRITERS

DOZENS OF activists transformed a vacant East Harlem lot into a tent city yesterday as part of a protest to demand more housing for the poor.

"They say gentrify, we say occupy," members of the group Picture the Homeless chanted as they set up shelters on property owned by JPMorgan Chase.

The demonstrators began camping out about 11 a.m. Cops moved in a few hours later.

The NYPD said it gave the 89 protesters four warnings and about 80 people left. Nine stayed and were arrested. Charges were pending. Two priests were among the arrested.

"We are going to keep on fighting," said the Rev. Frank Morales shortly

before he was loaded into a police van in plastic handcuffs.

Picture the Homeless is calling for warehoused lots and buildings to be brought back into use as housing for the poor and homeless.

At the lot on 115th St. between Madison and Fifth Aves., about 15 one-man tents were pitched before the crowd chanted, danced and played drums.

"Homeless people and allies aren't waiting around," said Beka Economopoulos, 34, from Williamsburg, Brooklyn.

"We are going to free the space and open the land," said a group board member, Rob Robinson, 52. "We are liberating those spaces and giving them back to the community."

With Dorian Block

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