

THE AMERICAN FAMILY INN BULLETIN



IT TAKES A COMMUNITY TO END HOMELESSNESS

Summer
2010

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A Special Thanks



50 Cooper Square, Fl 4, NY, NY 10003
P 212.529.5252 • F 212.529.7698

It Takes a Community to End Homelessness

Homes for the
Homeless



2010 SUMMER

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Dear Friends and Supporters,

Welcome to the Fall 2010 edition of *The American Family Inn Bulletin*. Most of us will remember this past summer as one of the hottest on record for New York City, but for hundreds of homeless children citywide, this was a summer of fun and learning at Homes for the Homeless (HFH) Summer Camps in upstate New York. We were able to offer three 16-day sessions this season despite funding cuts from the Administration for Children's Services.

And back in the city, children staying at our four American Family Inns—the Prospect, Saratoga, Clinton, and Williamsbridge—were engaged in a summer of science. Educational adventures could be found near and far. Through partnerships with world-famous institutions and everyday New Yorkers, children from HFH shelters participated in enriching activities. Destinations ranged from the Bronx Zoo to the New York Aquarium, while budding forensic scientists dusted for fingerprints with volunteers from New York Cares, and kids of all ages learned about dental health with the help of a local teen and her dentist mom who wanted to be of service.

We are so grateful for all of our volunteers and supporters, especially when family homelessness in our city continues

at record highs with more than 8,000 families with children, and more than 14,000 kids who call shelter a home each night.

We are equally gratified by the amazing staff that we have at HFH, from camp counselors who go the extra mile to coax a timid child to swim for the first time, to education coordinators who make sure that after-school and extended-day learning programs provide meaningful opportunities for vulnerable children so they don't fall behind academically. When children are engaged, their parents can focus more fully on gaining the skills they need to help move their families into permanent homes. This defines our American Family Inn model.

I welcome you to visit our Web site at www.hfhny.org or to schedule a visit to one of our American Family Inns to learn about our programs firsthand.

Thank you for your ongoing support.



Ralph da Costa Nunez, PhD
President and CEO
Homes for the Homeless

SPOTLIGHT on... 2010 SUMMER SEASON

Daniel Kennedy

Education Programs Coordinator, Prospect Family Inn

Daniel Kennedy is responsible for creating the engaging educational activities that take place at the Brownstone School, an after-school program for children ages 5 to 12, and FutureLink, an after-school program for youth 13 and older. Dan earned a BA in English from the University of Virginia, his MA in Leadership in Teaching from the College of Notre Dame, and taught high school for five years in Baltimore, Maryland. Teaching college preparatory courses, special education classes, and English as a Second Language in schools in low-income neighborhoods to children with different need levels enables Dan to develop educational programming today that is specialized to the homeless students he serves.

Dan believes the most important aspect of his job is creating an environment where the children feel connected to one another and to the program as a whole. Recently, he moderated a debate in which the children chose a mascot to represent the Prospect Brownstone School. After an energized discussion, the students decided to be the "Prospect Rockets" because a rocket best described their quest for knowledge and that they are "shooting for the stars."

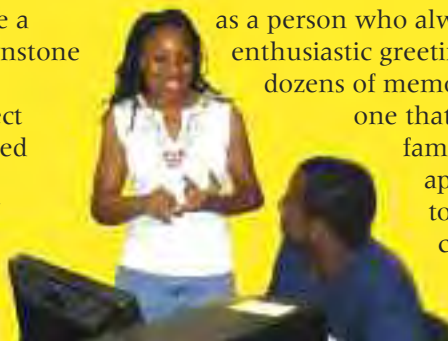


Tinnycua Williams

Education Programs Coordinator, Saratoga Family Inn

Tinnycua Williams believes it is her responsibility to provide youth at the Saratoga Family Inn with the tools they need to succeed. As a mother of three, she only facilitates programming that she would find worthwhile for her own children. With a BS from Colgate University in Africana Studies and Public Policy, and seven years of experience as an after-school administrator, Tinnycua is an expert at creating dynamic activities. She recently worked with the kids to produce the *F.R.B. News*—FutureLink, Recreation, Brownstone—a newsletter distributed to the residents of the Saratoga that highlights the after-school and recreation programs. Students improved their writing skills through poetry and conducting interviews. They reported an increased feeling of self-confidence as a result of so many people reading their work.

A student in the FutureLink program describes Tinnycua as a person who always has a smile on her face and an enthusiastic greeting for all. She can regale you with dozens of memorable moments with students, but one that stands out is with a boy whose family was moving on to a permanent apartment and how he took the time to thank her and wished he could come back to continue to attend the academic programs at Saratoga.



KIDS GO MAD FOR SCIENCE WITH HELP FROM NEW YORK CARES



The Prospect Family Inn has gone mad for science. This summer, New York Cares partnered with the Brownstone School at the Prospect to offer children ages 5 through 18 *Mad Scientists*, a series of workshops designed to activate curiosity and make science fun. Each Wednesday, a team of volunteers led an interactive lab covering different fields of scientific inquiry. Experiments included constructing an electric circuit, taking and analyzing fingerprints, and recycling paper.

This series lets kids participate in hands-on learning activities without the pressure of the classroom. They enjoy a much-needed break from the structure, but not the substance, of school. New York Cares designed the curriculum to introduce children to specific scientific topics, but also to work on important abstract skills such as honing their attention to detail, improving observational skills, and approaching problems scientifically. In the first week, the group planted bean seeds, and as the seeds sprouted, grew tall stalks, and produced beans, they enthusiastically observed and discussed the changes. Children learned about teamwork and cooperation, helping each other when someone struggled with the difficulty of an experiment.

All participants in *Mad Scientists* came away with an unforgettable experience. Yaïen, a six-year-old Brownstone student commented, "We do a lot of projects. It's fun and I get to learn stuff."

New York Cares will continue to offer *Mad Scientists* at the Prospect during the school year and next summer. If you would like to volunteer at an HFH location or support the HFH Brownstone School, please contact Margaret Menghini at (212) 529-5252 or e-mail mmenghini@hfhny.org. To volunteer with New York Cares, please visit their Web site at www.newyorkcares.org.

*Above and below:
New York Cares
volunteers teach
Brownstone
students how to
dust and analyze
fingerprints like
forensic scientists.*



HIGH SCHOOL VOLUNTEER PROMOTES DENTAL HYGIENE THROUGH PUBLIC SERVICE

Julia Tepper, a high-school junior from Manhattan, is a girl with a mission. Growing up in a family of dentists, she learned a lot about good oral hygiene. She also learned that many people do not know how to properly brush and floss, and these poor habits can lead to big problems later in life.

Julia decided to do something about it. She had an idea to give oral hygiene classes to the people who could benefit most—children. She contacted NYC Service, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg’s initiative aimed at involving more people in community service, and they directed her to Homes for the Homeless. Julia stated, “A simple demonstration and giving out a toothbrush and toothpaste to each child can make a big difference. And since maintaining healthy teeth is related to diet and eating the right things, there is also an important link to preventing obesity.”

In July, Julia and her mother, Dr. Priscilla Tepper, a dentist and professor at Columbia University, conducted workshops at each of the American

Family Inns for the Brownstone after-school and day-care programs. Using Zoe, a fluffy stuffed doll endowed with a full set of pearly white teeth, the duo demonstrated proper brushing techniques and fielded questions from an enthusiastic audience. Julia says, “The kids are very bright and were excited for us to be there. They asked good questions, and after the presentation was over they gave us hugs.”

At the Saratoga and Clinton Family Inns, the Teppers added important information about adult dental care for parents in attendance. Saratoga Administrator Frank Martarella lauded the sessions, stating, “Every little bit of education adds to the well-being of our residents. Parents and children alike learned something useful today that will benefit them long after their days at the American Family Inn.”

To learn more about NYC Service, go to www.nycservice.org.



The Teppers and Zoe offer service with a smile as they answer questions at the Prospect Inn day care. ^



Zoe made brushing fun, not a chore, for a curious day-care participant. ^

SNAPSHOTS OF SUMMER AT CAMPS WAKONDA AND LANOWA



Camp Wakonda is located on Upper Twin Lake and **Camp Lanowa** is located on Lower Twin Lake at Harriman State Park. Many of the campers have never fished, boated, or swum in a lake before. The lake is one of the most popular spots at camp, where kids learn new skills and enjoy the beautiful outdoors while bonding with their bunkmates and counselors.



A small portion of the lake is closed off and made into a three-foot-deep swimming area. Campers begin the summer with varying levels of swim experience, but all leave stronger swimmers. Every day, they receive swimming lessons and have a supervised free swim. Whether they learn to float, or to master an advanced stroke, all children are encouraged to improve their swimming skills.

Campers keep their minds stimulated while having fun. In this case, they play a game of chess during an afternoon rest period. With plenty of activity options, there is always something to do.





Counselors greet the children warmly as they arrive, and then the fun and games begin. Within the first couple of days, the campers become close friends with their bunkmates and form special bonds with their counselors, who do all they can to make sure everyone has an enjoyable time at camp. Their effort is apparent on the children's smiling faces day after day.

Composing electronic journals helps children remember their camp experience and provides parents with a picture of their time away. The computer center is also a place to play academic computer games and create graphic-arts projects.



After 16 days, the children head back to New York City. Although their summer camp experience is over, they leave with memories that will last a lifetime.

LEARNING IS AN ADVENTURE



At the Children's Zoo exhibit of the Bronx Zoo, the children mimicked the creatures they saw that day, climbing up a spider web, slithering down a tree slide like lizards, and burrowing through a prairie dog town.

Thanks to supporters, summer 2010 for children at the American Family Inns included many adventure-based learning trips. Students of the Brownstone and FutureLink after-school programs discovered anatomy at "Bodies, The Exhibition," and became familiar with animals above and below the water at the Bronx Zoo, the New York Aquarium, and Atlantis Marine World. The children encountered rare plants and flowers at the New York Botanical Garden and explored space and the midnight sky at the American Museum of Natural History. The kids also detected microbes through a microscope at the New York Hall of Science.

Children from the Saratoga Family Inn enjoyed hand-feeding goats, sheep, and llamas near the barn area. Later at the bird exhibit, they closely examined the attributes of Cuban Amazon parrots, blue-bellied rollers, and helmeted curassows.





The fish puzzle at the New York Hall of Science was a huge hit with the kids, and at the New York Aquarium, everyone loved the bright colors of the fish from Africa's Lake Malawi.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

September has always been a special time of year—the return of crisp autumn air, the smell of new books, and the promise of fresh beginnings. As our youngest residents head back into the classroom, HFH is committed to ensuring they are prepared to start the year off right. You can help us provide the children with essential school supplies by visiting our Amazon wish list at:

www.hfhny.org/getinvolved/wishlist.asp.

Visit us online to [learn more](http://www.hfhny.org) & [get involved](http://www.hfhny.org) www.hfhny.org or www.hfhcamps.org



A SPECIAL THANKS

Homes for the Homeless would like to thank our partners, friends, and supporters for helping to make the summer of 2010 a success.

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 Congregation Habonim
 Dr. Priscilla Tepper and Julia Tepper
 Eddie Hurowitz
 Eileen O'Churchill
 Horizons Media
 International Order of Odd Fellows, Mineola-Pacific Lodge
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