

Spring
2013

SERVING NYC'S NEEDIEST FAMILIES SINCE 1986

HOMES FOR THE HOMELESS BULLETIN



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A Special Thanks



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Dear Friends and Supporters,

Welcome to the Spring 2013 edition of the *Homes for the Homeless Bulletin*.

Sadly, since our last *Bulletin* the number of homeless children living in New York City shelters rose from nearly 19,000 to nearly 21,000. That's more than 2,000 additional babies, school-age kids, and young adults who are calling shelter a home right now. Thanks to your support, children who reside in our four American Family Inns not only have a safe place to live during this difficult time but also benefit from educational programming and enrichment.

In this issue, we spotlight KidCare, an organization founded by a dynamic group of young professionals with a desire to give back to children in need. Another feature focuses on college volunteers from St. John's University who are leading job readiness workshops for parents at the Saratoga Family Inn. We are pleased to share the story of the popular

Children's Garden at the Saratoga, which continues to grow with new offshoots at our Williamsbridge and Prospect Family Inns. The final article showcases The Teen Leaders Program, a new project that enables former campers from our Summer Camps for homeless and foster children and youth to come back to camp as counselors in training.

Throughout the issue you'll learn more about our programs and the people and groups that are helping us make a difference in the lives of children. We appreciate your ongoing support in the form of time, money, services, and donations.



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

2013 SPRING SEASON

SPOTLIGHT on...

The Founders of KidCare The Small Nonprofit That Does Big Things

Jon Dorfman, Brian Morgan, and brother and sister Morgan and Adam Turkewitz are moonlighters. By day, they are successful Manhattan real estate professionals, equities brokers, and bankers. At night and on the weekends, they second as founders of KidCare, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to "Let Kids Be Kids."

The founders' goal is simple: "We want to give these kids the opportunities we had," said Jon, an equities trader. "Just watching them do the things we did as kids," as co-founder Morgan Turkewitz put it, makes the effort worthwhile for the quartet.

Founded in 2009, KidCare sponsors the Saratoga Family Inn t-ball team, outings to professional sports games, after school dance programs, and an instructional guitar program at Homes for the Homeless (HFH) Summer Camps.

The organization also sponsors Job Hop workshops, which introduce HFH children to professionals who discuss their careers, and they organize an annual toy drive, distributing the donated gifts to the children at a holiday party.

Before founding KidCare, the four had been volunteering individually with numerous groups. They decided to join

forces and search for an organization they could partner with—one that would allow them to measure their success.

"We wanted an organization where we could help children in need and one where it would be tangible. Where we could see the development," Jon said. Since then, they have worked almost exclusively with HFH.

For co-founder Brian Morgan, it is all about seeing the children happy and giving them hope and inspiration.

"If we change one kid's life, that's a big deal," he said.

Courtesy of Nancy Borowick Photography



The KidCare founders enjoyed playing with the children during their annual holiday party.

GETTING READY FOR WORK COLLEGE VOLUNTEERS HELP ADULT RESIDENTS PREPARE FOR EMPLOYMENT

Latoya Smith worked on her resume electronically as her young son fiddled with the computer speakers. She was able to concentrate knowing that St. John's University student volunteers were nearby, ready to help with her resume and to play with her son when he got restless. These are just some of the ways student volunteers provide residents like Latoya support in job readiness at the Saratoga Family Inn (SFI).

"We try to do as much as we can to facilitate the process," said Kimberly Moloche, workshop coordinator and graduate assistant with the Ozanam Scholars program, a group of St. John's University students who dedicate a considerable amount of time during college to serving the community and conducting research on social justice issues.

SFI residents attending the six recent Ozanam-run workshops learned about budgeting, computer skills, and networking. Latoya honed her resume at one of the workshops and clearly felt better prepared to find work as a result.

"I have a lot of self-confidence," she said, putting her newly printed resume in a folder.

Volunteer Pat Maloney, 21, a senior at St. John's University, has found joy in empowering homeless adults by teaching them the skills they need to find employment.

After helping a young man with a resume, Pat felt he had made a difference. "I feel like now I can go out and do something," Pat recalled the young man saying.

The university volunteers appreciate Homes for the Homeless' guiding principle of homelessness as a temporary situation

that people can overcome with the right support and skills.

"Teaching people so they can teach themselves—that's certainly a lot more helpful than giving them a one-shot service," said volunteer Dean Jauregui, 20.

The students told stories of educated and credentialed people they had helped—folks who had just fallen on hard times. Some had graduate degrees. One was a physical therapist. Another was a recent college graduate who could not pay off debt.

"It's not just the uneducated person," said volunteer Ann Marie O'Brien, 20.

Tinnycua Williams, Director of Programs for HFH, praised the volunteers. "You are actually having a significant impact. And I don't think that we were put on this planet just to serve our own interests. I think that we're here to help one another. It makes us better as people," she said.

St. John's University student volunteers held workshops to help residents develop the skills they need to find employment.



Residents honed their resumes with help from St. John's University student volunteers.

GROWING GREEN THUMBS GARDENING PROGRAM EXPANDS TO ADDITIONAL SHELTERS



A fruit tree awaited harvesting by the children.

Now in their fourth year planting and harvesting their own vegetable and fruit garden, the enthusiasm of the green-thumbed children at Saratoga Family Inn (SFI) in Queens has rubbed off on their friends in the Bronx. The wildly successful Children's Garden program originating at SFI is expanding to two other Homes for the Homeless (HFH) shelters, the Williamsbridge and Prospect Inns.

The current program at SFI features 19 different types of plants and fruit trees. The Children's Garden has been a hit not only within HFH facilities but also the neighboring community and city. The program has garnered media coverage and launched a new blog. Gardens at the two new sites are just starting to grow, but in the coming years they promise to flower into success.

The SFI garden, funded this year with a grant from Queensborough Community College, has developed into an immersive learning experience that contributes to the spring and summer educational enrichment programming. With mentoring from Queensborough Community College volunteers, structured lessons, recreational activities, and field trips have been based around the topics of healthy food, nutrition, and the environment.

Marcel, 10, ate a pepper for the first time in the garden, while Jordan, 8, said that since the start of the program, "I've been a new kid."

Mr. C., the children's mentor who oversees the gardening program, said "the best highlight of



The children marveled at the size of their freshly picked produce.

Prize-worthy cabbages decorated the gardens at Saratoga Family Inn.



the garden since its beginning has been watching the kids enjoying the gardening experience."

Recently, Mr. C. and the other instructors led 13 children on a walk through the garden, quizzing them on the different types of tomatoes that they were growing. On Mr. C.'s mark, the kids began picking produce feverishly. The children eventually left the garden carrying baskets overflowing with fruits and vegetables. Mr. C. followed with a gigantic cabbage that the children helped pick.

Miss Shalina, the teacher who plans many of the daily activities and lesson plans related to the garden, said that the program has genuinely sparked the children's interest. In fact, this is the largest group she has seen involved with Saratoga's summer enrichment programming.

"These kids are eager," she said. "There's a need for it. The parents need us, and the kids want to come."

The blog mentioned in the story can be viewed at HFHNYC.org/blog.asp.

A FALL OF FUN & EDUCATION

Last fall, the early learning and after-school programs at all of the American Family Inns made learning fun through a series of field trips, hands-on activities, and service projects.



▶ The children from the Saratoga Family Inn visited White Post Farms in Melville, New York where they fed farm animals, rode camels, and picked their own pumpkins. ▼



▶ Young residents of the Clinton Family Inn spent a morning at the Central Park Zoo learning about barnyard creatures through crafts and sing-a-longs. ▼





▲ Students from Winston Prep volunteered by assisting the early childhood education teachers and sprucing up the grounds at the Saratoga Family Inn.

Children at the Saratoga Family Inn staged a breast cancer awareness walk in the neighborhood around the shelter to share what they learned and to give back to the community. ▼



▲ Children from the Williamsburg Family Inn picked apples and enjoyed the fresh, fall air at Harvest Moon Farm and Orchard. ▼



CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE WHILE GIVING BACK

SUMMER CAMP ALUMNS RETURN AS TEEN LEADERS

Teenage summer camp alumni were brought back to mentor younger campers.



It was the summer of 2009 when Sheldon Barrow, now 15, first traveled to the Hudson Valley to attend one of Homes for the Homeless' (HFH) two summer camps, Camp Lanowa.

Most of the children attend one of three camp sessions held over the course of the summer, but Sheldon made sure that he was a part of all three. The next year, he was back again.

Since 1989 the camp program has offered an escape to homeless and low-income children from New York City who get the chance to spend two weeks in wooded Harriman State Park. Camps Wakonda and Lanowa served almost 350 children from throughout the City of New York last summer. Camps are open to children ages six through 13. So after his two summers, Sheldon was aged-out.

He told staff about how he wanted to remain a part of the program in some way. The idea to bring back alumni had been discussed before, and Sheldon provided inspiration to make it happen.

This past summer, Sheldon and three other former campers returned to Harriman State Park as teen leaders. Serving as role models and mentors to the younger campers, this first class of promising alumni know how to relate. They have shared personal experiences, and they really do know what it is like to be a young person experiencing homelessness or other challenges related to poverty.

"Kids look up to you more," said Thalia Huggins, 14, one of the teen leaders.

Sheldon echoed those words.

"They seem to take me more seriously knowing I was a camper. They see me as a role model," Sheldon said with pride.

Sheldon's mother is proud as well. It brings her joy to know that her son is giving back to the community that once reached out to them during their time of need.

"We've been blessed, so we give back," Dorothy said. "I'm hoping, in a way, he's giving back."

In addition to learning the satisfaction of helping others, the teen leaders revel in another perk of their position. They are "super campers," which means that they still get to do the adventurous stuff of camp, like swimming, hiking, boating, and telling stories around the campfire. They are experts at fun.

Sarah Herold, camp program coordinator, praised the program.

"Not only do they get to enjoy another summer spent at HFH camps, but they come away with new skills, higher self-esteem, and a passion for service," she said.

Teens like Sheldon Barrow inspired the teen leader alumni program at the Homes for the Homeless summer camps.



Homes for the Homeless would like to thank our partners, friends, and supporters for helping to make our programs a success. This list covers the period from November 1, 2012, through March 1, 2013. We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the list and apologize for any inadvertent error or omission.

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HELP FAMILIES

VOLUNTEER AT THE PROSPECT FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

HFH's Prospect Family Support Center (PFSC) is one of only two 24-hour programs in New York City that provide immediate temporary assistance to parents in crisis who are having difficulty taking care of their children. The PFSC has several opportunities for you to help.

Volunteers are needed for 90 minutes on Wednesday evenings throughout the year to care for children while their parents attend workshops on parenting. Opportunities for volunteers also exist during other events, and in-kind and monetary donations are also welcome if you cannot give your time. A list of needed supplies and information on monetary donations are available at: <http://www.familysupportnyc.org/support.asp>. For more information on volunteering, contact Margaret Menghini at (212) 529-5252 or mmenghini@hfhnyc.org.

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