



Homes for the Homeless

Serving NYC's Neediest Families Since 1986

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2013 SUMMER/FALL

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A Special Thanks



HOMES FOR THE HOMELESS BULLETIN

SERVING NYC'S NEEDIEST FAMILIES SINCE 1986

2013
Summer/
Fall

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Welcome to the Summer/Fall 2013 edition of the *Homes for the Homeless Bulletin*.

In New York City there are currently more than 10,000 families with children living in homeless shelters. That means that thousands of children are at an educational disadvantage compared with their peers and thousands of parents are struggling to find stable, gainful employment and housing. With your support, we are able to provide the families in our four American Family Inns with educational services and programs designed to propel them toward success.

In this issue we spotlight one of our day care employees, Sade Dickson, whose initiative in starting a Parent Action Committee at the Saratoga Family Inn has created a renewed sense of community within the Early Childhood Education Center. Another feature focuses on Family Works, an internship program designed to provide adults in our shelters with job-readiness training and search support with

the goal of finding full-time jobs and permanent housing. We are proud to share the story of the Prospect Family Inn Chess Team, which is comprised of children who are learning to play chess and has already garnered several medals in tournaments throughout the city. The final article is about our recent receipt of the EmblemHealth Commitment to Care Award for our work with homeless families at the Saratoga Family Inn.

Throughout the *Bulletin* you'll gain insight into some of the people and programs making a difference in the lives of homeless families at our Inns. All of us at Homes for the Homeless thank you for your ongoing support, donations, and service.



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

2013 SUMMER/FALL SEASON SPOTLIGHT on...

Sade Dickson

As part of the EarlyLearn program, an early childhood education system designed to prepare children for success in elementary school and beyond, administrators at the Saratoga Early Childhood Education Center are asked to form a Parent Action Committee (PAC) and incorporate parents into the classroom structure. Because she felt strongly about parental involvement and found it easy to connect with parents at Saratoga, Sade Dickson stepped in to form the PAC and encourage parents to be more involved with their children's education.

Spearheading the initiative, Dickson persuaded parents to volunteer in the classroom, help celebrate special events, recruit other families to join in, and advocate for those who are sometimes unable to attend PAC meetings due to fluctuating work schedules and long commutes. Elections were held for parent representatives for each class, including a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Though some parents shied away from running for office, Dickson was persistent. "If they said no and I felt they were a great candidate, I coaxed them into it," she said.

Saratoga Family Inn's director of child care, Fran Perez, said that the PAC has "strengthened the communication lines between home and school." Perez noted that Dickson is skilled at persuading parents to join the PAC, and that as a

result, "[The parents] feel more involved in the process rather than like they are going along with what we dictate. They seem proud to be involved, and it adds to the friendly, warm environment."

Dickson hopes in the future to expand the program to include more children and also to have more parental involvement. "I would like the day care to be known as a day care, and pass that stigma of it being in a shelter. It's open to the community," said Dickson. "I've been here for six years, and it's like a family. It's always good to help family."



Sade Dickson spearheaded the formation of the Parent Action Committee at the Saratoga Early Childhood Education Center.

PAVING THE WAY

FAMILY WORKS INTERNSHIPS HELP PROVIDE PATH TO PERMANENT HOUSING

When Courtney Butler mentioned to a housing specialist at the Saratoga Family Inn that she'd previously worked as a corrections officer, the specialist urged her to meet immediately with SFI administrator Mike Fahy and Deputy Administrator Sharon Lewis. Fahy and Lewis were interviewing candidates for the Family Works program, which focuses on job-readiness training while offering residents at the Inn on-site paid work.

"I had my two-year-old daughter with me at the time, and she was like, 'You go get changed into something nice, I'll watch her while you go to the interview,' so I went," said Butler. When she applied to be a part of Family Works, she had been living at the Saratoga for nine months as a single parent with two children. "It's not always a bad thing to be in a shelter," said Butler. "It can happen to anybody. But if you see an opportunity like this to get out, you take it."

Family Works helped her complete the eight-hour process of obtaining a Pre-Assignment Training Certificate, which is required for security personnel in New York. By February of 2013 Butler was working full-time as a security guard at the Saratoga, championing Family Works to residents as she signed them in. Shortly thereafter she moved out of the shelter and into nearby permanent housing. Her story is one of several successes that have already come out of the program since its start in mid-2012.

Currently in its third session, Family Works provides clients with valuable on-the-job experience, as well as training in setting goals, team building, scheduling, communicating in the workplace, and seeking jobs.

"Their supervisors mentor them rather than just directing them, and they show them what to do and what not to do in the workplace," said Fahy.

Courtney Butler graduated from the Family Works program and is now employed as a security guard at the Saratoga Family Inn.



"This is a real job, it's the real world," said Lewis, who emphasizes to those in the program that their part-time work in the shelter is vital not just for the shelter, but for their efforts to gain full-time, viable employment.

Graduates of the program are encouraged to make step-by-step goals, such as aiming for full-time employment that can sustain their households, then finding permanent housing, and then, perhaps, pursuing education that would allow for greater career opportunities down the line.

"It's about helping them build self-esteem and self-worth. It's a great feeling to see someone get a job and move out," said Fahy. Lewis agreed, saying, "I know that I am participating in something that can change someone's life. If we can make a difference in one person's life, my job is done."



Staff from Homes for the Homeless' central office and Saratoga Family Inn honored graduates of the Family Works program at a graduation ceremony.



Tiffanie Dukes received a certificate for completing the Family Works internship program.

MAKING AN IMPACT SARATOGA FAMILY INN RECEIVES COMMITMENT TO CARE AWARD



Staff from the Saratoga Family Inn represented Homes for the Homeless at the EmblemHealth Commitment to Care Award ceremony, honoring the work the Queens-based shelter does to assist families in need.

Homes for the Homeless' Saratoga Family Inn was one of five Queens-based nonprofit organizations to receive a Commitment to Care Award from EmblemHealth, the largest New York City-based health insurer, on June 12. EmblemHealth's Commitment to Care program recognizes nonprofit organizations that positively impact the lives of New Yorkers. The program honors the important work of successful nonprofits and provides strategic advice through a lecture aimed at helping the organizations to continue growing and serving their communities.

Honorees were recognized by EmblemHealth representatives and presented with the award by Earl "The Pearl" Monroe, an NBA legend with local ties. Mike Fahy, administrator at the Saratoga Family Inn, accepted the award on behalf of HFH and the Inn. He invited members of his staff and HFH's central office to join him on stage, noting that they were all part of a team that works each day to make a difference in the lives of families in shelter, helping them obtain the skills they need to become independent.

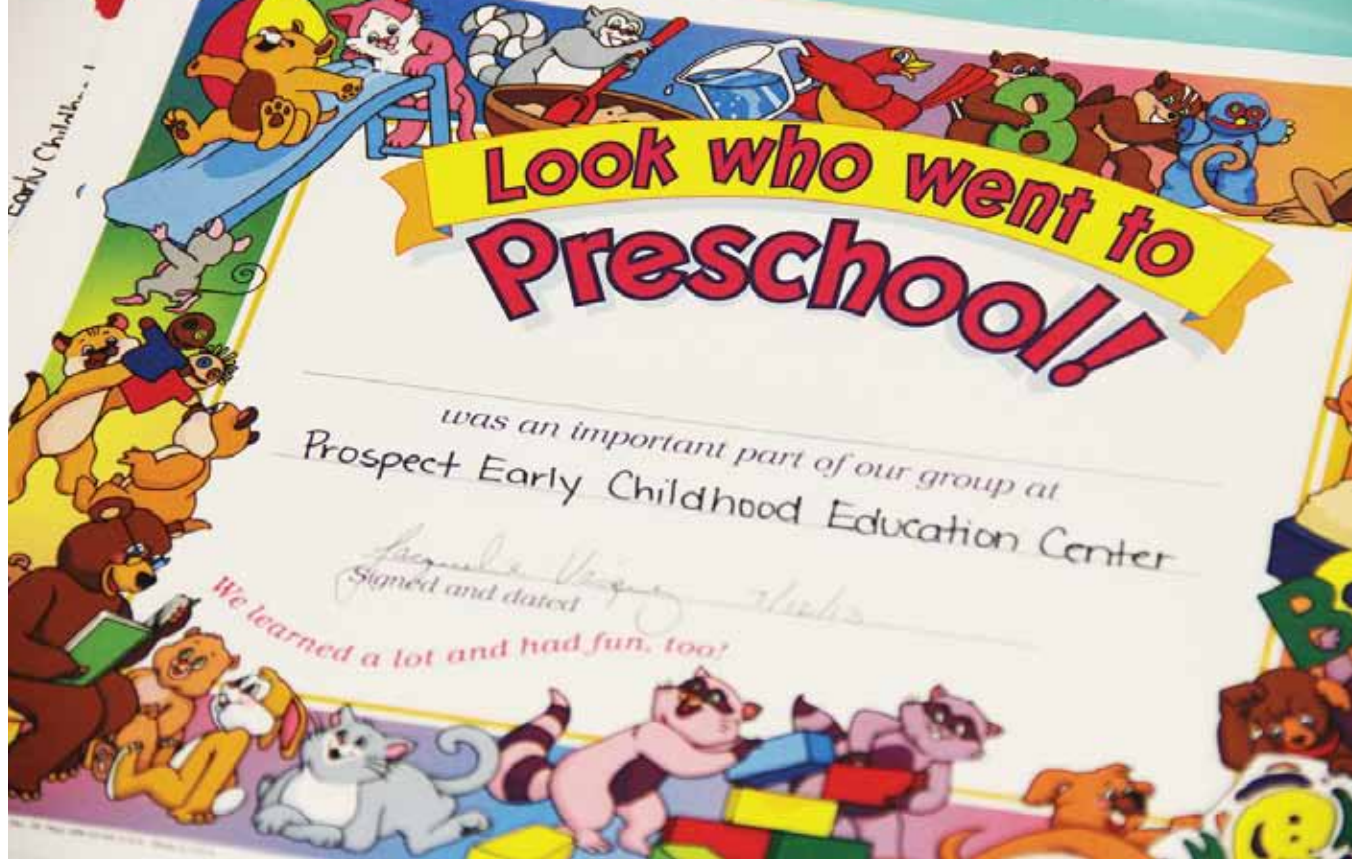
"The nonprofits we honor tonight serve constituencies from various backgrounds and stages of life, but they all share an unrelenting spirit and commitment that allows them to be successful," said David Flemister, director, Brand Strategy and Community Marketing at EmblemHealth and the

event's master of ceremonies. "EmblemHealth honors and draws inspiration from them as we all strive for a stronger New York."

The evening's honorees also included Haitian-Americans United for Progress, the Jamaica Service Program for Older Adults, Latin Women in Action, and the National Council of Negro Women.

Saratoga Family Inn administrator Mike Fahy accepted the award on behalf of Homes for the Homeless and his staff, noting that they had all worked as a team to help families achieve independence.





Children in both the Prospect and Saratoga Early Childhood Education Centers celebrated the completion of their EarlyLearn preschool program this summer, with their teachers, parents, and siblings looking on proudly.

The children were all smiles in their caps and gowns as they received their pre-K diplomas. In addition to certificates noting their accomplishments, the graduates also received a year-book put together by one of their teachers, Sade Dickson.





▲ As part of their Moving Up celebrations, the children dressed up in costumes and sang a song about what they'd like to be when they grow up. Each of the graduating age groups also did a special performance highlighting what they had learned throughout the school year.



BEGINNERS TO CHAMPIONS

PROSPECT CHESS TEAM GAINS SKILLS FOR CHESS AND LIFE

“The king can eat any piece he wants,” explains 13-year-old David, a senior member of the Prospect Family Inn Chess Team, in the whimsical terms of a younger player. He is pointing out available moves on the chessboard laid out in front of them. Sprawled around the room, children are playing against each other, focusing intently on their boards, asking neighbors if they’re in check or, “How does the bishop move, again?”

Founded just over a year ago by Education Programs coordinator Leo Benavides, the Prospect Chess Team has already amassed seven individual medals, one individual second-place trophy, and one first-place plaque as a group. Free tournaments are held monthly all over New York City and sponsored by Chess in the Schools, a nonprofit organization that promotes the game to increase inner city students’ confidence and academic potential.

When Benavides, a chess player since age 11, learned about Chess in the Schools, he saw an opportunity to use chess to help children at the shelter improve their math and reading skills, build self-esteem, and develop a positive approach to life.

“[Chess] shows them sportsmanship and how to lose gracefully, and that practice is important for learning and having success,” said Benavides. “They learn from chess to understand that you can make mistakes and you can recover, and they apply that to life. Learning from mistakes and then winning a trophy or medal, you see the boost of self-esteem in the children’s eyes.”

Getting children interested in chess when there is a world of digital entertainment available in the same room where they practice was initially a challenge. However, once a few children were

Children pair off to practice their chess skills at the Prospect Family Inn. The Prospect Family Inn Chess Team practices regularly for its monthly meets against teams from schools around New York City.



involved, other children followed along. Older kids have started to mentor the younger kids, and less-experienced players frequently challenge the senior team members in order to learn from them. Staff members are joining in, too. “I’m thankful for my staff learning chess. Most hadn’t played before, so them coming on board was helpful,” Benavides said.

The team includes kids in both the younger and older age groups who participate in after-school programming at Prospect. Thanks to a New York State Office of Children and Family Services grant for Advantage After School Programs, the team expanded this year to include children from schools around the community. Their first tournament of the year took place October 5 in the Bronx.



Chess gives children the opportunity to practice important critical thinking skills, learn good sportsmanship, and feel a sense of accomplishment.

March 2–June 30, 2013

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 March 2, 2013 to June 30, 2013. We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the list and apologize for any inadvertent error or omission.

AIDS Center of Queens County	Hofstra University
Abrams Family	H.O.G.A.R. Garden Plaza
Aiysha Reid	Humu Mohammed
Alex D. Morales	Ian and Abigail Handel
Alexandrina Chetreanu	Isabelle Sanginario
American Museum of Natural History	Isaiah Salvador
Amy King	J. Mahamah
Andrea Summerlin	Jackie Kinsler
Andrea Stern	Jacqueline Chatman
Ann Ellis	Jacqueline Hampton
Annetta Smith	James D. Hernandez
Annette Williams	James McGovern
Annette Jolles—Van Bergen	Janet Howe
Ayana Green	Janet Slater
Back from Bali	Jared Verdi
Bank of Tokyo	Jeanette Figueroa
Barbara E. Powell	Joanne Meikle
Benita Brown	Joanne Scott Wright
Bernard Moore	Joey Scott
Bethany Baptist Church	John Leung
Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church	Jon Dorfman
Beverly Hurd	Joyce Farnsworth
Brian P. Guillot	Karen Topsey
Brian Morgan	Kasowitz, Benson, Torres, & Friedman, LLP
Bridgeman Art Library	Keri Dottin
Bruce Tush	KidCare
Calvin S. Glenn	Kids in Distressed Situations
Cariann Coward	Kim Cumberbatch
Carlo Stephen	Krysten S. Brown
Carola Marrero	Ladies Guild
Caroline Bolanos	Lance Lilly
Carolyn E. Robertson	Laura H. Jackson
Cassandra Williamson	Lauren Peelen
Catherine Cardoso	Leon Lewis
Changing The Odds	Leslie Koeppel
Cheryl Jones	Letia Ryle
Chris Roach	Lineage Project
Christine Faulkner White	LinkShare
Christopher McLean	Lisa Battaglia
Claire Koeppel	Luis M. Ramos
Constellation Energy Group	Luvasia Bouges
Foundation, Inc.	Lynda DeLott
Corrie Slewett	Madison Square Garden—New York Liberty
Credit Advocate Counseling Corporation	Manhattan Business Academy
City University of New York, York College	Manhattan Children's Clothing & Toy Exchange
The Dalton School	Manhattan College of New York
Dan Gutman	Marie Anthony
Debra Ingram	Maritza Edwards
Defina Scott	Mary Anne Lamour
DeLories Thomas	Maxine Linehan
Denise Bach	Mayai N. Chatman
Dennis Charles	Melissa and T.J. Flaherty
Diana Ramos	Members of Zion Gospel Church
Diane Kasselmann	Michael Mitchell
Dina Roach	Michelle Latimer
Dineca Harper-Robertson	Michelle Sibbles
Doreen Lacatena	Monica Mathelier
Dorrian Spencer	Monserita Julian
Eddie Stern and Stephanie Rein	Moostafa Yosef Bey
Edwina George	Morgan Turkewitz
Edwyn W. Stuart	Mt. Carmel Youth Development Corporation
Eileen Fernandez	N.J. Kliegman
Ellen Quackenbos	Nancy Llamas
Emblem Health	Nancy Salwen
Erika Lyon	Natalia Alexander
Eunice Murphy	Natalie J. Jamerson
Extrashade	National Council for Research on Women
Fay Chin	New York Cares
Fender Musical Instruments Corporation	New York Children's Health Project
Food Bank for New York City	New York City Administration for Children's Services
Frank Sansivieri Intermediate School 73 Q Builder's Club	New York City Department of Education
Geri Marsanico	
God Wright	
Harriet Kliegman	

Front Cover Photo: Awards from the Prospect Family Inn Chess Team's victories are displayed in the lobby of the Prospect Family Inn. Read more about the team on page 6.

HELP CHILDREN SUCCEED CALL FOR SCHOOL SUPPLIES

The start of the school year brings a fresh opportunity for learning, as well as a fresh list of school supplies that students need to participate in the full range of classroom activities. Backpacks, calculators, notebooks, pens, and pencils—the list goes on and on and can sometimes be overwhelming. For homeless families in New York, purchasing these supplies for their children can prove to be a challenge, not only at the start of school but also as the year progresses. At Homes for the Homeless, we strive to ensure that our children attend school with the proper supplies to help them reach their full academic potential. You can help to keep their learning going all year long by donating much-needed school supplies. A complete list of necessary items is available at our Web site: www.hfhny.org/getinvolved/wishlist.asp.

New York City Department of Homeless Services	The Stephen Gaynor School
New York City Department of Youth and Community Development	Students from CUNY York College
New York City Transit Authority	Students from Hostos Community College
New York State Office of Children's and Family Services	Students from Hofstra University
Nick Francoeur	Students from Metropolitan College of New York
Nidina Canoville	Students from Nightingale-Bamford School
P.S. 40	Students from St. John's University
Pajama Program	Students from Touro College
Parkchester Baptist Church	Temple Emanu-El
Patricia Brown	Teresa Duran
Patricia Miller	Terrell McEwan
Peace by P.E.A.C.E.	Tiffany Moore
Peter Abibb	Tiffany Wright
Queens School of Inquiry	Timothy Taylor
Rebecca Simon	Tosha Brown
Reyad Hussain	United Faith Baptist Church
Ricky Thompson	United Way of Greater Knoxville
Rita Horne	University of Wisconsin
Rob Poselle	The Village Community School
Robert Handel	Vivian Viera
Robinson Family	Winston Preparatory High School
Roy Lee Aarons	Yasmin Coichetti
SAR Academy	Yolanda Simon
Sabrina Clarke	Yvonne Frazier
Sabrina Wells	Yvonne Newsome
Sanya Rivera	
Sarah Schnee	
Sean Service	
Simon Stern	
Shari Rivera	
Shaun Dominici	
Sheila Carter	
Sheila Gillece	
Sherise Williams	
Sherricka White	
Shirley Gibson	
Shongo Massamba	
Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP	
Song Mondress PLLC	
Soyoung Cheon	
Sriram Padmanabhan	
St. John's University	
Stacey Cohen	
Stephanie Steinberg	

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