

MAIN ADDRESS:  
60-02 Queens Boulevard  
Woodside, NY 11377  
tel: 718.651.7770 fax: 718.651.5029  
www.childcenterny.org

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## Called to Action

From the Executive Director **Sandra Hagan**



### EVIDENCE

Early in my career, I worked at a shelter for runaway teens where I saw children as young as eleven and twelve so devastated by the violent deaths of parents or by being beaten or raped by adult caretakers that they'd turned to the streets, drugs and prostitution. By the time we reached them, the damage was so bad that few could ever fully heal. It was clear that the children's earlier traumas had led to their downward spiral.

Results are in for our crisis intervention program for families and their teens who are at risk of foster care placement and juvenile detention. Our independent researcher studied 100 cases and measured each child's "risk factors" at the time they came to us. These included serious parent-child conflict, noncompliance with rules, academic failure, criminal involvement, drug abuse, and mental illness. In short, a very challenging population.

I decided I wanted to reach children sooner and be part of the safety net that would save lives. That's why I came to The Child Center, 26 years ago.

At the end of treatment, the mean number of total risk factors decreased 61 percent. Even more amazing is that after program completion, families continued to improve so that by six months after treatment, there was a **total 84 percent decrease in risk behaviors** from where the youth had begun. We applaud and thank our staff. We also thank the Robin Hood Foundation for funding this work.

I am sad to say that today we see this safety net unraveling, as we now face the toughest financial climate in our 58-year history.

Never before have I seen such drastic funding cuts to programs that help our poorest and most vulnerable citizens. Not only has the mayor proposed removing millions of dollars from after school programs and childcare, the state has rewritten Medicaid rules so that our most troubled children will not get the array and depth of services they need.

All this comes at a time when a growing body of research proves that best-practice interventions—like the ones used at The Child Center—really work. I simply do not understand this shortsighted thinking that will sacrifice our children and cost us all so much more later on.

If you have ever thought of helping The Child Center, there never has been a more important time to do so.

What can you do?

- Make an immediate difference for the children we serve by making a donation, either online at our website, or in the enclosed envelope.
- Take five minutes and tell our lawmakers that the city must continue to provide services to our most at-risk young people. Please visit [www.childcenterny.org](http://www.childcenterny.org) to find out how.

We are developing a business model that adapts to the new fiscal reality but alone, we cannot keep services in place for all the children who currently receive them. I hope you will support us so that we don't have to turn away children.

I am haunted by images of teens living on the streets. Please join us in keeping the safety net strong.

*Sandra Hagan*

We turn around the most at-risk adolescents with proven interventions.



### The Summer Time Advantage

The Child Center will provide fun and enrichment this summer at our camps throughout Queens. At eight locations, 1,400 kids will engage in lots of learning and doing, through creative projects, physical activities, social connections, and excursions to places like museums and baseball games.

"Our summer camps are wonderful for parents because they can go to work knowing that their children are in a safe environment with caring adults," said Nicholas Ferriera, assistant director of The Child Center's Youth Development programs.

"Doing theme-based activities in the arts, recreation, and academic enrichment helps prevent summer learning loss," said Nicholas. "With field trips, our kids also get to explore their neighborhoods and the rich offerings of our city. We keep them learning. Plus they get to be with their friends and have a good time."

to make a donation  
[www.childcenterny.org](http://www.childcenterny.org)  
or to find out more

All young people experience learning losses when they do not engage in educational activities during the summer.

Most students lose about two months of grade-level in math computation skills. Low-income students lose more than two months in reading achievement.

More than half of the achievement gap faced by low-income students can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities. As a result, low-income youth are less likely to graduate from high school or enter college.

Source: National Summer Learning Assoc.





A boy in our Head Start program heading toward school readiness and success.

## How We Helped Children

2010

With your help, we achieved our mission in 2010 by reaching out to **18,000 children** with the following vital services:

Provided **Early Childhood Education** to **683** impoverished children under age five. In a recent year-long evaluation of one of these programs, the vast majority of children showed strong and significant gains in language, fine motor skills, social-emotional, and cognitive development—greatly improving their odds for starting school ready to learn.

Protected and healed **2,439** children at serious risk by providing **Child Abuse Prevention**, strengthening thousands of families so children can be safe and thrive.

Gave **Individual and Family Counseling**—using evidence-based interventions—to help **5,773** children and their families cope with serious emotional problems, school failure, behavior problems, trauma, and substance abuse.

Strengthened **9,213** young people in our **Youth Development** division, with after-school programs, academic enrichment, sports, summer camp, vocational guidance, pregnancy prevention, college readiness, and a one-on-one tutoring program that helped **92 percent of 232 students** improve their total reading scores by one or more grade levels.



The Child Center always strives to strengthen the supportive bonds between parents and their children.



Our programs provide a safe haven from the streets, educational support, and a connection to caring adults.

## A Place of Opportunity **spotlight:** Youth Workers



Daniel Valverde working with children at PS 56. "I can work with any grade," said Daniel Valverde, age 20, "but my personality clicks best with the little kids. If they cry or feel uncomfortable, I am able to get them to communicate. I can get the shy ones to open up and join in with the other kids."

For the last four years, Daniel has been a youth worker at our PS 56 after-school program where he provides homework help and leads activities for kindergarteners and first graders. "Working here has made me more responsible and mature," he said.

"We think of our centers as being a place of opportunity for the local neighborhood," said Deep Ghosh, director of The Child Center's Youth Development programs for more than a decade. "We try to groom our youth workers to become mentors and leaders to their younger peers, who usually come from the same neighborhoods and share many of the same experiences. It's a great opportunity to set a good example and to give back."

Many of our youth staff go on to become the social workers, teachers, and psychologists of tomorrow. Daniel recently declared an elementary education major at Queens College. As he explained it, "Because of this job, I want a career working with kids."

Though The Child Center is famous for helping at-risk children, few people know that we also are an employer of more than 400 part-time young adults. These are primarily high school and college students who come to us for their first paid jobs and resume building experiences. They work in our summer, after school, and peer leadership programs as activity specialists, instructors, tutors, group leaders, and some even become program directors. Each young employee receives training and mentoring.

Tiffany Tacury started as a volunteer at The Child Center's PS 89 after-school program, then rose through the ranks to eventually become a site coordinator before leaving for Chicago to go to graduate school.

"From youth worker to the director of my own program, I never believed I was capable, but with much support and care given to me at The Child Center throughout the years, I succeeded."

Thank you The Child Center of NY. Through you I learned hard work and dedication does get you far. I am forever grateful to this organization for grooming me into the professional I am today."

Tiffany Tacury  
Graduate Student,  
DePaul University

## Big Night Round Up

On a freezing night last March, hundreds of supporters brought warmth and celebration to The Child Center's annual gala at Terrace on the Park in Flushing. It was a beautiful and successful evening.

At the center of the event were our honorees who invested generously in our work.

### Our deep gratitude to:

Anthony Caporrino of Grodsky, Caporrino & Kaufman P.C. • Louis J. Macari, Esq. of Exit Realty Lewis & Murphy  
The Honorable Malcolm A. Smith, NY State Senator • Spiros Voutsinas, President and CEO, Atlantic Bank, a subsidiary of New York Community Bank • Pearl Meyer, honored posthumously.

And a million thanks to the dinner dance committee that made it happen.

### Thanks to our sponsors and underwriters:

**Platinum:** New York Community Bank Foundation

**Silver:** Cook & Krupa • Crystal Window & Door Systems • Flushing Bank • New York Community Bancorp

### For donating goods and services, we gratefully thank:

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The Child Center of NY is a 58-year-old nonprofit agency whose mission is to help at-risk children and youth succeed in life.

The Child Center is a Better Business Bureau Approved Charity.  
For more information visit: [www.childcenterny.org](http://www.childcenterny.org) or call 718.651.7770 ext. 210.