



1953-2013  
**60**  
YEARS

*From the Executive Director*  
**Sandra Hagan**

Dear Friends:

I was absolutely thrilled on the night of our Gala when I realized we had just raised more money than ever before in our agency's history.

And it couldn't have come at a better time. Even with all of our hard work, there's a huge job still to be done. Thousands of children desperately need us if they are ever to have the hope of the future that they—and all children—deserve. The money we raise from our friends enables us to weather the storms of government cutbacks and recessions, and still be right here, in the poverty and violence stricken neighborhoods, where we are needed the most.

The Gala celebrated our 60 wonderful years of helping over a quarter-million children and families succeed. Along the way we've grown from a small, neighborhood counseling center to an agency able to impact the lives of 18,000 children annually. We insure that youngsters who are on track stay there, and that those who have fallen off, sometimes disastrously so, get back on. Our results speak for themselves.

Hope is so critical to our work. Thanks so much for giving us hope that by working together, both we and our children can accomplish our dreams. With your help, we'll serve a million youngsters in our next 60 years. What a wonderful moment to celebrate.

*Sandra Hagan*

Sandra Hagan, LMSW



## Sequestration Hits Home

When U.S. Congressman Joseph Crowley visited The Child Center's Head Start program in Woodside last May, he went to each classroom, listened to singing, and chatted up the three and four-year olds. But he was especially interested in talking with 20 or so parents who were waiting to tell him what the program means to them and their fears for the future.

The \$85 billion in federal budget cuts known as sequestration are being felt in The Child Center's Head Start programs, which serve 328 impoverished children from birth to age five. Already one site of 31 children has had to reduce to 24. More cuts are likely to follow.

"Head Start is at the forefront of the Democratic Caucus," said Representative Crowley who has championed the program in the past and sits on the House Ways and Means subcommittee on human resources. "We will not see Head Start fail, as long as we can stop it."

One mother said to him, "Please continue to fight for us. Please don't forget about our program. We can't speak to the lawmakers, so please speak for us."

*Above: U.S. Rep. Joseph Crowley met with parents at our Head Start program.*

*Right: The congressman toured our classrooms and met with our children.*



# the *Greatest Gala Ever*

The Big Night felt especially big this year. More than 300 guests came to the annual April gala, helping to raise a record-breaking gross \$840,000—up 36% from the year before, and more than double that of two years ago.

Rob Simmelkjaer, a senior VP and on-air contributor at NBC Sports Group, hosted the gala, which was held at Guastavino's in Manhattan and also marked The Child Center's 60th anniversary. The evening's program featured inspirational moments from staff members, as well as former clients (in person and on video) who shared personal accounts of how The Child Center changed their lives. Charismatic Lydia Fenet of Christie's, raised spirits and rallied the crowd with a live auction that brought in bids from \$500 to \$10,000 to support The Child Center's work.



Host Rob Simmelkjaer of NBC Sports Group with board vice president Charlotte Bolland, Melanie Stein, and Lauren Pacuit.



Special guests: Jose, long-time participant in our after-school program, along with his grandmother.

"I am humbled by the generosity of so many donors who embraced the cause of disadvantaged children who all too often are invisible," said Richard Jay, president of the board. "Many thanks to our event co-chairs Nell and Adam Schwartz and Aliana and David Spungen, as well as all our board members who worked so hard for this success."



The young and inspired. Caroline Boneparth and Tom Woiteshek who led our new Junior Outreach Committee.

## Up & Coming

It all started when Tom Woiteshek and Caroline Boneparth—two recently minted associates at a Manhattan private equity firm—started talking about charity and giving back. They weren't sure what they wanted to do but they knew it should make a meaningful difference. Russ Carson (their boss at Welsh, Carson, Anderson & Stowe) suggested they consider The Child Center of NY. After a tour and a meeting with board president Richard Jay, Caroline and Tom agreed to recruit a junior outreach committee that would create a fundraising event for young professionals.

The result? In April, the Sunset Social brought 150 guests, mainly in their 20s and 30s, to Hudson Terrace Rooftop to share cocktails, mingle, and learn about The Child Center. The event netted nearly \$20,000 for the agency.

"It was bigger than we expected," said Tom. "The Child Center's message really spoke to people. We want to do it again."

"The Sunset Social was an easy way for people to come and learn about the charity and think about what they might like to get involved in," said Caroline. "We're not so far removed from our own childhoods. Many of us know we've had such good fortune in our lives. It's just not fair that so many kids have so much less."

To be notified of future young professional events including a sure-to-be-epic dodge ball tournament this fall, please drop an email to [jenniferdudley@childcenterny.org](mailto:jenniferdudley@childcenterny.org).



## Robitics Rules

Kudos to our middle school After-School Robotics Team at JHS 185 which took a first place award in the finals at a citywide tournament. For their project, the students surveyed senior citizens and found out that arthritis was their biggest daily-life challenge. Then they set out to solve the problem using Robotics to create a blueprint for a new kind of synthetic knee joint that would reduce pain, increase mobility, and lead to a higher quality of life. How great is that?



Many things can wait;  
children cannot. Today, their  
bones are being formed, their  
blood is being made, their  
senses are being developed. To  
them, we cannot say 'tomorrow.'  
Their name is today.

--Gabriela Mistral  
*Nobel Laureate in Literature, 1945*



For info call  
Susan Gleason  
718-651-7770,  
ext. 204



spotlight

## Leyla Bermudez

**Site Director,**  
*After-School Program at PS 182*  
**Education:**  
*BA in Criminal Justice, John Jay*  
**Years at The Child Center: 8**

### ***Tell us about your work at The Child Center.***

Our program gives kids extra academic support after school and extends the learning hours of the day. We also offer enrichment that helps them tap into talents they didn't know they had. They learn the guitar and keyboard and play Duke Ellington. They take drama and art. They get exposed to chess and team sports. A lot of these activities are experiences their parents might not be able to afford to give them.

### ***Who are the kids you work with?***

Many have academic challenges. Many come from multigenerational poverty, and their parents have given up hope. These kids have dreams but, because of their circumstances or what they've seen and the role models in their lives, they don't know how to get there or even where to start.

### ***How do you approach the families?***

I try to engage parents and get them into the conversation. Sometimes I get passionate and verbalize that they have to be part of this. I send out personal invitations. I offer incentives to get them involved. I tell them straight that I'm thinking about what's best for your kid. You and I have to work together. Tell me how I can help you. I tell them that there are solutions to problems.

### ***What makes you feel good about your job?***

I feel good when the kids are happy and I see them building skills. I get letters from them all the time. They tell me that I am wonderful and that I care about them. They give me artwork, which I post in my office. When I see it I get inspired. It makes me very proud when they do things that I wasn't sure they were capable of doing. They surprise me all the time. Then I say, okay it's all worth it.

**The Child Center of NY is a 60-year-old nonprofit agency whose mission is to help at-risk children and youth succeed in life.**

**To make a donation, visit: [www.childcenterny.org](http://www.childcenterny.org) or call 718.651.7770 ext. 301.**

MAIN ADDRESS:

60-02 Queens Boulevard

Woodside, NY 11377

tel: 718.651.7770 fax: 718.651.5029

[www.childcenterny.org](http://www.childcenterny.org)



By Animdita Bhattacharjee, age 10. With thanks to the Guggenheim UBS MAP Art initiative that gave our after-school participants an unforgettable art experience and a chance to share their work in the My MAP. My Story exhibit at UBS.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

More Children Get a Head Start

The Greatest Gala Ever

Robotics Rules

Young and Inspired

to make a donation

[www.childcenterny.org](http://www.childcenterny.org)

or to find out more



Growing and Learning at PS 223.