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## After School Programs Saved!

Last January, the mayor presented a budget that slashed 33 of the city's out-of-school-time programs. Half of these were in Queens, including two after-school programs operated by The Child Center. Thousands of families were distraught. After months of intense budget negotiations, The City Council restored this funding.

"We are thrilled and grateful that The City Council saved after-school programs in New York City," said Executive Director Sandra Hagan. "This worthwhile investment saves money in the long run by building kids' social and academic skills, while giving them a safe after-school haven off the streets."

The Child Center will provide more than 1,800 children with safe and enriching after-school activities this school year.

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

Nine out of 10 Americans want all children and teens to have some type of organized activity or safe place to go after school.

Participation in a high-quality after-school program is linked to significant gains in standardized test scores and work habits, as well as reductions in behavior problems among disadvantaged students.

Parents miss an average of 8 days of work per year due to lack of after school care—costing businesses up to \$300 billion per year.

## Hundreds of Volunteers Build a Playground in a Single Day

Warner Music Group and Non-Profit KaBOOM!  
Team up with The Child Center of NY



Painting blue skies and rainbows.

In an extraordinary collaboration, 240 volunteers joined forces on October 21 to transform an abandoned loading dock into a brightly colored playground at The Child Center's South Jamaica Clinic. This unique "community-build" project was organized by KaBOOM!, a national non-profit dedicated to "saving play" for children.



Executive Director Sandra Hagan, with State Senator Malcolm Smith, and board member John Cook.

The new 2,544-square foot play space was fully assembled from scratch in less than eight hours with the help of volunteers from Warner Music Group, The Child Center, the local community (including employees from Swiss Re) and KaBOOM! The volunteers installed slides, climbing structures, swings, benches, and flower boxes. They painted the surrounding walls with cheerful murals.

With generous funding from Warner Music Group, the new play space will be available to the 600 at-risk children who receive counseling, after-school tutoring, and special programs at this location.

At the ribbon-cutting ceremony, NY State Senator Malcolm Smith said, "You have no idea what you've done for this entire community. You've helped turn this neighborhood around."

"For twenty years, it's been my dream to have a playground here. And now my dream has come true," said Sandra Hagan, executive director of The Child Center of NY. "Playing together with peers is an essential part of healthy childhood. We are so grateful to Warner Music Group

photography by Michelle Kawka



Checking out the new swings.

Special thanks to these businesses and individuals that generously contributed materials and food for our big day!

Apple & Eve, Inc., Iris Ballestere, Rodney Batte, Boston Market, Cook and Krupa, Costco, Daniel F. Allen & Co., Dunkin Donuts, Ebenezer Restaurant & Pizzeria, Fine Fare Supermarket, Flagship Diner, Golden Krust Bakery, Home Depot, McDonalds, Mississippi BBQ Grill, Riveria Produce, Smoked BBQ Pig, Barbara Russ, Subway, X Riders for the Community.



From the Executive Director  
Sandra Hagan

Sometimes when I read the news, I wish The Child Center could be everywhere. This happened recently when I saw the headlines about four-year-old Marchella Pierce found dead in her Brooklyn home weighing only 18 pounds. Marchella spent her early years in the hospital. She then returned home to a mother still struggling with substance abuse. After Marchella's death, her mother admitted that she'd hit her and tied her up at night to keep her from taking food. Now there are scathing critiques of the child welfare authorities' inadequate monitoring of this family over the last six months.

But I keep wondering what was going on for the first years of Marchella's life, a time that is critical for brain development and especially the wiring for relating to others. How hard it must be for a mother to even regularly visit a child who's in the hospital over several years, to say nothing of forming a loving and nurturing relationship with her. What's clear is that no one was really there for this family, ready to teach the mother to empathetically care for her challenging child. Our city needs to do better when both mother and child have special needs.

I also was greatly troubled by the news that Rutgers freshman Tyler Clementi jumped off the George Washington Bridge days after fellow students broadcast on the Internet his sexual encounter with another man. Tyler was a devoted violinist and a fine young man. It is heartbreaking that no one was there to help him see that his life was precious and to comfort him through such a horrible experience.

The total lack of empathy displayed by the fellow students is stunning. I worry that life online makes it harder for our youth to think of others as real people, with real feelings. The influence of the Internet is expanding just at a time when across many spectrums our nation is becoming more polarized. The way to cross divides and remember that we all live on the same planet is through empathy and tolerance. Our legacy for our young should be a focus on these skills.

Every day, we serve children and youth like Marchella, Tyler and their families. We prevent teen suicides, child abuse and tragedy, but there's so much more to do—more parents and politicians to educate, more children to reach before it's too late. Thank you for caring and for helping us. Let's not let another life be lost.

*Sandra Hagan*

The Child Center is a 57-year-old nonprofit multi-service agency whose mission is to help at-risk children and youth to succeed in life.



One Child's Face

This girl—with her vulnerability and beauty—represents all the children served by The Child Center. That's why the Financial Service Centers of New York (FSCNY)—a trade association of hundreds of neighborhood check-cashing centers—asked its membership to put this poster up in their business locations between November 1st and November 15th. In the course of each transaction, tellers asked customers if they want to make a donation to our work. We are grateful to the FSCNY for this wonderful opportunity and to the many participating businesses and tellers.

IMAGINE IF YOUR CHILD NEEDED HELP.



The Child Center of NY has been serving thousands of children and families in need for more than 50 years—in more than 50 sites and in 35 different languages.

Family Intervention  
Child & Youth Development  
Counseling for Children & Families  
Home Visiting

childcenter.org  
CHILD CENTER OF NEW YORK  
MULTI-SERVICE AGENCY • COMMUNITY SERVICES

Want to make a deep and lasting impact on a kid's life?  
Sponsor a child today and your gift will keep on giving for years to come.

If you have a business that interacts with the public, you can do something similar. Please call Sue Wyant at 718-651-7770, ext. 210 to discuss the perfect "cause-marketing" campaign that will suit your business and create good will with your customers while helping at-risk kids lead successful lives.

We serve 17,000 children and their families each year. To make a donation or to find out more visit: [www.childcenterny.org](http://www.childcenterny.org)



spotlight: Paulette Diggs,  
LCSW-R Program Director of JobNet since 2001

What Is JobNet?

It's a program that provides work readiness training, paid internships, GED preparation and counseling for emotionally troubled youth. We work with 15 businesses that accept our youth for internships. Work prepares them for life and builds their self-esteem.

What Kinds of Children Come to Your Program?

Our clients are ages 16 through 21. All of them have a mental health diagnosis, and most have multiple problems. Typically, they come across as oppositional and defiant toward authority. Some are on probation. Some are depressed. Others have difficult peer or family relationships. They are all struggling to find their place in the world.

What Inspires You?

I grew up in Jamaica, Queens and always wanted to work with the community. In graduate school, I studied community organizing. I came to The Child Center in 1996, and for six years I worked with young children. Then I realized I had an affinity for older adolescents. You have to appreciate teenagers for where they are in their stage of development. They are not adults, but they are not kids. That's the hard part but also the exciting part. They need you to believe in them. If you don't come across as genuine, they know it right away and will not let you in.

How Do You Do It?

No matter what is going on with the client or the family, I always think about the positive side. Some families feel hopeless, so I feel it's my job to give them hope. I try to pull out the strength. It also helps that I have a great staff.

These teens see that we want to help them. We believe in them even though they may not believe in themselves. They focus on the past and past hurts, but I say to them, "Yes that happened. But what are you going to do now? You can't let the past define you."

Our youth are capable of so many things they don't recognize. At JobNet, we don't focus on what they can't do but what they can accomplish with support.



Busy on the job. JobNet gives these young people business skills, work experience, and a paycheck.



State Senator  
Jose Peralta  
Visits Head Start

Last month, Senator Peralta paid a visit to The Child Center's Ficalora Family Center in Woodside. Our Head Start programs were recently acknowledged by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Head Start Bureau as a model of exemplary multicultural practices.

"I read about The Child Center's excellent work with very young children, and I wanted to come see for myself.

"We need more Head Start and child care programs in Queens. Young children need stimulating safe environments such as this one if they are to arrive at kindergarten ready to learn. And parents need to go to work and lift their families out of poverty, knowing that their child is in good hands during the work day."

Many thanks...

to our golfers—especially those who stood by us despite soggy weather on September 27. Proceeds from the golf outing provide essential funds for our work with children. Special kudos to co-chairs Gary Arcieri, John Cook, and Gary Tabackman, and their generous golf committee.