

The Big Night



Our 2010 Honorees (left to right): Richard Gaccione, Robert Wann, John Cook, Frank Macchio.

Last March 20th, more than 350 of The Child Center's nearest and dearest gathered for our annual dinner dance at Terrace on the Park in Queens.

Four successful and generous businessmen were honorees: John Cook, President of Cook & Krupa; Richard Gaccione, President of Pay-O-Matic Corporation; Frank Macchio, President of Construction Services Company; and Robert Wann, Senior Executive Vice President and COO of New York Community Bancorp.

During the weeks leading up to the event, Mr. Gaccione's company named The Child Center as a featured charity at each of its 130 check-cashing sites across the city. At the dinner dance, he presented a check for \$45,000, which included matching funds from Western Union.

John Cook received our prestigious Sonia Strumpf Humanitarian Award. He has taken on the role of passionate Child Center supporter from his late father, Ray, who championed our golf outing for many years.

In a special appearance, Queens Borough President Helen Marshall spoke movingly of the value of The Child Center's work to the community and New York. The event raised a record-breaking amount – more than \$360,000 – for our vital services.

A million thanks to all our committee members, with special gratitude to Sher Sparano, our dinner chair.

COME ON OUT...



For a day of fun and sun. Our annual Raymond J. Cook golf outing takes place on Monday, September 27, 2010. In our long-standing tradition, we offer you the opportunity to help kids and play at the exclusive Old Westbury Golf and Country Club at the same time. To purchase tickets, consider sponsorship opportunities, or get more info, please visit our website: www.childcenterny.org

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the **child center** of ny
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SUMMER 2010

NURTURING CHILDREN. STRENGTHENING FAMILIES.



Head Start families at work.

Brighter Beginnings

The Child Center of NY has just received word that its long-awaited license is finally approved for a new Early Head Start program. Located at the Macari Family Center in Flushing, the new center will open its doors in September. For 32 families on our waiting list, a dream will come true. The newly renovated space provides four bright and cheerful classrooms where children, ages three and under, can play and learn and grow.

Founded in 1965 by the federal government, Head Start serves economically poor children, ages three to five. In recent decades, scientists have built consensus that crucial brain development occurs much earlier – before birth and during the first years of life. Early Head Start was created specifically to intervene during this critical window of opportunity: pregnancy to age three.

Dr. Barbara Greenstein, The Child Center's deputy executive director, developed the first Early Head Start in New York City in 1995. She

is a national expert on early childhood development and parenting and oversees the program. The Child Center has been delivering Early Head Start since 2001.

The new program in Flushing will provide high-quality childcare, parent education, case management, and other supports that help at-risk children and their families succeed in life. We put special emphasis on building the secure and loving parent-child bonds that are the foundation for all early childhood development.

The Child Center provides Head Start programs to 450 children annually. The federal government funds 80% of costs; the rest comes from private sources.

We are extraordinarily grateful to the Joseph and Katherine Macari Foundation and the Ficalora Family Foundation for investing in our work with very young children.

In the Heat of It

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



For The Child Center, warm weather brings summer camp, where we keep thousands of children off the streets with enriching opportunities for learning and fun.

Summer also brings our new fiscal year on July 1. As you may know, it has been a time of budget wars, both city and state. This year has been one of the toughest I've ever seen, and much is still not resolved. We are working constantly to fill the growing gaps – seeking new foundations, corporations, and donors to invest in our work.

It is during this uncertain time I feel all the more gratitude to our supporters. You are the people who have made a commitment to children – whether you've mailed a small donation, attended an event, or made a huge gift by naming one of our programs. Your kindness enables us to do our best. Thank you for being there and standing by us.

We are determined to do the exact same thing for our kids – stand by them – whether times are bearish or bullish. This is our special calling, and we are committed to the core. On behalf of all of us at The Child Center, I offer a million thanks for your interest in children, your love for them, and your support of us.

Sandra Hagan

Sandra Hagan,
Executive Director



Head Start “grows” a future scientist.

WE ARE PART OF THE SOLUTION

Here’s just a small sample of how we made the world better in 2009.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION: 942 At-Risk Children

About: Our therapists help keep children safe. With intensive therapy, parent guidance, and supervision, we intervene and strengthen families to prevent the need for foster care.

Results: 91% of families served had no new reports of abuse or neglect; 99% were able to safely remain in their homes.

THERAPY AND COUNSELING: 5,214 Children and Families

About: We help children and their families who are struggling with trauma, clinical depression, substance abuse, and other emotional and behavior problems. We also advocate for health care, food stamps, job training, and other resources that stabilize families.

Results: Through one counseling program, Single Stop, 619 families accessed an average of \$3,069 per family in unclaimed public benefits – a total of \$1.9 million.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: 8,500 Young People, Ages 5 through 21

About: After-school recreation, educational enrichment, drama, dance, tutoring, mentoring, dropout prevention, vocational training, and Beacon programs, which offer a community resource center for families.

Results: In one of our after-school tutoring programs for children reading below grade level, 99% improved in vocabulary; 93% improved in comprehension; and 94% improved in total reading score.

CRISIS INTERVENTION: 337 Seriously Emotionally Troubled Children

About: A highly specialized intervention for children whose severe problems put them at risk of being placed in lock-up psychiatric wards.

Results: For 83%, we prevented the traumatic experience of hospitalization.

Board Member Marge Richman Retires After 48 Years of Service



All nonprofits need good board members. But with Marge Richman, The Child Center was extraordinarily blessed. We hope more will follow in her footsteps.

Tell us about your early involvement with The Child Center.

I’ve always been a community activist and concerned with kids. When I first became a board member, we served only about 1,000 children a year. There was a considerable waiting list. The Child Center was at that time four small, over-used clinics and we fought for funds for better facilities and shorter waiting lists for families.

What are the biggest changes you’ve seen over these years?

It’s really about how many children and families we serve – more than 17,000 at last count – and how specialized we’ve become in serving specific issues and problems. As poverty levels have increased and demographics have changed, we have reached out in every way we can to help meet the demand for services. That includes bringing in therapists who speak Spanish, Asian and Eastern European languages as the flow of the borough’s population has shifted. Because we reach out to more families than ever, the work we do keeps more children out of foster care and out of jail. We keep more families together with our network of services. It’s good for everybody.

Why should others get involved?

I’m proud of having been an advocate for those who don’t have voices: children and troubled families. We must continue to be their spokespeople, and I encourage others to join the effort.

Speaking Out

We often ask ourselves how we can best tell the story of the lifesaving work we do. New Yorkers need to know about the struggles our children face, and they need to know that they too can help.

Now, a new group of young people is stepping up to the task, bringing particularly authentic voices. With our Ambassadors Program – launched this spring by our president Dick Jay – a bright young group of young adults will be spokespeople for the agency, going out to spread the word.

The first group of eight Ambassadors – ages 19 to 22 – was recruited from the hundreds of paid youth workers at our after-school youth programs. Most are in college, and many grew up in the same rough neighborhoods as our children, facing the same struggles. They are full of positive energy and drive to make the world better. Within them we see the social workers, educators, and leaders of tomorrow.

The goal of this new program is to raise awareness and provide a speakers bureau to the community. Another goal is for these energetic young people to learn new skills in marketing, public speaking, and philanthropy.

The Ambassadors received two days of

pro-bono training from guru Eric Baron, founder and CEO of The Baron Group, a Connecticut-based corporate sales training company with Fortune 500 clients. Twenty-two-year old Jason Oquendo, a full-time college student who is also a group leader at our after-school program at PS 89, said it was “one of the most amazing experiences of my life.”

“They learned how to listen to the nos and the yeses and to be gracious about the answers either way,” said Deep Ghosh, Director of Youth Development at The Child

“I look forward to going out to the community with these very talented young people. Their voices are the real voices of The Child Center.”

*Sue Wyant,
Chief External Affairs Officer*

Center. “This training has also given them a greater sense of belonging... they feel more connected to the agency and the full scope of what we do.”

The Ambassadors received an education on The Child Center’s many programs.

They also learned about the principles of philanthropy.

At the March dinner dance, they had their first assignment, fanning through the crowd, meeting guests and talking about their experiences helping children.

If you would like to have our Ambassadors give a presentation to your business or community group, please call Susan Wyant at 718-651-7770 ext 210.



Saher Mahmood (center) surrounded by students from The Child Center’s Beacon program at MS 226 where Saher coordinates programming.

Spotlight: Ambassador Saher Mahmood

Saher Mahmood began working at The Child Center’s Beacon Program in South Ozone Park four years ago. Born in Kuwait to Pakistani parents, she went through harrowing times during the first Gulf War, including a seven-hour trek through the desert to escape an army ambush. The experience was especially terrifying for the family because Saher’s sister was suffering from a serious heart disease. Saher was just three years old.

In 1992, the family got a medical visa to the U.S. so they could seek a cure for their daughter. Saher’s parents also hoped to find a good education for their children and a better life. Her father, formerly an engineer in Kuwait, became a taxi driver, and her mother took work as a school aide. After three months in the ICU, her sister was finally healthy. Years of hardship and adjustments followed, but today the family lives in their own house in Richmond Hills, Queens, and they are a success story by any measure.

“I’ve always wanted to advocate,” says Saher, “because I’ve seen so much. There was one teen in our program in so much trouble that the police took him out in handcuffs. A year later, he wanted to focus his life, so he came back and asked for an opportunity. Now he’s volunteering to help others. If my one site can have that impact, imagine what the whole agency can do.”

As an Ambassador, she will recount the transformations she has witnessed as a youth worker, as well as the structured, safe fun offered at our after-school programs. “It’s a great feeling, she says. “I know my voice can be heard.”

Saher is now pursuing a degree in forensics psychology at John Jay and plans to work with teens in the juvenile justice system. “My whole career decision has changed based on my experience here,” she says.

The Child Center is a 57-year-old nonprofit multiservice children’s agency whose mission is to help at-risk children and youth to succeed in life. We serve 17,000 children a year and their families.

To make a donation or to find out more: www.childcenterny.org