

## SINGLE STOP AT THE CHILD CENTER Finding help in hard times

Think about how intimidating it can be to for new immigrants unaccustomed to navigating government systems or low-income working mothers not used to dealing with large bureaucracies to access the benefits they are entitled to, and how amazing it would be to have someone walk them through it...

Nearly thirty years ago teen mom and domestic violence victim Diane Gonzalez discovered for herself how daunting that path can be. "If only someone had been there for me," she says of her own experience navigating the maze of public benefit programs. Since 2003, Gonzalez has headed up the Single Stop Program at The Child Center of NY. The Child Center's Single Stop (administered by Single Stop USA) is part of a network of programs funded by The Robin Hood Foundation to point low-income families toward the public benefits and tax credits they are eligible for, but don't yet access. Diane Gonzalez understands firsthand how essential benefits like Food Stamps, medical care and childcare can be in keeping families healthy, stable and intact and leaves no stone unturned to



*Single Stop Director Diane Gonzalez at work*

ensure that The Child Center's clients are able to access them.

Gonzalez's team of caseworkers counsels working families, new immigrants and abuse victims on financial and work-related public assistance, as well as referrals for family counseling, day care, after school programs, summer camp, tutoring and other services, offered both at The Child Center's sites and other agencies.

One of the Single Stop financial tools that Gonzalez raves about is the Self Sufficiency calculator, a spreadsheet that quickly computes how much income a family of any size must make to meet basic needs without public assistance. For example, a single parent with two children earning a minimum wage of \$7.15 an hour would only be able to meet 34% of their basic expenses with-

out public assistance. That same family would meet 63% of their basic needs if they received Food Stamps, childcare and healthcare assistance and 96% of their needs with a housing subsidy. Self Sufficiency enables caseworkers to determine real eligibility for public benefits, as well as provide cogent advice on career planning and financial goals.

*Case Spotlight: A 36-year-old woman with two children was referred to Single Stop for legal assistance by her son's therapist. As an undocumented immigrant, she was unaware of most of her rights in this country. She was not initially considered eligible for benefits, but because she had a long history as a victim of domestic violence (DV), she was entitled to assistance. The case manager provided her with information on an application for a U-Visa, issued to immigrant victims of crime. Three months later she obtained a work permit and found a job. Through Single Stop at The Child Center, she also applied for and received a housing voucher, and is now looking for a new, safe place to live with her children.*

**The Child Center of NY serves more than 15,000 at-risk children annually from birth through early adulthood.**

**Our programs empower children to make good decisions... help parents build skills to become better providers and nurturers...**

**...and create connections to the mainstream through family intervention, child and youth development, counseling and home visiting to prevent psychiatric hospitalization.**

## WHERE WE ARE NOW... WHERE WE ARE HEADING...

It has become a real but overused truism that these difficult times are even harder on children and families in need. Even those whose lives were on the road to greater security and emotional wellness before this critical downturn began are losing their grip in greater numbers. A layoff, shrinking assistance, and a family can spiral downward quickly.

For those of us at The Child Center, who intercede when families are most vulnerable—who teach, counsel and help sustain low-income, at-risk children and their parents—these economic times

have created a critical level of need. We observe escalating numbers of children applying for programs: parents needing additional therapeutic support and coping skills, increased drug and substance abuse intervention and more requests for after-school so parents can take on or look for additional work. Against this backdrop, we are experiencing cutbacks from all sides—from government, corporate and private donors. This coming year, we anticipate a decrease in government funding of 10%.

There has been so much focus on imprudent investments within our financial markets, but during this challenging time we cannot overlook the most important investment of all—a secure future for our city's children. It's an investment that has assured short-term benefits—for children and their families—and long-term benefits—for the entire community. With a more productive society there is less strain on public assistance; children who become academic achievers and emotionally whole are able to live good, fruitful lives and give back to society; parents who can be supportive caregivers create children who can thrive. It benefits us all.



*Sandra Hagan,  
Executive Director*

It may seem counterintuitive to give when money is so tight. But the needs of those who have so much less becomes acute during hard times and, we hope, so will our shared sense of responsibility.

As we look ahead to the coming year, we are committed to matching and surpassing the goals detailed at right, because they represent real lives and a more productive, fulfilled future for us all. We hope you can join us in any way you can.

*Executive Director*  
Sandra Hagan, LMSW

*Deputy Executive Director*  
Barbara Greenstein, Ph.D.

*Deputy Director  
for Finance & Administration*  
Keith Levitt

*Director of Development  
& External Affairs*  
Linda Henley

*President*  
Richard Jay

*Vice Presidents*  
Henry H. Auffarth  
Samuel Freed  
Melissa London Hilfers  
Gail A. Roseman  
Wendy Schildwachter  
Sunila Tejpal

*Treasurer*  
Robert Goldfarb

*Secretary*  
Diane Macari

## THE CHILD CENTER AT WORK

Counseling  
\$9,694,985  
**35.8%**

Home Visiting  
\$1,396,484  
**5.1%**

Child and Youth  
Development  
\$8,882,024  
**32.7%**



2008

## Issues and Investments in Action

*As part of an ongoing effort to spotlight the work that we do everyday, here are four programs within our four service areas that address pressing areas of need.*

### FAMILY INTERVENTION

Protecting children and adolescents from the abuse and neglect that arise from severely dysfunctional destructive home environments

PROGRAM: CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

GOAL: Prevent abuse and foster care placement

CLIENTS SERVED: 487 families

OUTCOME:

94% of these families were not reported for suspected child abuse incidents

97%—Of the 842 children in these families, 816 remained in their families' homes

### CHILD and YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Providing tools for parents, teen leadership and vocational preparation; child care, after-school recreation and tutoring

PROGRAM: READING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

GOAL: Raise reading levels and improve overall academic achievement in children who were reading below grade level

CLIENTS SERVED: 246 children

OUTCOME:

64%—Improved one or more grade levels in their ability to identify words

92%—Improved one or more grade levels in their ability to sound out and read words

### COUNSELING

Improving child and parent coping skills, reducing problem behaviors including substance abuse and helping children to access and be maintained on medication

PROGRAM: SINGLE STOP

GOAL: Facilitate the ability of low-income families to access public benefits

CLIENTS SERVED: 887 families

OUTCOME:

\$2.7 million previously unclaimed benefits accessed, or about \$3,044 per family

### HOME VISITING

Preventing psychiatric hospitalization for children who are brought to psychiatric emergency rooms or have previously been hospitalized

PROGRAM: CRISIS INTERVENTION

GOAL: Preventing psychiatric re-hospitalization

CLIENTS SERVED: 329 children

OUTCOME:

89% or 292 children were not hospitalized

Nearly 90% of our \$27,124,668 budget was invested directly in 15,000 children and their families in 2008.

Administration  
\$2,869,015  
**10.6%**

Family Intervention  
\$4,282,162  
**15.8%**

# DEPRESSION SCREENINGS SAVE LIVES

## The Child Center Offers Free Screenings in the Schools

In the most vulnerable communities, the warning signs of childhood depression can be overlooked in the face of what seem to be more pressing problems such as poverty and domestic violence. Because of a new screening initiative adopted by The Child Center, children are finding a path to treatment and recovery.

Child and Family Clinic Plus (CFCP), is a school-, child care center- and child abuse prevention program-based service developed by the NY State Office of Mental Health to detect signs of depression and other emotional problems before they reach the crisis point. CFCP provides a safety net for children with undetected and untreated mental illness in our poorest communities.

The Child Center's senior administrative staff, led by Deputy Executive Director, Dr. Barbara Greenstein, was committed to bringing CFCP to The Child Center because it brings screening for emotional problems to venues where children are most readily accessible—schools and child care centers—and caters to parents' busy schedules. Dr. Greenstein believes that the initiative is also effective because The Child Center follows up with children, making sure they

receive treatment, whether on-site where they are screened or at one of The Child Center's clinics. The outreach is also effective because so many of the agency's social workers are from the same cultures as children and families in the schools.

In its first year the program screened over 750 children in 15 schools in English, Spanish, French, Creole, Mandarin and Cantonese.

Some of the results have been quite dramatic. In two separate cases, social workers were able to arrange immediate hospitalization for teenagers who had already developed secret but detailed suicide plans by the time they were screened. Although the family of one of the teenagers was already being served in a program to prevent child abuse, the family's case manager did not know that the girl was so deeply depressed. Through CFCP, she disclosed her plan, even drawing a noose to show how she would do it.

The Aetna Foundation, which provided generous support in the program's first year, re-funded it in 2008. The foundation, which specializes in supporting programs that address cultural



**Abused and neglected children are 25% more likely to suffer from mental health problems.**

**Depression is harder to spot in children who may often seem bored or irritable, not sad.**

**1 in every 33 children and 1 in 8 adolescents may suffer from depression.**

obstacles to care, has rarely re-funded a single program, but chose to make an exception because of the strong results yielded by The Child Center in just its first year. CFCP is also partially funded by the NYS Office of Mental Health.

## The CHILD CENTER of NY ANNUAL DINNER DANCE 2009

**JOIN US** for an evening of dinner and dancing as we honor four extraordinary members of our community and share stories of children and families whose lives are being transformed by The Child Center of NY.

SATURDAY, MARCH 28  
TERRACE on the PARK  
FLUSHING MEADOW, QUEENS  
7 PM - MIDNIGHT

honoring...  
**James Carpenter,  
Steve Chen, Dr. Jatin Shah  
and Hank Auffarth,  
Humanitarian Award Recipient**

To RSVP online, please go to [childcenterny.org](http://childcenterny.org) or call Susan Gleason, 718-651-7770, X204



# HOPE FOR A BETTER FUTURE:

## The Child Center's Top-Performing YABC...

Nearly half of New York City's matriculated students do not graduate from high school. That very disturbing figure has a profound effect on all of our futures: fewer students go on to good jobs; more non-graduates go on to low-income and marginal lives, less productivity and achievement. A lower performing city population places more strain on the system, not to mention, the unrealized potential and unfulfilled lives.

Young Adult Borough Centers or YABCs are evening academic programs developed by the Department of Education (DOE) to improve the high school graduation rate. Their mission is to reach out to students between the ages of 17 to 21 who have attended high school for three

or more years and are in danger of, or already have, dropped out.

For the last four years, The Child Center of NY has been behind the top-performing YABC (Young Adult Borough Center) in the city. The Child Center's YABC, located at Flushing High School, is staffed with counselors, tutors (college students) and administrative personnel who provide the support and attendance outreach that reinforce the academic program offered by the Department of Education (DOE).

"Students come from overcrowded school environments and are really given a chance here," says YABC Director William Carron. "Our staff makes each kid feel important. Each of us is committed to helping students graduate, even

making home visits, if necessary, to help them reach goals." The graduation rate over the past year at the Flushing YABC has averaged 66%, the highest of any YABC in the city. More than 34% of those students went on to college or vocational/technical school.

**"Our YABC program helps kids to take ownership of their lives and make a commitment to their futures. On graduation day, the look on the faces of students who had given up on getting their diplomas makes it all worthwhile."**

—William Carron, Director,  
YABC at Flushing High School

## Shining Stars

Twenty "shining stars"—including many college students—were honored on November 11th for outstanding achievements in their tutoring, job preparation, peer education, after school and enrichment program work for The Child Center of NY. The breakfast was generously hosted by the United Nations Credit Bureau Head-quarters in Long Island City, for the second year in a row.



*The 20 "shining stars" honored for their work at the Youth Development Division Recognition Breakfast, with Deep Ghosh, Director of the YD Department, pictured center right*

## A Day on the Green



A group of more than 150 old and new friends convened at the Old Westbury Golf & Country Club on September 22 for a day of golfing and raising funds for The Child Center of NY. The event was chaired by Gary Tabachman and Gary Arcieri.

The day was capped by a twilight reception that included a live auction, the Jet Blue Golf Challenge, as well as a generous check from the Aetna Foundation to help fund the Child and Family Clinic Plus new depression screening program.

*Board VP Hank Auffarth and Tisha Auffarth with Child Center friends Veekay Tejapaul and Rich Binetti at the Annual Golf Outing at Old Westbury Golf & Country Club*



# A COMMUNITY SCHOOL EXPANDS HORIZONS

"En garde!" has become a not uncommon phrase in the halls of JHS 185 this past year. As student fencers take their place in mock duels, their postures reflect a pride and passion in a new sport and a new discipline, one of the programs offered by The Child Center's newly launched Community School project.

In this last year alone, The Child Center launched four new after school programs in elementary and middle schools, reaching over 1,000 new children. The program at JHS 185, which was created in partnership with JP Morgan/Chase, local cultural institutions and The After School Corporation (TASC), adopts the community school model to reach out beyond the walls of schools to access the vast educational, cultural and recreational resources of New York City.

**"The program is a lifeline for working parents," says community school JHS 185 principal Valerie Sawinski. "It addresses the creative disparity in after school programs for low-income children—providing broader exposure to the world, not just remedial help."**

In partnership with the Great Neck Center for the Arts, the Queens Theatre in the Park and the New York Hall of Science, the After School Program at community school JHS 185 offers fencing, Latin dance, dramatic arts and video game design, among other new enrichment initiatives. Program components are chosen because they are of real interest to young people, with the result that students become more engaged with school and on track for high school graduation. The community school also provides homework help, closely monitored by teachers, as well as a chance to get involved with community service. Outcomes are measured in greater parent participation, improved school attendance and higher grades.

Vinford Mentar, VP of Community Relations at JP Morgan/Chase, the program's corporate funder, chose The Child Center to lead the program because of an impressive track record in bringing together community partners to turn around outcomes for the city's most at-risk children.

**In this coming fiscal year, it is estimated that 15,000 children are in danger of losing their after-school programs, a majority of whom live in New York City. TASC predicts that because of the severe budget cuts from city, state and private funders, many programs will close their doors and others will be seriously threatened. Low-income working parents will find themselves particularly hard hit. Children will find themselves without access to the kinds of program that keep them safe and stimulated after school.**





## Friends Gather at Rockefeller Center

The evening of November 18th was very cold but the warmth of the room could not be dampened.... over 150 new and old friends gathered at Rockefeller Center for an evening focused on the transformative nature of the work we do to keep children emotionally healthy and communities strong.

One young man who has been in ongoing treatment with The Child Center since adolescence spoke about his crippling anxiety related to school and sense of worthlessness; how he

was essentially "raised" by the agency, and is still in treatment as an ongoing aid to keep him emotionally on-track. The Child Center programs gave him the tools and the confidence to cope with school and through counseling believe in himself. He now wants, in turn, to help others, as a social worker. There are thousands of these inspiring stories each year, across decades of The Child Center. We look forward to more opportunities to share the vision and the promise of the work we do.



Deputy Executive Director  
Barbara Greenstein, Ph.D.

Many thanks to The Tishman Speyer Organization, who partially underwrote the event.

***"Although our programs and services are diverse, our theory of change is constant across the board. Our perspective is that optimal development can only be achieved through attuned, secure relationships between children and parents or other adult caregivers. We believe this is at the core of promoting emotional wellness and remediating existing problems."***

—Dr. Barbara Greenstein, Deputy Executive Director, speaking at The Child Center's Friends Gathering

## Annual Toy Drive a Record Success

A 12-year-old girl requested "something beautiful to wear," a little girl with diabetes asked for a bike. Other community children made simpler pleas—for much needed school supplies—notebooks, writing utensils and backpacks; for board games, stuffed animals and gift cards. With a record 6,000 gifts donated, dreams came true for children and families hit with particularly hard times during this economic downturn. Long-time donors included community banks, stores and corporate donors who opened candy cane-shaped requests filled in by The Child Center's clients.

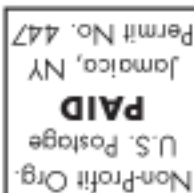
Veteran participant, NY Community Bank, distributed over 300 candy cane requests to their branches and brought in over 200 toys from employees and customers as a result. "It was extraordinary to see the flood of responses," said Barbara Sorge, director of retail operations for

NYCB, "especially in these hard times. There seemed to be a tacit understanding that children who are living in difficult circumstances, even in the best of times, should not be left to do without now that times are harder for us all."



Verizon presented The Child Center with a check for \$10,000 to underwrite our reading programs. From left to right: Dick Jay, Board President; Assemblyman Jeffrion Aubry; Bill Martin, Verizon; Child Center client; Hank Auffarth, Board VP Fundraising; Georgiana Reese, Board Member

**Many special thanks to our Annual Toy Drive's corporate supporters: Con Edison, JetBlue Airways, Astoria Federal Bank, Ridgewood Savings Bank, New York Community Bank, Roslyn Savings Bank, Queens County Savings Bank, Citibank, Tishman Speyer Properties, Fisher Brothers Management Co., and transportation support from Plant Specialist and SDS Global Delivery Service.**



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child center of ny  
NURTURING CHILDREN. STRENGTHENING FAMILIES.

## A New Role for a Cherished Friend

*It is not an exaggeration to say that Hank Auffarth, board president for 14 years and now VP of our board's fundraising committee, is the heart and soul of The Child Center of NY. We talked to him about his more than 30 years... and counting...of work with The Child Center.*



Hank Auffarth and grandson Ryan at Annual Holiday Party 2008

### How did you first get involved at The Child Center of NY?

A customer asked me to donate some pens from the bank where I was working. I knew nothing about The Child Center of NY but was amazed at the range of services it was offering even then. I was in a unique position to help. As a banker, I could reach out to local business people and show them how they could make life better for kids in their own community.

### Why has this cause been so important to you?

I had a very difficult, dysfunctional childhood and my kids had a

wonderful childhood. Every child should have the experience of a good, caring environment to grow up in, with loving resources available. The Child Center really believes in creating caring, sustained connections with each kid and family we serve. That can transform the way a child turns out.

### What are some of the highlights of your tenure as president?

I helped initiate and grow our annual Holiday Toy Drive. Giving a gift to an individual child is really giving something from your heart. This year we collected nearly 6,000 gifts including gift cards, books, school supplies, bikes and all kinds of toys delivered to our clients and their siblings—the largest gift of its kind in the borough of Queens.

Another memorable achievement was the opening of the first therapeutic center for the prevention of child abuse in preschoolers in the borough 15 years ago. Our emphasis on mental health issues has transformed statistics on domestic violence and child abuse in Queens and throughout New York City.

### How do you envision The Child Center's future?

**WE'RE LIVE**

**www.childcenterny.org**

New web site with ongoing updates on new programs and initiatives, current issues and trends within the child-serving community and how we work to ensure that at risk children and families are taken care of... especially during these difficult financial times.

**NEW MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER**

Forward your e-mail address to [susangleason@childcenterny.org](mailto:susangleason@childcenterny.org) so we can be in touch, with insights and information on your investment in action.

More and better services to the community's neglected children. We now serve 15,000 kids, more than 20 times the number we served 30 years ago. And yet, the need continues to grow, particularly now in this time of severe financial downturn.

As we move into a difficult and challenging time, we are looking to find new opportunities for people to learn more about the organization and how to get involved. I am particularly proud to have passed on the leadership to Dick Jay and honored by his creation of the Auffarth Fund, an endowment that aims to raise contingency funds for maintaining and growing our great organization in the years to come.

*Hank Auffarth is a senior vice president at Citibank. He lives with his wife, Tisha, in Westchester and is the father of three and the grandfather of seven.*