

A Vision Realized: New Tele-Visiting Initiative Launches

For more than 60 years, The Child Center of NY has been caring for children who might otherwise slip through the cracks. Children with an incarcerated parent are among those who need our help the most. That's why we connected with Tina Reynolds, chair of an advocacy group for currently and formerly incarcerated women called WORTH, to form A Vision for Tele-Visiting. Designed for children from Queens who have a parent residing at a state correctional facility, the program offers families the tools to maintain and strengthen their relationships during a parent's incarceration and prepare for a successful reentry.

Through the request of Assemblyman Jeffrion Aubry to the Division of Criminal Justice Services, we have received funding to pilot the program in South Jamaica, Far Rockaway, and Long Island City. We are working in partnership with Hour Children, an organization dedicated to helping incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women and their children; the Osborne Association, which offers tele-visiting to families in the Bronx and Brooklyn; and York College.



As an agency with deep roots in mental health, we are not only bringing this important service to families in Queens, but also expanding it to make mental health and wraparound services (such as job placement assistance and benefits counseling) an integral part of the package.

Child Center CEO Traci Donnelly and tele-visiting staff recently met with Acting Commissioner Annucci of the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision and his team, and with their support, we are piloting the program in the Bedford Hills and Taconic correctional facilities.

"While we know and honor that tele-visits should never take the place of visits where children can speak with, see, and touch their parent, tele-visits can be instrumental in maintaining relationships between loved ones and their incarcerated family members," says Reynolds, who is serving as the program's project director. "Here at The Child Center, we are committed to offering support to families who may be facing particular hardships as a result of familial incarceration. We are approaching our services from a holistic perspective where everyone within the family will be supported."

Program staff have created a moving documentary that showcases real families whose relationships have been strengthened through tele-visiting. We invite you to view it at <http://childcenterny.org/videos/>.



**THE CHILD
CENTER OF NY**

Strengthening Family. Building Community.

On the Record:

By spring in our Woodside Head Start program:

100%
of four-year-olds met or exceeded expectations for literacy development, up from 21.43% in the fall

100%
of three-year-olds met or exceeded expectations for math development, up from 12.5%

96%
of three-year-olds met or exceeded expectations for social-emotional development, up from 22%

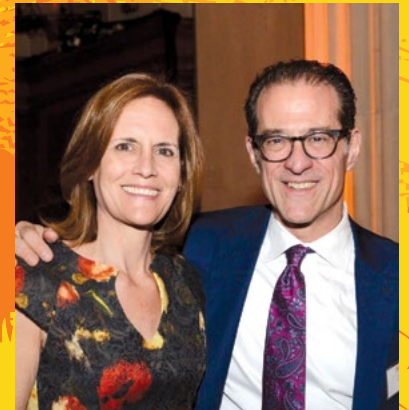
From the CEO and Executive Director Traci Donnelly

Transitions almost inevitably come with moments of reflection. Here at The Child Center of NY, we're in the midst of a huge transition, as our headquarters are relocating from Woodside to Forest Hills to accommodate our growth and put us in a more central location. The move has prompted me to think about our need to reimagine not only our space, but also our very identity as an organization—from a nonprofit to a social impact organization.

The term “nonprofit” puts the emphasis in the wrong place. It doesn't take into account that profit is not always measured by dollars and cents. When one of our kids is the first in the family to attend college, or a child goes from being abused to safe, secure, and loved, we are improving individual lives, as well as our citizenry at large. Our success should be measured by how well we achieve these goals, in addition to our fiscal prowess.

Running everything like a business is a popular idea these days, but running a social impact organization like ours requires a more versatile approach. Measuring ourselves only in dollars and cents limits our potential vision, commitment, and results. If I merely focus on cost when considering a new program or tackling a tough challenge, I may ultimately avoid the risks necessary to make a profound difference and impact change. Given the choice, I'll err on the side of making a difference every time.

At The Child Center, we carefully invest every dollar in methods proven to make a difference. This includes new approaches and, equally important, systems that measure how well our methods are working. In this issue, you'll see encouraging statistics that indicate we're on the right track. You'll also get to know clients whose stories make clear that, in many ways, the impact we make is immeasurable.



Traci Donnelly with Board Member David Spungen at the 2016 Annual Gala

A handwritten signature of Traci Donnelly in black ink, written in a cursive style.

Rockaside Girlz Take Home First Place Trophy

When a group of sixth graders began middle school at the Waterside School for Leadership in Rockaway Park, they immediately noticed that peer pressure was a major problem.

“Students dealt with pressure to cut school, to lie and avoid accountability, and resort to violence and cyberbullying,” explains Shantryce Hare, program director of The Child Center's SONYC (School's Out NYC) afterschool program.

The group decided to do something about it. After weeks of brainstorming and research in The Child Center's technology lab, they created a service campaign featuring a Peace Week observance and a mentoring program for K-5 students.

Calling themselves the Rockaside Girlz and naming the campaign “Above the Influence,” the group used dance as a vehicle for change in their mentoring program. “The mentors helped the younger students develop dance skills, do their homework, and think about peer pressure,” Hare explains.



“The next event was Peace Week, when the group led the school community in signing a peace pledge and held events such as a “unity social” dance. According to students, faculty, and school administration, it was a resounding success. “I saw less people in Friday detention, kids complimenting each other, no more fights... and no more trips cancelled because of bad behavior,” notes group member Denaya.

It was so successful that the group entered the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) SONYC Game Changers Youth Competition, presented their campaign at DYCD's youth conference—and took home the first place trophy for civic engagement.

“The judges were beyond blown away with all of the events the team engaged their school community in,” Hare reports, noting the efforts of Activity Specialist Jocenia Holman and Educational Coordinators Sean McNulty and Caroline Feeney, who worked closely with the team.

“We put in the effort and made a huge change,” Denaya said after the win. “I was extremely nervous, but it was worth it.”

See the award-winning video on The Child Center's website.

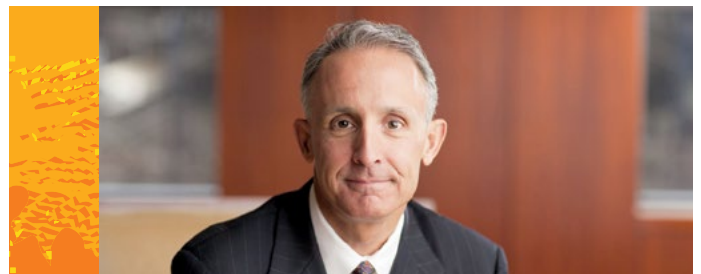
Noteworthy

- Deepmalya Ghosh, associate executive director of youth development and community engagement, was selected as one of 16 community leaders nationwide to participate in the prestigious Annie E. Casey Foundation's Children and Family Fellowship, a results-oriented executive leadership development program that asks—and expects—fellows to make a major contribution to the broader population within 16 months. Ghosh's goal: to use his experience in the fellowship to ensure that The Child Center is engaged in data-driven change, with partners from multiple sectors making aligned contributions.
- Spring was the season of publicity for The Child Center. CEO Traci Donnelly found her way into the Wall Street Journal twice, while Deep Ghosh was quoted in Politico. Our advocacy for our communities was noted in the local press, including Queens Chronicle, Queens Tribune, and Times Ledger. Visit us at childcenterny.org and click on News/In the Media to read all about it.
- Our Spring Gala was a huge success, raising nearly half a million dollars. We are grateful to our board members and major donors, including Roger Altman, Bob and Trudy Gottesman, Pat and Dick Jay, Chasity and Peter Santoro, Hillview Capital Management, New York Community Bank, Highbrook Investment Management, Tradition Energy, and Troob Capital Management. The spotlight was on staff, as CEO Traci Donnelly recognized more than 90 employees, and Early Head Start Director Tanya Krien was honored along with Executive Vice President of the Board Sam Freed with the Russell L. Carson Visionary Award; and on clients, who shared stories about how The Child Center helped them improve their lives: David went from being unable to speak to anyone outside of his family to addressing an audience of hundreds; Brandon got help for depression after his mother's death; and Brandon's father Tommy got the support he needed to become a competent and loving single dad.

Supporter Spotlight: Garrett D'Alessandro

Like other driven individuals, Garrett D'Alessandro focused the first 20 years of his professional life principally on his career goals. He had always been financially generous to charitable organizations but made little time to otherwise engage in his community.

D'Alessandro—who is currently the CEO and President of City National Rochdale Investment Management, managing \$27.8 billion in assets—had an epiphany; he became concerned that he was not being true to the example his parents had set. "My dad always said, 'We have to help others,'" he explains. "My mom wished he spent more time with the family, but she wouldn't have had it, or him, any other way. That lifelong demonstration made me realize it is important to give of yourself to community well-being."



When D'Alessandro was ready to follow in his parents' footsteps, he searched for an organization dedicated to family, education, and community—and came upon The Child Center of NY. As the Vice President of the Board of Directors, he continues to support the agency financially, and in his role on the Board, he contributes leadership and business acumen, living up to the example set by his parents: an abiding spirit of generosity.

"I'm proud to be affiliated with an agency that helps not just the child, but the whole family, live up to its potential by offering the right education, counseling, and support," says D'Alessandro. "In my work, I help people make good investments. Frankly, supporting The Child Center is about as failsafe an investment you can make."

How Your Gift Helps

\$7,000

Support a family in our intensive case management program, giving their child a real chance to stay out of a hospital and get the help he or she needs while remaining at home with family.

\$500

Ensure a child who has experienced trauma receives a month of counseling.

\$150

Pay two weeks' stipend for an internship for a teen in our work skills program.

\$35

Provide transportation fare to enable an impoverished family to participate in our Early Head Start program for one week.



Staff Spotlight: Working Across Cultural Barriers

As a case planner with the Family Treatment and Rehabilitation Program at the Elmhurst Family Center for the past year, Delia Azcona has been putting her master's degree in social work and her past experience working in a domestic violence shelter to good use. Her cultural savvy and language skills have made her the embodiment of The Child Center's mission to "appreciate the nuances" among diverse communities and neighborhoods.

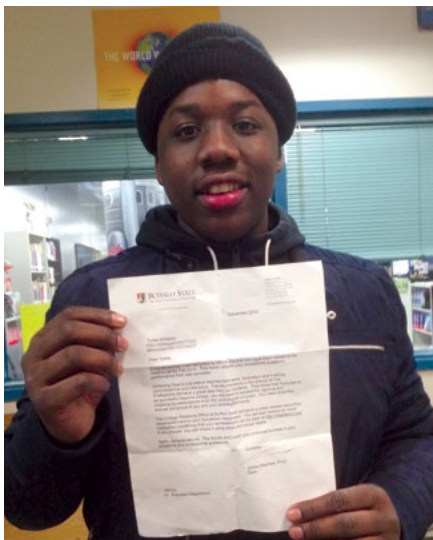
"Helping my clients to understand what resources are available to them and reassuring them that I am there purely to offer support has made my job so fulfilling," says Azcona, who serves 13 families predominantly of Latino heritage. Program Director Yolanda Vega says that "Delia's multifaceted engagement with these clients enables their trust, keeps children safe, and allows parents to be their best."

Case in Point: Creating a Cycle of Opportunity

Tyliek was 16 years old and lived in the Brownsville/East New York section of Brooklyn, one of the most disadvantaged communities in the country, when he came to The Child Center of NY. His dad had died seven years before. Tyliek's mom sent him to a high school in Manhattan, thinking he'd get a better education there.

But Tyliek found it difficult to get along at the school. And when one of his close friends died unexpectedly, he stopped going to classes altogether.

That's when he and his mom found Aspirations Diploma Plus High School in Brooklyn. The Child Center serves as the community-based organization at three schools for overage and under-credited students. Through these schools, we offer struggling students academic assistance, internships, and an advocate counselor whom students can count on for guidance and support. Aspirations is one of them.



Tyliek shows the letter announcing he's been named to the Dean's List.

He started thinking, "Maybe I'm like them. Maybe that's who I'm destined to be." He'd been doing well in his classes when he first enrolled at Aspirations, but by spring, his academics started to suffer again. So Paul began meeting with Tyliek's teachers, principals, and guidance counselor to develop a holistic strategy to help Tyliek stay on track. They knew that academic support was one piece of the puzzle—and helping him change his self-concept was another.

On the academic front, they offered homework assistance and guidance on such essential skills as time management. Paul met with him every two to three days—even on weekends—to help organize his schedule and troubleshoot problems, such

as not having a computer at home. On the self-concept front, Paul ensured Tyliek had an opportunity to succeed at something he enjoyed. Tyliek had always loved sports, so Internship Coordinator Erin Santana (now Aspirations' Learning to Work coordinator) offered him a position with the school basketball team, taking stats, recording points, and managing the score clock. The job taught him how to focus—"You can't be blindsided by what's going on in the game. You have to remember you have a job to do," Tyliek explains—and got him thinking about pursuing a career, and degree, in sports management.

He also took on a second internship, as a mentor to younger students, which he says motivated him to become a better person: "I realized I was a role model. I couldn't be a bad example."

Tyliek began to see himself, and his future, in a different light. By senior year, Tyliek was earning excellent grades and ready to apply for college. He had started Aspirations over a year behind, but with our help, he graduated on time and was accepted to SUNY Buffalo State, where he earned a place on the Dean's List in his first semester.

During his winter break, Tyliek showed us the Dean's letter. "Younger kids from my neighborhood and school now look up to me," Tyliek told us proudly. "They ask me about college life and see it as a real possibility."

Field Notes: Meeting Clients Where They Are



Amanda, a happy raffle winner at Escalera's Spring Jamboree

Our New South Jamaica Hub

The Child Center has long had a presence in South Jamaica. Now we are consolidating several services to create a South Jamaica hub at our Sutphin Boulevard location. This has involved relocating some programs that had been a few miles away at our Jamaica Family Center. Although it was a difficult decision, the advantages of the move include being able to address the needs of a very underserved but high-need area of Queens, as well as the ability to boost retention rates by offering many services at one easy-to-access site. Our extensive experience and independent research have consistently found that requiring people to travel to multiple facilities has a negative effect on retention rates, whereas “one-stop shops” boost them. Plus, locating mental health services in a place that’s not just a “clinic” helps counter stigma. That’s why we’re particularly excited to be in talks with primary care providers to better integrate behavioral and primary physical health services—at their sites and ours. By integrating services, we can care for clients holistically, addressing their physical, mental, and emotional health.

Meeting Them in Manhattan

The Upper West Side and nearby neighborhoods are home to a large population of low-income Spanish-speaking immigrants and first-generation Americans. At our Escalera Head Start on 87th Street, our bilingual, bicultural staff is skilled at teaching dual language learners and engaging their families so that parents learn how to support their children’s development and advocate for them on their own.

According to Education Director Marie Mason, Escalera achieves this goal through parenting workshops, connecting families to community resources, and, equally important, getting families together socially to form a supportive community. “We facilitate, and parents take the lead,” Mason says.

In April, Sarah Cabrera, mom to 3-year-old Allison, took the lead in organizing a spring jamboree for Escalera families. “Parents brought burritos, chicken, desserts, and 150 cupcakes so kids could frost them,” says Cabrera. “There was good music, a makeshift photo booth that the kids loved, and school pictures in the hallway.” Another big hit was the raffle, with prizes that included beach toys, balloon centerpieces, and a Dunkin’ Donuts gift card. “It was great to bring together families from the different classes,” says Cabrera. “It’s like we’re a small family.”

Single Stop

We meet clients where they are emotionally, as well as physically. When 87-year-old UF came to The Child Center, he wasn’t ready to ask for help. So when he met with a caseworker at Single Stop—a unique program that provides free counseling on entitlements, health insurance, and other services to community members of all ages—the caseworker, Guadalupe Del Rio, made clear that she understood he was there just to listen. Del Rio reviewed UF’s history and told him that he was eligible for SNAP (“food stamp”) benefits, the Medicare Savings Program, filing for free tax preparation, and beginning the process of citizenship. She allowed UF the time to think about it—and was there to assist him when he was ready. Within 30 days, UF received \$303 in expedited SNAP benefits and \$357 in ongoing SNAP benefits for himself and his wife. They also have been approved for the Medicare Savings Program and received a much-needed tax refund.

The Child Center employs this strategy of meeting clients where they are across all programs—from offering mental health services in schools to providing home-based early childhood education. We do whatever needs to be done to ensure the greatest chance for our clients’ success.



THE CHILD CENTER OF NY

Strengthening Family. Building Community.

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Christopher enjoys being a part of our Parent-Child Home Program, which provides low-income families with educational books and toys—and guidance on using them.



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