

OUR STORIES ARE YOUR STORIES

A CHILDREN'S VILLAGE ANTHOLOGY

About The Children's Village

Founded in 1851, The Children's Village is a charitable organization that specializes in working with the most vulnerable children and families in the New York metropolitan region and beyond. The Children's Village reaches thousands of children, teens and families through a variety of innovative community-based and residential programs. The Children's Village was the 2013 winner of the New York Nonprofit Excellence Awards, is approved by the Better Business Bureau, and is accredited by The Council on Accreditation.


2013 Nonprofit Excellence Awards
Gold Prize Recipient



Administrative Office and
Residential Campus
One Echo Hills
Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522
914-693-0600

New York City Office
2090 Adam Clayton
Powell Blvd.
New York, NY 10027
212-932-9009

Bronx Office
400 E. Fordham Road
Bronx, NY 10468
718-220-4700



www.childrensvillage.org

To volunteer, donate, or get involved visit our website or follow CV1851 on







OUR STORIES ARE YOUR STORIES BECAUSE YOU MADE THEM HAPPEN

This special collection of stories gives you a glimpse of the impact your support has on so many lives. This booklet contains six pieces written by the children and families we serve. They represent the 11,842 individual stories that you helped write.

Thanks to you, this has been a good year at CV. We met 100% of our adoption goal, placing 36 children with permanent families, saving an estimated \$1,152,000 in foster care costs. Every single young person in our Westchester Sanctuary shelter went to a stable home. All of the seniors in our Work Force Investment program earned their high school diploma.

Helping children and teens find a home of permanent love and belonging is our untiring focus. There are no shortcuts, no easy answers. The work is difficult, but as you'll read in the next pages, the results are life-changing.

The caliber of our work last year earned us the highest recognition in the New York Nonprofit Excellence Awards, the Gold Prize. Your support helps us continue to strive for excellence.

Whether you made a financial donation, provided gifts for children, or gave of your time, your contribution matters. You helped write these stories.

Thank you, and please enjoy reading the eloquent and heartfelt thanks written by those whose lives have been touched by our collective effort.

“I WANT TO BE SOMEBODY THAT PEOPLE CAN LOOK UP TO”

Hi, my name is Eboni B.

I'm 22 years old, born and raised in Harlem. Born into a broken home surrounded by poverty and drugs, I was forced to grow up quickly. By the age of 12, I was washing my own clothes, knew how to take care of my 3-year old nephew, and could clean the whole house sufficiently. My mother's struggles made me stronger, taught me how to care for myself.

After high school, I didn't have a job and wasn't interested in college so I hung around the neighborhood with the older people. That later turned into me making a bad decision of selling drugs to bring in money. I ended up in jail for armed robbery charges and on probation for 5 years.

These mistakes have introduced me to many positive opportuni-

ties. One of those opportunities is the Children's Village Harlem Justice Community Program. This program has helped me see things that for most of my life meant nothing to me. It has motivated me to become a better person, not only for me, but for my family, community, and peers.

During these next 5 years, I know I have a lot of work to do, but I am ready for the challenge. I want to be somebody that people can look up to. I want to show people that you can go through a negative situation and turn it into a positive experience.

My life's motto is that "It takes mistakes to learn and grow in order to better oneself". I love my life and wouldn't change my past for anything, because no lesson worth learning is easy.



CV's Harlem Justice Community Program helps youth on probation develop the attitude and skills to succeed. Youth create professional portfolios, give back to their community through volunteer projects, work on education and work skills, and learn that they have options for a better life.

“I LEARNED HOW TO SAY NO AND NOT GIVE IN”

From a Parent

Identity withheld to protect confidentiality

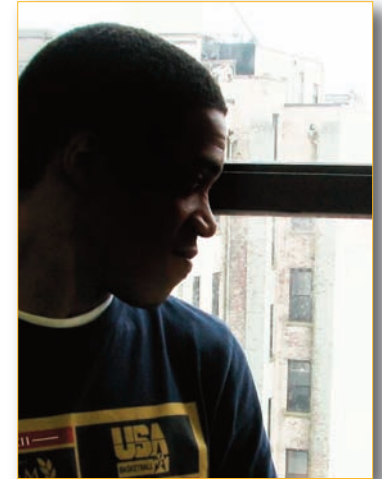
CV's MST program has been wonderful and helped me a lot. I feel much stronger and learned how important consistency is with my teen. I learned how to say no and not give in. I also learned how to separate my emotions from discipline. The program helped me find a balance.

I liked that the program is for the whole self and the whole family. It includes all aspects of yourself you want to improve, not just keeping tabs on the teenager. The fact that it is available 24 hours a day is awesome! And it was wonderful to feel that the therapist genuinely cared about my child, Eric.

Some things I got out of treatment were being more consistent with Eric and learning how to say no and stick to it. I think Eric gained better skills in being able to express himself and he is now better able to accept "no" and regain control of his emotions when he gets upset.

Through working with the program, I learned so much better how to express myself without so much emotion, particularly anger, and deal with people outside the family in a more effective way.

CV's MST program works with families whose teens are returning home from out-of-home placement or are at risk of being removed from their homes. Highly trained therapists provide families with 24-hour support for three to five months with the goal of giving parents the skills to prevent future problems. In the last 6 months, 91% of youth in the program stayed in their homes, compared to the NYS average of 75%.





“IT WAS LIKE JAIL AND PRISON WERE A REGULAR PART OF LIFE”



Thoughts from Jose O.

You can call it whatever you want but the fact is some people just won't make it. Some people go to college, some go to prison and, growing up like we did, a lot of my friends didn't even try for any more. It was like jail and prison were a regular part of life, like jury duty or something.

Out of the group of us there are literally only 3 people I can think of that are still ok. They're not locked up or in a wheelchair or dead. There are a lot of younger residents who may have negative things to say about Children's Village, but for me, this place saved my life. I'd probably be dead or serving some great amount of time in prison somewhere. They gave me a second chance at High School, a gym to work out in, as well as substance abuse counseling. Since coming here there has been major progress in my life and a big change in my outlook on life.

CV's Residential School in Dobbs Ferry provides short-term care for approximately 400 youth each year. About half of the youth have been abused or neglected and come through the foster care system. The other half are youth who have committed a non-violent crime and CV offers them a second chance. Thanks to private donors, when youth are ready to return home, they do so with a paid mentor to help them stay in school, get and keep a job, and avoid getting into trouble.

“I KNOW I’M GOING TO DO JUST FINE”



Tiffany is on track to succeed.

Tiffany and Stephanie live in public housing in one of New York City’s high-crime neighborhoods. Both girls were raised by single mothers and took on adult responsibilities, like childcare for siblings, at a very young age.

The girls began attending after school programs at CV’s Polo Grounds Community Center several years ago. Here they were given an opportunity to just be kids. They went on trips, learned new skills, and were part of an innovative Girls Club started by CV’s partner organization LitWorld.

Tiffany is now an accomplished young woman of 20, attending college for Computer Science. She also works as a Counselor in Training at the Community Center. Tiffany writes:

“I couldn’t be where I am today without CV and LitWorld. I passed the English Regents, I stayed on track to my goal, I am more focused and creative, and I have the confidence to speak to strangers. Finally, because of the girls in Girls Club, I have a group of friends to learn with, laugh with, and share my stories with. Thank you to The Children’s Village and LitWorld for the support.”

Stephanie is in her senior year of high school and is also getting ready for college.

“When I leave for college this fall, I’m going to be really sad to go, but I know I’m going as a well-rounded woman. I’m going to take everything I learned from CV, like being outspoken and social from Mr. Robles and being professional and determined from Mrs. Stuart, and I know I’m going to do just fine.”



CV’s Polo Grounds Community Center is a vibrant, multi-generational center that provides children and families with fun activities, exciting cultural trips, and engaging programming. Most of all, it provides residents of the Polo Grounds Towers and Rangel Housing Projects with a place to call their own.

“YOU HAVE SHOWN ME THE VALUE OF HONESTY, SINCERITY, AND TRUST”

For Andrea (CV Staff Member):

First, I want to express my appreciation for the time you have dedicated to me and I hope that you know how important your guidance and insight is to me. It's great to have someone tell you how good you are at something and to push you and make sure you do nothing but your best. You told me what I needed to work on and you didn't stand back and just let me trip over my shortcomings.

You pushed me out of my comfort zone.

Like anyone else, there are things that scare me, and those fears sometimes hold me back. But you took the extra step and signed me up for activities so that I learned being in public isn't a death sentence. I just want to express my deepest gratitude for believing in me. You have shown me the value of honesty, sincerity, and trust. You will forever remain a major contributor behind my success and achievements. I really look forward to the day I can do the same for someone else.

Karess
Karess

Karess was part of CV's program that helps foster care kids in Westchester who are returning home to their families. This can often be a difficult time for the families. Prior to this program, 24% of children in Westchester returned to foster care within the first year. This program reduces the number of failures to 10%.



Drawing by Adrian F.

“UNDERNEATH YOU WILL FIND A CHILD WITH HOPES AND DREAMS LIKE OTHER CHILDREN”

Letter from a proud father to his son who volunteers at CV and is Chair of CV's Leadership Council.

Dear Noah,

I love the way you engage the boys in conversation one-on-one. This sends a powerful message that says they are individuals worth talking to. Especially important for these boys who come from physical and emotional abuse, broken homes, the streets or the criminal justice system where negativity permeates their lives.

For these boys, life conspires to shatter self-esteem. Yet, last night we saw Rob, Juan and others who were smiling. How come?

My view: 3 reasons;

1. everything CV does fosters self-worth
2. interactions with people like you who really care, and show it
3. when you peel away their defenses and layers of self-doubt, underneath you will find a child with hopes and dreams like other children

"All of the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light of one small candle."

Love you,

Dad

(Henry Simon)



Top: Henry Simon celebrates his birthday at CV
Bottom: Noah Simon took CV to new heights
at the peak of Mount Kilimanjaro