News from the Village

Put Down the Guns and Shoot the Cameras

As a high school senior, Vaughan Thorpe was arrested for robbery, trading his prom and graduation for a prison sentence. Thorpe was convicted as an adult and served on Riker’s Island alongside adult men. “I was literally attached to these men, and they could do anything they want. It was uncomfortable on so many levels. They take your pride from you first.”

Thorpe is now part of CV’s Harlem Justice Community Program, which helps youth on parole prepare for a future that doesn’t involve prison. Thorpe and others in the program filmed a documentary of their stories to help deter teens from making the same mistakes they made. When asked why he wanted to make this film, called One Last Chance, Thorpe shook his head, weary beyond his 22 years, and said, “I got tired. I got so tired.”

One of the young filmmakers, Cadeem Gibbs, started selling drugs for a gang when he was in middle school. He spent six years in “big boy jail” starting when he was only 16. As the breadwinner for his family, he was trapped, forced back onto the streets each time he attempted to return to school. Even after being shot, Gibbs walked away from the hospital back to his street corner. Gibbs hopes telling his story will educate other teens at risk of incarceration.

“One wanted to be part of the solution, not the problem,” Gibbs explained.

Addressing the large crowd gathered for the premier of the film, Thorpe, the 22-year old filmmaker and former prison inmate said, “The world would be a better place if more people picked up an 8mm lens and put the 9mm guns down.”

Filmed on the streets of Harlem, One Last Chance, a docudrama by CV youth Vaughan Thorpe, tells the harsh reality of teens on probation and how CV helped them reclaim their lives.

Keeping Quiet About Wrongdoing at Nonprofits Only Makes Matters Worse

Excerpt from an editorial published in the Chronicle of Philanthropy by CV President and CEO Jeremy Kohomban and Charity Navigator CEO Ken Berger.

In our opinion, based on our 60 years of collective experience, a culture of constructive self-criticism has yet to embed itself in the ethos of most nonprofits, their staff leadership, and their boards of directors.

Just like in business or government, wrongdoers exist, but nonprofits don’t see any reason why they should be held to a higher standard than any other institution when it comes to punishing bad players.

The result is a sense of denial and defensiveness throughout the nonprofit world that is damaging our credibility with the public.

We recognize the deep commitment of people who work at nonprofits and the great good they do for society. But we strongly disagree with those who believe “results are all that matter” when assessing how a charity operates.

Financial management, good governance, ethics, and high operating standards must continue to be vital measures of a nonprofit’s worthiness.

Read the full article at www.childrensvillage.org/news
The Children’s Village works in partnership with families to help society’s most vulnerable children so that they become educationally proficient, economically productive, and socially responsible members of their communities.

The Fatherhood Project is a new initiative to locate and make contact with fathers of youth in CV’s residential care. The intent is to increase resources and support for youth through either the father or his family.

In February 2014 when the initiative began, 29 fathers had been identified and contact had been made with only 15 of them. By April 2014, 46 fathers were identified and 30 have had contact with CV.

We are proud to have doubled the number of fathers with whom we have contact because it means twice as many family connections for our youth. Because of this success, we will be expanding the project to include more youth.

Exploited Teen Seeks Safety

“Just need to love myself more than I love him,” the gregarious 17-year-old told me. Ava* was speaking of her desire to end the abusive relationship she had been in since her arrest at the age of 15 for prostitution. As the psychologist for CV’s Safe Harbour program, which works to identify and treat sexually exploited minors, I recognized the gravity of her statement. Being treated as a commodity to be bought and sold had given her the impression that all relationships come at a high cost.

The path that led Ava to my door had been rife with pitfalls. Her mother’s struggles with addictions had compromised her ability to provide Ava adequate care. By the age of 13, Ava, feeling awkward, abandoned, and insecure, was an easy target for predators intent on exploiting her vulnerabilities. She was recruited through a “friend” she met on the streets, groomed, coached, and repeatedly sold by her pimp to “johns” before her arrest. Fortunately, increased awareness and legislative changes allowed Ava to be treated as a victim, not a criminal.

Ava knew she wanted to end the abuse and exploitation, but was uncertain as to how. “I’m a strong black woman,” Ava told me, adding softly, “Do I need help? Yes.” I saw Ava a few weeks later. She was heading into the Safe Harbour support group. She stopped to greet me before excitedly joining the group of other survivors with whom she would participate in life-changing discussions and artistic activities. I smiled, knowing that Ava was getting the help she needed.

Outcome Corner: The Fatherhood Project Finds Fathers

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The Power of a Father

Though Chris* admired his father’s clothes, cars, and money, he learned the hard way how gangs and prison can ruin your life and the lives of loved ones. Chris plans to earn his clothes, cars, and money by graduating college and getting a good job. His father is cheering him on from a prison cell halfway across the country.

Deciding that it was time to show his father that he has become a mature, responsible young adult, Chris, a 20-year-old college student, booked a flight and a hotel room with the help of CV staff so that he could travel to visit his dad. For ten years, Chris and his father have regularly exchanged letters and Chris feels his dad’s support despite missing his presence. Chris’ connection with his father is essential for his own success. Knowing there is somebody who has hope in his future and will always be just a letter or a plane ride away makes all the difference.

In all of the work we do at CV, we strive to provide at least one meaningful adult connection for our youth. For Chris, the connection with his father is an unlikely source of support, but a testament to the power of a father.

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**Deloitte Volunteers Uncover Treasures!**

Deloitte employees, accompanied by their friends from Macquarie, traded their suits and briefcases for jeans and paintbrushes at CV’s Polo Grounds Community Center in Harlem. As the first group to kick off the busy corporate volunteer season, Deloitte set a high bar. The day was filled with laughter as they bonded with each other and with CV youth while painting, organizing, cooking, and otherwise sprucing up the Community Center.

One Deloitte team member proved to be a painting professional, covering both the walls and himself with bright blue paint. Others went on archaeological digs through closets, attics, and alcoves, laughing as they tried to top each other’s uncovered buried treasures. The winner found a fully operational sink, running water and all, buried beneath musical instruments. The volunteers who didn’t care to be fully immersed in paint and dust enjoyed making caramel popcorn balls with our professional chef as an after-school treat for the kids.

**A Four-Legged Listener Creates Enthusiastic Readers**

"You mean all these books are for kids to read?" Benny exclaimed as he entered the children’s room at the Dobbs Ferry Library. Benny and three friends from CV’s youngest cottage were visiting the library for Pawsitive Tails, a program that invites struggling or new readers to visit the library for Pawsitive Tails, a program that invites struggling or new readers to

As the volunteer by visiting childrensvillage.org/groups.

**I have the opportunity to help people who live only five minutes away.**

By Hallie Cronin, 16 years old, CV Volunteer

A sophomore at Ardsley High School, Hallie is one of the youngest volunteers in CV’s School-Based Mentoring program, which partners with local schools to bring creative and eager teenagers to work with CV’s youngest residents.

“I used to think of volunteering as something that helped others, not realizing that it also helps the volunteer. I have had my assumptions challenged. I have learned to be more patient and have been presented with children whose background is very different from mine, yet who want the same things: friendship, education, confidence, and stability.

I enjoyed my time with all the kids, some who never ceased to make me laugh, and others who amazed me with their creativity. Each week, when my mom picks me up, I share the interesting and funny things I heard. I feel empowered that as a high school student, I have the opportunity to help people who live only five minutes away. Sometimes we are led to believe that help is only needed in faraway places. I can’t wait to be back next year to continue to be involved in a wonderful and successful program so close to home.”

**Alumni Talk About What’s Important To Them Today**

"Most importantly, I feel safe.” 24-year old Nicole* called CV’s runaway and homeless shelter this month to make a clothing donation. She explained that she wanted to give back to the shelter because when she was 18 growing up in Rockland County, she needed help and “thank goodness you had room!” Nicole said she thinks of her time in the shelter often and said, “It really made a difference in my life.”

Today, she told us, some troubles remain, but “I have a bare friend who is committed and supportive and, most importantly, I feel safe.” CV’s Sanctuary is the only runaway and homeless shelter for teens in the Lower Hudson Valley.

Ms. Gaffney, now the Assistant Vice President for Community Foster Care, laughed and remembered Tyheim as a teen who gave her a memorably tough time. The two are scheduled to reconnect over lunch.

**Travis and Messiah cuddle up to read aloud to Pauly, an enthusiastic and non-judgemental listener, at the Dobbs Ferry Library.**

Tyheim, a CV alumnus, tells us “I’m at a comfortable place in my life... Most importantly, I’m happy.”

*name changed to protect privacy

**Biscuit Plays Ball**

The two are scheduled to reacquaint over lunch.

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**News From the Village**
On May 23, CV and Westchester County Family Court hosted a Foster Care Month Celebration honoring members of the foster care community. The event featured Darryl “DMC” McDaniels from Run DMC, the first hip-hop group to earn a multiplatinum certification, appear on the cover of Rolling Stone, and be inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

DMC, who was adopted out of foster care at a young age, gave an inspirational speech to youth, staff, and visitors in which he told the youth, “To all the young people in foster care... I want to let you know that I’m not better than you, I’m not smarter than you, I’m not greater than you, I’m not more talented than you. I am you.”

“I made it alongside my greatest friends! You all had a part in my success and I just wanted to say thank you.”

–Chris, Class of 2014

“Make a difference in a life and earn income for life!”

The Children’s Village is now able to offer donors the opportunity to establish a Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA). With a CGA, you can make a lasting gift that will generate an immediate income tax deduction, plus provide an annualized income stream for life! (Interest rates depend on your age and can be as high as 9.5 percent.)

For more information, contact Linda Stutz at lstutz@childrensvillage.org or 914-693-0600 ext. 1413. Save the dates!

11th Annual Golf & Tennis Classic
September 17, 2014
The St. Andrew’s Golf Club
Hastings-on-Hudson, NY

Masquerade Gala
October 25, 2014
Roosevelt Ballroom
Yonkers, NY

The “Sally” Paddle Tennis
October 29, 2014
Fox Meadow Tennis Club
Scarsdale, NY

For more information, please call 914-693-0606 ext. 1224 or visit www.childrensvillage.org/events

CV Opens Volunteer-Run Krupman Library

On June 18, CV opened its first-ever after-school library, one that was created by and will be staffed primarily by volunteers. The new library was dedicated to Trustee and former Board Chair Bill Krupman and his wife Anne in recognition of the Krupman family’s passion for and support of literacy at CV.

Pam Allyn, daughter of Bill and Anne and founder of the Books for Boys Program at CV, spoke about how loved a child feels when an adult takes the time to share or recommend a book they might enjoy.

“We are truly grateful for the Krupman family and all the volunteers who will breathe life and love into this space for years to come,” said Jeremy Kohomban.

Friends and family gather to celebrate the new Krupman Library at CV.

Hip-Hop Artist Honors Foster Care at CV

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Congratulations to the Class of 2014!