

# News From The Village

The Children's Village • Fall 2011



“I am part of a whole family. I have siblings, cousins, grandparents...”

Lloyd J., seen here while a resident at The Children's Village, is one of the Families for Teens success stories. He is now a senior in college with big plans thanks to the support of his new family.

## Everyone Needs to Belong to Someone

Finding youth a place to belong is the sentiment behind The Children's Village Families for Teens program, which received The Council on Accreditation's 2011 Innovative Practices Award. Over the past seven years this program has helped more than 50 older teens, all of whom had given up on being part of a family. Below are some of their stories.

### A Typical College Student

In many ways, Lloyd J. is a typical college student. In his senior year at SUNY Cobleskill, he works part-time, plays tennis, thinks a lot about what he will do after graduation, and spends school breaks with family.

But Lloyd is far from typical. He spent most of his life in foster care prior to coming to CV's residential school. With a lot of support, he made great strides emotionally and academically and was accepted into a four-year college. However, he was facing the prospect of doing it alone since he had given up on becoming part of a family many years ago.

To his surprise and delight, Lloyd was asked by CV staff member Tommy King and his wife if he would be willing to become their foster son. Lloyd moved in with the King's the summer before his freshman year.

“They made it clear from the beginning that I was part of the whole family. I now have siblings, grandparents, cousins—a whole family. The King's home is now my home.”

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## The Best Summer They Ever Had!



“I made lots of friends on my first day of summer camp,” said Isaiah, one of 88 children from the Polo Grounds Towers housing development in Harlem who attended summer camp at CV's campus. “This is my best summer ever!”

Guests at CV's Circle of Friends Annual Dinner in May stepped up to make this camp possible for the kids and, on behalf of them, we thank you.

Each week the children spent three days at CV's Polo Grounds Community Center and two days at the beautiful new Lanza Activities Center in Dobbs Ferry. They learned to swim in the indoor pool, went on scavenger hunts, tried out the zipline, played tennis, cooled off on the slip and slide, and kayaked on the Hudson. Staff even slipped in some learning through the Lit World Program. The camp culminated with a Family Day Barbeque which included parents and siblings of the campers.

“There are no words to explain my gratitude for this fun filled summer you've given my children,” said Adine De Souza, mom of Sunshine and Anthony. “From the depths of my heart Thank You!”

Giving Kids the Chance of a Lifetime

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**Families for Teens (cont.)**

With the security that the King family has brought to Lloyd's life, he has the chance to do what all college students do—dream about a future. "Right now I'm looking forward to getting into the real world and contributing."

**When I Call Her "Mom" It's Official**



"It's unexplainable. I'm just really, really happy now," is how Claude describes feeling about his adoption being finalized in mid September.

Claude, who turned 21 this September, came into foster care when he was five years old. He was placed with Tracey

Roy but, unfortunately, Ms. Roy's apartment was not big enough for her to take his four siblings, so they were split up. Ms. Roy was determined to keep the family together, so she began to pursue adoption for all five children.

"Something always got in the way, but we never gave up," said Roy. After more than a decade and a half, Claude has finally seen his dream come true. "There was a period of time when I didn't know if it would ever happen," says Claude. "But she was always there taking care of me. Now when I call her 'Mom' it's official!"

With the support of his family, Claude is now attending college full-time and looking for a part-time job.

**Making a Dream a Reality**



Nicholas' grandfather was the only consistent part of his life, so when he was no longer able to care for Nicholas it was devastating for both of them. Nicholas was placed at

The Children's Village, but he continued to hope he would go back to his grandfather even though staff tried to help Nicholas understand it was not an option.

Recognizing how special this relationship is, staff searched for a family who lived close to his grandfather in Long Island and who would help them maintain a connection. Within a year, the perfect pair was found. Wendell Miller and Milton Scheldorn hit it off with Nicholas right away. They have a mutual love of art and enjoy being together. It was not long before Nicholas and his two dads knew that they had become a very special family.

Shortly after Nicholas' first visit to their home, Wendell and Milton told the staff, "Thank you for making our dream a reality." Now the family is just waiting to finalize the adoption and make their dream permanent.

**A Long-Term Parent**



Stacy Dessaline did not plan to adopt Donte. "I thought I'd just be a short-term foster parent, but I was so impressed when I first met him, and he kept on impressing me so much that I knew I had to."

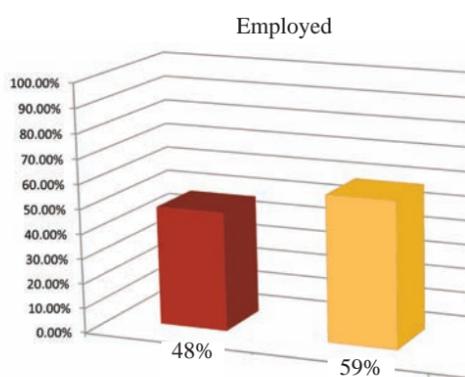
Donte lived at The Children's Village for five years and really struggled in school and had difficulty relating to people. Staff worked hard to help him open up. His volunteer mentor helped a great deal too. Then he met Stacy Dessaline.

"At first it was difficult. He had a hard time talking to me about things and even addressing me. After a few months though, things began to get better. He even called me 'Mom', and that's when I knew we would be ok."

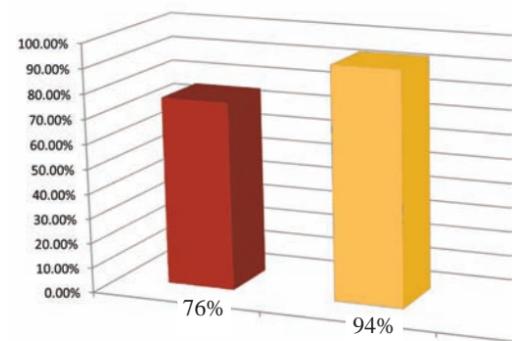
Donte has now lived with his new family for a year and is doing well. Ms. Dessaline keeps him focused through afterschool activities, church, and music lessons. Just like all families, Ms. Dessaline and Donte are still figuring some things out, but they are on the right track. "Things aren't perfect, but they get better every day. I know that we are both blessed."

**Outcome Corner - The WAY Home**

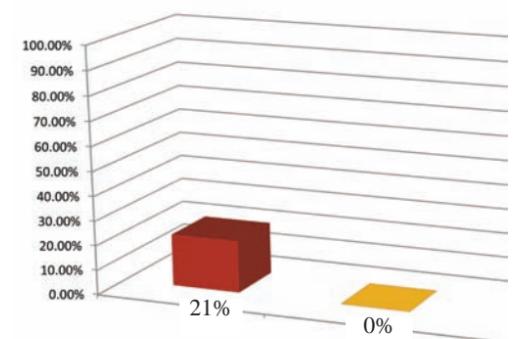
A report published recently by The Center for an Urban Future entitled "Fostering Careers" concluded that "An alarming number of foster youth essentially go from being minor wards of the state to adult wards of the state." CV's WAY Home program helps foster care youth leaving CV's residential school beat those odds by providing a paid professional mentor to help them complete school, get and keep a job, and remain in a stable home. Below are outcomes on WAY Home participants compared to those published in the report on former foster care youth.



High School Graduate or Enrolled in School



Entered Shelter Within Three Years



■ Former Foster Care Youth in their 20's  
■ WAY Home Participants (18 to 24 years old)

**About The Village**

Founded in 1851, the mission of The Children's Village is to work 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.

## A New Volunteer Committee Makes the Difference

Donations of in-kind gifts (toys, household goods, furniture, appliances) can make a real difference to a family who has little and to the children in CV's programs. But organizing and distributing them is time consuming. With funding cuts this year, we were planning to stop accepting most donations, but our Community Advisory Group said "No way!" They recruited a volunteer in-kind group that now has six members who come regularly to inventory donations and distribute them to families, cottages, and community programs.

"While this group will be a huge asset all year round," said Candy Fitts, Director of Volunteers, "I can't begin to think what we would do without them for the holidays when so many generous people and organizations donate gifts for the children."

"We are happy to be of help in these difficult economic times," said David Schwartz, In Kind group member and Chairman of CV's Community Advisory Committee.



Left to Right: Rhona Neuwirth, David Schwartz, Diana Asher, M J Madigan and Jeff O'Donnell (Kim Savvides not shown) are having fun sorting donations that they know will be appreciated by families and kids.

## Goldman Sachs Volunteers Clean House

Early in the summer, 14 volunteers from Goldman Sachs' Community Team Works helped to spruce up the living space for our Assistance Dog Training Program. They not only cleaned storage areas, put together new furniture and painted, but also paid for the whole project with Goldman Sachs volunteer funds. This project has been coordinated by Junior Board Member Brendan Kereiakes for the past two years.



Goldman Volunteers meet ECAD staff member Phil (orange shirt) and his dog Reese to learn about how CV boys train assistance dogs for people with disabilities.

## J-E-T-S JETS! So Awesome!

On August 17th, 14 boys from CV were treated to a special VIP day by the New York Jets. Junior Board member Jackie Rosenberg coordinated a trip to Jets Training Camp for the boys, which included an opportunity to visit the training facility, watch practice from the sideline, and meet and get autographs from several Jets players including Bard Scott, Jeremy Kerley, and Bryan Thomas. All the boys had an incredible time including Jose A. who, upon leaving the camp said, "I can't believe I just met REAL, ACTUAL Jets! So Awesome!"



CV Boys watch "REAL, ACTUAL Jets practice at the new Florham Park, NJ compound.

## IBM Doubles the Fun!

This summer, IBM's Asian Diversity Network sent two groups of volunteers to CV. The first group of 44 came out on June 16th to mark IBM's 100th anniversary and participated in campus beautification projects. On behalf of the volunteers, IBM made a \$3,000 donation to our Academic Program to support the purchase of new books and supplies.

At the end of the summer, 15 IBM'ers came back to continue their work improving our campus, working alongside several boys. This hard working crew was able to finish two crucial projects. They capped off this trip with a BBQ prepared by our Culinary Arts program and made ice cream with the boys. Both projects were coordinated by IBM employee Andrea Tsoi.



IBM'ers and CV resident Lamor (second from left) take a break from landscaping on the company's 100th Anniversary Volunteer Day.

## Eagle Scouts Clear Trails



Henry Figueroa, Jr. chose The Children's Village to complete his Eagle Scout project. CV's Recreation Program has always had an active mountain biking and hiking program, but

## Morgan Stanley Partners with The Children's Village

June is Volunteer Month for employees of Morgan Stanley. That typically means lots of trips to CV's Dobbs Ferry campus, and this year was no exception. Sixty five Morgan Stanley volunteers weeded, planted flowers, built a bower for our high school graduation ceremony and played softball with the boys.

To add to this donation of time, the Morgan Stanley Foundation gave a generous \$9,500 grant to our Sanctuary Youth Shelter on behalf of several volunteers including Trustees Bill Hirshorn and Mark Scherzer. We thank you for this partnership.



Just some of the 65 Morgan Stanley volunteers in front of their impressive work.

## Friends Celebrate the Sanctuary

As a final farewell to summer, the Sanctuary Shelter and the Supportive Housing programs held their 7th Annual Family and Friends Day in early September. The Interfaith Caring Community coordinated the event, which saw guests participate in a softball game, a Blongo Ball Tournament, and other activities. Burke Heat of Tuckahoe kindly sponsored the event by providing the food and volunteers, and Eddie Cruz, for the second year, organized a great drum circle that gave people a chance to learn to drum in a group, play percussion, and even dance!



Two guests join in the drum circle with Norma M., Sanctuary staff, to make some beautiful music.

several years of severe storms have made many of the trails impassable. Henry decided clearing these trails was the job he wanted to tackle.

The weekend of September 11, more than 60 friends, family and colleagues showed up with chain saws, weed wackers, lawn mowers and rakes. Their hard work created beautiful trails accessible to CV staff and youth as well as local residents.

**Want to Join the Fun and Volunteer?  
Contact Candy Fitts at 914-693-0600 ext. 1586 or [cfitts@childrensvillage.org](mailto:cfitts@childrensvillage.org)**

## Golfers and Tennis Players Have a Day in the Sun

The week before the golf outing, St. Andrews Golf Club was under water. But with a little luck, September 13 was a beautiful sunny day for the golfers and tennis players at CV's eighth annual Golf and Tennis Classic. The event raised \$40,000 to support programs for at-risk children and families. A special thank you to our Gold Sponsor Armand Paganelli and Mount Carmel Pharmacy and to everyone who helped make this event successful, including Arc Advisors, Inc., Michael Hannigan, HMB Consultants, JVKellyGroup, Inc., Key Bank, Richard Morton, Dennis Noskin Architects, O'Connor Davies Munns & Dobbins, LLP, Rosin Steinhagen Mendel, Andrew & Sharon Saunders, Michael Schaenen, Sodexo, and Tom Robbins.

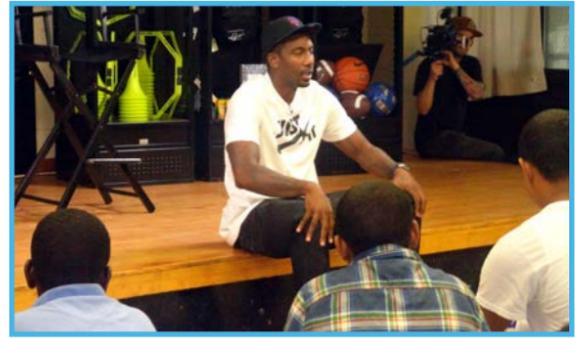


The low gross champions, with an impressive score of 58, were (l to r): Scott Vigliotti, Sal Inguanti, Armand Paganelli and Tony Keogh.



Tom Robbins (second from right), with his guests Tom Wimmer (far left), Lars Ebbesen (second from left) and Sean Fales (far right) at the Golf and Tennis Classic.

## NBA Star Talks Education & Poses a Challenge



To kick off the school year, 50 youth at the Polo Grounds Community Center were greeted with a surprise visit by NY Knicks star, Amar'e Stoudamire. He brought autographed book bags filled with school supplies and a message about the importance of a good education. He also announced that he will donate a shopping spree at Niketown to the two students with the most improved GPA's this semester.

## Artist's Legacy Revitalized



Thanks to the generosity of the Keith Haring Foundation, the mural in the lobby of the medical clinic on our Dobbs Ferry campus has been restored to its original brilliance by professional art restorer Louise Hunnicutt. The mural was created by the late artist Keith Haring, who was an avid volunteer and supporter of The Children's Village. The Keith Haring Foundation continues his legacy of giving and is an exceptional friend to the Village.

## CV Boys Meet First Lady--and First Dog!

Ten lucky boys from CV's campus earned a three-day trip to Washington D.C. by working hard and excelling in their studies. But this wasn't just any trip. Alan Fitts, Trips Director to the First Lady of the United States, planned some very special activities for the boys. The July 4th weekend included a private tour of the White House, tickets to the BBQ and fireworks on the South Lawn hosted by the President and First Lady, and a private meeting with Michelle Obama--which left the boys speechless.

And to top it off, Anthony caught a foul ball at the Washington Nationals baseball game where the boys were treated like VIP's, again thanks to Mr. Fitts.

Juan E. summed the experience up by saying, "I don't think it would be possible to have a better trip!"



Brian P., Aaron R., Jeffrey K., & Anthony C. visit with Bo, the First Dog, shortly before their private tour of the White House.

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The Children's Village  
Dobbs Ferry, NY 10522

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