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on Tuesday, Jan. 8, at the community center. Fee:

Imperishable food items for the holiday season, Dec. 30. Gallery artist John Nieman has an art show through Dec. 31. Access author-readings or enjoy the show in printed form. Visit bbserrylibrary.org to check out pre-loaded items weeks. For children, 5 meets Wednesday, 93-6614 or visit www.bbserry.com.

Items is the Friday contact the listings at 78-2787, ext. 19 or [entrprise.net](http://www.entrprise.net) with happenings and

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JIM MACLEAN/RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE

Barbara Stutz gives a gift to Marcos, a CV resident, on Dec. 11.

Younger generation invigorates outreach

By Colleen Michele Jones

For many of the boys at The Children's Village in Dobbs Ferry, December can be a tough time. Not all of the kids can expect to receive gifts, and fewer still have family to go home to during the holiday season.

That's why 15-year-old Shane M. (full last name withheld for legal reasons) was so touched by the Italian feast laid out before him at a holiday party held Dec. 11 at Howard Cottage, one of several group homes for neglected and abused children — most of them boys — run by the children's welfare agency.

"It's like so out of the ordinary; it's just amazing that these volunteers would do something like this — it's something like my family wouldn't even do," Shane, originally from Brooklyn, told the Enterprise. "I feel like a really special kid today."

The volunteers Shane referred to are part of a group called The Children's Village (CV) Leadership Council. Begun in the spring of 2010, the coalition is made up of just under 20 young professionals in the metropolitan area — many with established ties to the facility — who give of their own time to raise funds for activities and other "extras" many campus residents are not used to receiving, such as a snowboarding outing in upstate New York or the

chance to meet Jets players on the field after a game.

CV serves more than 10,000 children and families through a variety of programs and locations in the greater New York area. Many of the boys are referred to the agency through the courts for transitional care, treatment and schooling. About 400 of CV's charges reside on the Dobbs Ferry campus off Walgrove

Avenue at any given time, including a couple dozen girls in self-contained programs. Howard Cottage, one of two group homes "adopted" by the Leadership Council, houses boys aged 14 to 17.

Last week's party included holiday decorations, music, catered food, presents for each of the boys, as well as a

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CV Council

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cottage gift of a foosball table — all arranged for by the Leadership Council, several of whose members came straight from their Manhattan offices to join in the festivities.

Topher Nichols, a CV spokesperson who also serves as a liaison to the council, explained the purpose behind the group of 20-somethings who meet monthly and also hold regular fundraisers, such as cocktail parties in New York City to benefit CV's programs, as well as through direct solicitation and networking.

"We [agency administrators] were thinking about how we could engage those people in the community who aren't necessarily at a point in their careers where they can give tremendously now [for example, through corporate underwriting], but sort of cultivate them while in their early 20s and find ways they could contribute," Nichols explained.

CV has built its "junior council" by going through its Rolodex of established contacts with corporate affiliates such as MasterCard, Goldman Sachs, and JP Morgan Chase, as well as spreading the word to staffers whose grown children already have familiarity with the organization's mission. One example is Dobbs Ferry's Barbara Stutz, whose mother, Linda, is CV's vice president for institutional advancement. Stutz, a 28-year-old alumni of DFHS's Class of 2002, works as an associate at Bank of America/Merrill Lynch in Manhattan.

Noah Simon, 27, who grew up in nearby Scarsdale, first got involved helping kids at Children's Village through his family's synagogue, the

It's awesome, because we're not here with our families. It's nice to see that people care enough to spend time with us.

Jose M.

Westchester Reformed Temple, and then began volunteering on outings the campus recreation department took with the boys, including kayaking and mountain biking.

A charter member of the Leadership Council, which he now chairs, Simon said, "One of the goals of the group is taking community service to the next level and having sustained involvement that can have a greater impact on the children and families of CV."

While the group's first year focused mostly on planning and fundraising — with a total of more than \$30,000 contributed — in recent months some of the joint activities the council has conducted with the cottages include indoor rock climbing in New Rochelle and attending a Jets/49ers game at MetLife Stadium, where the group got to meet wide receiver Jeremy Kerley.

Twenty-seven-year-old Natalia Izzo, a member of the council who is originally from Rhode Island and works at Bloomberg, said she is most gratified in "being able to establish relationships and see [the kids'] reactions to the things we do with them, like taking them on the field to meet the Jets players, which is something I would have never gotten the chance to do, either."

"The best part about it is connecting

with the kids, because when they're having fun, we're having fun," added Simon, who lives in Manhattan, where he works as a financial adviser.

Irvington High School Class of 2010 graduate Aaron Mack, whose mother, Leslie, is a staff manager at CV, grew up aware of the challenges of the young people sent to the Dobbs Ferry facility.

"So I jumped at a chance to take more of a leadership role," said Mack, a 25-year-old investment banker at Barclays in Manhattan. "It's great to see the kids and how extremely appreciative they are of getting attention. You can really see how it makes a difference."

The Leadership Council is committed to raising \$45,000 over the next year, money that will benefit future group events as well as any other programs CV runs, such as WAY Works, which provides teens with the skills they need to enter the workforce.

Possibly without even realizing it, these successful young professionals also end up being role models to the troubled boys, and many have developed personal relationships with them.

Mack is helping a 19-year-old he mentors to earn his GED soon, while Simon said he's always happy to talk to the guys about how he got into the business world, "because these kids do really aspire to become something."

When asked what he thought about all the fuss made over him and his cottage-mates last week, Jose M., a 17-year-old originally from the Bronx, said, "It's awesome, because we're not here with our families. It's nice to see that people care enough to spend time with us."

For more information about joining the Children's Village Leadership Council, e-mail Topher.Nichols@cnichols@childrensvillage.org.

Police

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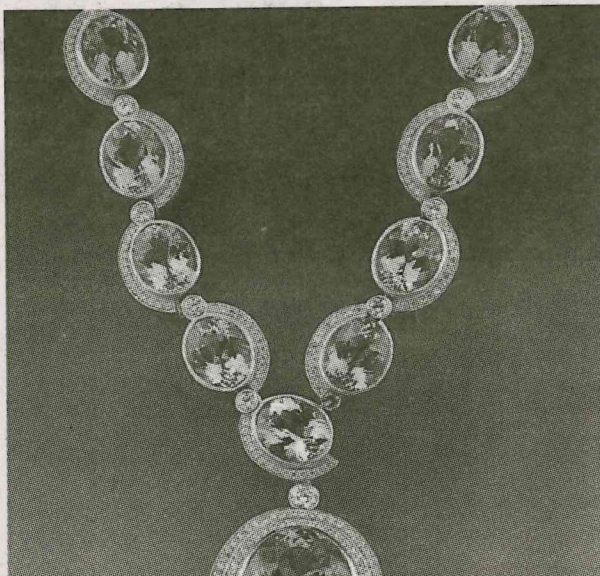
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