Early Childhood Center Students Learn to Read Through Innovative Literacy Program

At the start of the school year, educators in our Early Childhood Center implemented Letterland, a new and innovative early literacy and phonological awareness program. Letterland is a multisensory program that incorporates song, physical movement and stories to make the alphabet come to life. The Letterland curriculum is based on recent literacy and neuroscience research and has proven highly effective in early studies, as well as in our own classrooms. After successfully partnering with Clinical Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Literacy and Innovation Carolyn Strom from New York University’s Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development to pilot an early literacy curriculum called Zoophonics in two classrooms last year, the Neighborhood House expanded and refined this literacy approach with the implementation of this new Letterland curriculum. We have seen amazing results so far, as the children who are being taught with the Letterland curriculum are able to recognize letters and spell short words at an earlier age compared to more traditional methods. We are excited to continue to see improved results using this new curriculum and to watch the students learn to R-E-A-D!

Members Delight in New Classes at the Center

Our newest classes at the Center @ Lenox Hill Neighborhood House give our older adult members unique perspectives on two familiar topics: New York City and the arts. Students in the “Exploring New York Outside In” class learn methods and tools to navigate the City’s wide array of cultural opportunities. The class blends educational presentations, discussions, guest lectures and trips to some of the City’s most treasured institutions. On the first trip, members explored The Frick Collection, while our multilingual staff helped to translate the tour into Mandarin and Cantonese for those who required it.

In partnership with the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Center offered a “Painting Without a Brush” class taught by a Whitney Museum educator. Our members explored the creation of color compositions with unconventional tools and materials. The class was meant to inspire and empower students to create art in nontraditional methods and our members welcomed the opportunity to learn new artistic techniques.
Early Childhood Center Students Celebrate Winter Festival

Children in our Early Childhood Center celebrated their favorite aspects of winter during our annual Winter Festival. The students performed original songs and dances written and choreographed by our talented Visual and Performing Arts teachers. Each class also recited a special winter poem, including “Flitter Flutter,” “Down Come the Snowflakes” and “Chilly Willy the Penguin.” The children had been practicing for weeks and were thrilled to perform in front of their parents, classmates and friends. In preparation for these fun and creative performances, each classroom crafted unique accessories for the Festival, such as snowflake necklaces and penguin crowns.

The Teaching Kitchen at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House Hosts Celebration Dinner for Trainees

The Teaching Kitchen at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House hosted a potluck celebration to honor the success of the amazing organizations who have benefited from The Teaching Kitchen since its launch in 2015. Attendees included chefs, nutritionists and program administrators from organizations who have all participated in previous Teaching Kitchen trainings and workshops. Each organization has taken the lessons learned to collectively serve more locally sourced produce and less sugar and to serve healthier farm-to-institution meals to their communities – totaling nearly 10 million meals annually as a whole.

Our Teaching Kitchen Chefs distributed awards to recognize the hard work and achievements of these organizations regarding improvements to their food systems. The award for “Best Creative Recipe” was presented to the Acacia Carver Senior Center for their Kale and Spinach Sofrito and “Best Facility Change” was awarded to Neighbors Together for the remodel of their kitchen, allowing them to create more meals from scratch. These organizations have all embraced our mission to serve healthier meals to low-income New Yorkers and we were thrilled to highlight the incredible improvements they have made in their communities.
Older Adults Kick Off the Holidays at Annual Thanksgiving Dinner Dance

The Neighborhood House was honored to welcome nearly 400 older adults to our Thanksgiving Dinner Dance, one of our most beloved annual traditions. Our guests included members of both the Center @ Lenox Hill Neighborhood House and our Senior Center at Saint Peter's Church, as well as clients from our Geriatric Care Management and CARE programs. Guests were thrilled to be greeted by United States Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney, New York State Assembly Members Rebecca A. Seawright and Dan Quart, New York City Council Member Ben Kallos and a representative from the office of Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer.

A Thanksgiving blessing was delivered by Pastor Amandus J. Derr of Saint Peter’s Church before guests enjoyed a full farm-to-table Thanksgiving feast prepared by our fabulous Food Services team, followed by spirited dancing to a live band. Dinner was served by our incredible volunteers from New York Life Insurance Company, New York Cares, Omni Hotels & Resorts and Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

The delicious menu, prepared by our talented chefs, included roast turkey breast with roasted garlic and sage gravy, cornbread stuffing, baked sweet potatoes with ginger, green beans with caramelized onions and mushrooms, house-made cranberry sauce, whole wheat dinner rolls and house-made individual pumpkin cheesecakes with whipped cream for dessert. After the meal, guests enjoyed dancing to live music from the Leah Rich Band, who entertained the crowd with chart-topping hits from the 50s, 60s and 70s. This memorable evening of food, fellowship and fun was a fantastic way to kick off the holiday season and celebrate together as a community.
Neighborhood House and Pro Bono Partners Host Rent Calculation Clinics

Our Legal Advocacy Department, in collaboration with pro bono attorneys from Morgan Stanley and Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP, hosts regular rent calculation clinics for tenants in buildings owned by the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). During the clinics, our attorneys meet with individual clients, calculate their appropriate rents based on their incomes and applicable regulations and assist clients with on-the-spot rent adjustments. Tenants also learn about potential deductions and ways to better communicate with NYCHA to advocate for their rights. Through these clinics we uncovered that one tenant was being overcharged by 400%, and by making this adjustment we saved the tenant more than $10,000 each year. We are grateful to Morgan Stanley and Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP for their partnership in helping us to expand our ability to protect the housing stability of low-income NYCHA tenants.

RealArts Students Learn Robotics and Creative Writing

Students in our RealArts After School program enjoy immersive educational arts programming as well as special Robotics and Creative Writing classes. These classes give students the opportunity to explore their interests in a hands-on educational setting. Our Robotics classes are held twice weekly and are led by our volunteer Robotics Teacher Cristina Mota, who holds a PhD in Computer Science with a focus on Artificial Intelligence. Christina teaches our future engineers the basics of computer coding by programming “Dash” and “Dot” robots and “Ozobots” to recognize different colors and perform operations in a set order. These basic functions lay the foundation for students to understand complex computer programming commands. The Neighborhood House recognizes that topics such as computer science and programming are educational essentials and we are thankful to Christina for teaching these skills to our students.

In our Creative Writing classes, students explored stories and myths from around the world. Lead Creative Writing Teacher and longtime volunteer Loraine Kriegel worked with our Drama Teacher Kerri Evans and RealArts students to create a mythical and intriguing script that was showcased in their Final Bow performance. This writing process helps children to exercise their creative minds and use their imaginations. As a special project for the Final Bow performance, students from our oldest Gamma group created the costumes for our younger Alpha students. Our RealArts programming continues to lead the way in arts education and to inspire students beyond the classroom.
Public Theater’s Mobile Unit Performs Measure for Measure at Women’s Mental Health Shelter

Residents of our Women’s Mental Health Shelter at the Park Avenue Armory enjoyed a new performance of Shakespeare’s Measure for Measure presented by the Public Theater’s Mobile Unit, a touring theater company that provides free Shakespeare performances to communities across New York City. For this new production of the classic play, the Mobile Unit transformed the Shelter’s Community Room into the streets of New Orleans and immersed our residents in a 1979 Mardi Gras setting of the dark comedy.

The Public Theater’s Mobile Unit performances are part of a multi-year partnership that helps the Shelter to bring high-quality arts programming to our residents. The Mobile Unit’s team uses a trauma-informed approach before the show begins that allows our residents to anticipate and opt out of portions of the performance that might be emotionally overwhelming. Prior adaptations of The Tempest, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Henry V and Hamlet have all been performed on-site at our Shelter to great acclaim. The sensational all-female cast of Measure to Measure brought fabulous costumes, music, laughter and drama to the Shelter in this superb performance.

Neighborhood House Presents Lecture and Performance on the Power of Protest Music

The power of music to push societies forward is an influential tool that has been used throughout history and across the world. We were excited to welcome members of the community to enjoy a compelling lecture by Dr. Benjamin Tausig, Assistant Professor of Ethnomusicology at Stony Brook University, on the impact of protest music—as it relates to the settlement house movement and to other 19th and 20th century causes, and as a vital force for change in our own era. The lecture discussed protest music and songs of dissent from around the world, including Thailand and Russia, and was followed by an acoustic performance of historical protest music by musicians and scholars Taylor Ackley and Alison Rowe. The duo performed a number of classic protest songs including “Man in Black” by Johnny Cash, Loretta Lynn’s “Coal Miner’s Daughter” and Bob Dylan’s “Blowin’ in the wind.”
Helen Ruan, Legal Advocate

Helen Ruan has been a dedicated Advocate in our 26-member Legal Advocacy Department since 2011, helping to represent thousands each year with critical legal issues. Helen is a graduate of Hunter College, where she earned her bachelor’s degree in Community Health Education. Originally intending to pursue a career in medicine, Helen changed course as she began to learn more about the field of public health and the issues that ordinary people face. Helen realized that by helping people to obtain better access to public health services, she can assist them well before they find themselves needing medical care.

Helen has held diverse responsibilities in her nine-year career at the Neighborhood House but her primary objective has always been to assist people with gaining access to public benefits. Helen now helps to run our Supplemental Needs Trust program, where we assist individuals living with disabilities to maintain eligibility for government benefits such as Medicaid or to assist them in bridging the payment gap for their medical needs that Medicaid does not cover.

Helen has always enjoyed working with clients one-on-one and listening to their stories because, “that’s how you learn about your community. I like being able to work with a whole variety of clients, as it ultimately helps me think about ways to solve their complex issues.”

Tania Cortes, Director of Casa Mutua

Tania Cortes, LMSW, was recently promoted to her role as Director of Casa Mutua, our permanent supportive housing residence in East Harlem. Tania first joined the Neighborhood House in 2010 as a Social Worker in our Women’s Mental Health Shelter at the Park Avenue Armory and later became the Shelter’s Director of Social Services. While working with women at the Shelter, Tania aimed both to advocate for her clients and to support them in their journey towards greater independence and empowerment. Tania experienced “pure joy” upon hearing news that a client would be moving out of the Shelter and transitioning to her own apartment.

Now that she is leading our Casa Mutua community, Tania works to help residents gain greater independence and stability by providing comprehensive social, psychiatric, recreational, counseling, legal and other supportive services to individuals living with mental illness who were formerly homeless. Tania enjoys the sense of community at Casa Mutua: “our clients care about one another, they look out for each other.” Tania is also thrilled to continue to provide direct services to tenants because “being a social worker is my passion.” Tania is a graduate of Hunter College and received her MSW from the Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College.
Volunteers and Older Adults Forge Friendships with Help from Neighborhood House Friendly Visiting Program

The Neighborhood House relies on more than 1,100 dedicated volunteers to enrich our programs for thousands in need. Our Friendly Visiting program provides a unique opportunity for volunteers who desire a fulfilling one-on-one experience to help their neighbors. Volunteers are thoughtfully matched with homebound older adults and visit them weekly. These older adults represent one of the most vulnerable groups in our community as they are often socially isolated. Friendly Visiting volunteers provide socialization for these older adults and cultivate lasting friendships, learn from each other’s experiences and benefit from the personal satisfaction derived from community service.

While the older adults benefit from the connections that a volunteer provides, our volunteers find the program equally beneficial. One volunteer described his visits with Jay, a homebound older adult client, as being “very impactful to my life…Our visits and adventures are so very special to me and really enrich my life as much, if not more, than Jay’s.”

To learn more about the program or to become a Friendly Visiting volunteer, please contact Lauren Goldman, Deputy Volunteer Director, at 212-218-0452 or lgoldman@lenoxhill.org.

Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP Presented with Elizabeth Rohatyn Award for Community Service

Our annual Volunteer Recognition Celebration collectively honored our more than 1,100 incredible volunteers for their important work to enrich our programs and our community. The evening also featured the presentation of the Elizabeth Rohatyn Awards for Community Service, which we have awarded to distinguished volunteers since 1994 in honor of past Board President and Honorary Chair Elizabeth Rohatyn (1930-2016).

We were proud to present the awards to Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President, in recognition of her invaluable support of Lenox Hill Neighborhood House and of our neighbors in need. Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP was also presented the award to recognize the firm’s dedicated service to our community by assisting low-income older adults with Medicare coverage and issues.

Members of the Center @ Lenox Hill Neighborhood House performed selections from our recent production of Into the Woods SR. and several current volunteers regaled the audience with their life-changing volunteer experiences. Our outstanding volunteers use their unique skills and talents to benefit our vital programs and we are deeply grateful for their dedication and passion to helping those in our community who need us most.
Early Childhood Center and RealArts Children Revel in CIBC Miracle Day

The Neighborhood House was thrilled to participate in CIBC’s Miracle Day for the fifth consecutive year! Children from our Early Childhood Center, together with members of our Father Figures Group, along with students from our RealArts After School, had the fantastic opportunity to visit CIBC’s New York headquarters to participate in this fun and special tradition. The students toured the CIBC trading floor, learned about financial markets and met New York sports legends John Starks, Johnny Damon, Kenny Anderson, Mike Keenan and Ron Duguay. They enjoyed an exciting performance by hip-hop artist DEE-1 before posing for photos with actors Tony Danza, Lorraine Bracco, Michael Imperioli, Federico Castellucci and Jim Gaffigan. As an added surprise, they were thrilled to meet the ultimate celebrity—Santa Claus!

Now celebrating its 35th year, Miracle Day has helped to improve the lives of millions of children worldwide. Each year, CIBC’s Capital Markets team and Investment Advisors donate their fees and commissions to children’s charities on the first Wednesday in December. As a beneficiary of this wonderful event, the Neighborhood House receives a generous grant to support our children’s programming. We are especially grateful to CIBC’s Eric Price for his continued generosity and commitment to helping children in need.

Neighborhood House Launches New Program to Support Caregivers

There are estimated to be between 900,000 and 1.3 million caregivers in New York City and it is all too common for these caregivers to experience symptoms of depression or anxiety as they juggle their myriad responsibilities. To help this underserved group, the Neighborhood House was proud to launch our new Caregiver Program to provide unpaid caregivers with a variety of supportive services to help them in caring for family members and friends in six community districts in Manhattan. Our team of social workers will support hundreds in this delicate “caregiver dyad”—the giver of care and receiver of care—so the relationship can thrive amidst changing roles and experiences. Our program provides caregivers seeking help with individualized information, help with accessing vital benefits, supportive counseling and trainings on important topics. Caregivers are also able to participate in support groups in English and in Spanish, as well as telephonically, and are eligible to receive thousands of hours of respite care from experienced home attendants. Our Caregiver Program is an important new expansion for the Neighborhood House so that we can better serve older adults and their caregivers.

To learn more about our Caregiver Program or to find out how you can receive assistance, please contact our dedicated Caregiver Intake Line at 212-218-0438 or email caregiver@lenoxhill.org.
Local Comedians Host Stand-Up Comedy Show to Benefit Women’s Mental Health Shelter

We were grateful to be the beneficiary of a special night of comedy to raise funds for our Women’s Mental Health Shelter at the Park Avenue Armory. Lovely Ratbags, a stand-up comedy show featuring some of New York City’s funniest comedians, donated all proceeds from the show to support the women at our Shelter. A lively crowd laughed their way through the night with host Lisa Davey and comedians Caroline Moore, Jhanelle Dennis, Kendall Ketchum and Jay Jurden. Funds raised from this fantastic evening of comedy help to continue our critical, comprehensive services to hundreds of women with a history of mental illness to help them recover from the trauma of homelessness and to find permanent housing and rebuild their lives. Our thanks to the Lovely Ratbags team for this wonderful support!

Students of English Improve Language Skills Through Visit to The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Students in our Adult Education program enjoyed a visit to The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s American Wing as a part of their Intermediate English class. Students were able to practice their English skills in a real-world setting outside of the classroom by asking for and listening to directions, interpreting a museum map, reading art descriptions and expressing their opinions about the artwork. As a part of their visit, led by Adult Education Coordinator Allison Horwitz, students examined and described the artwork, then asked questions about what they were viewing. This type of learning outside of the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classroom is important for our students and gives them the opportunity to apply their improved English language skills while exploring a New York City treasure.

NY1 News Team Visits The Teaching Kitchen

Spectrum News NY1’s reporter Roger Clark traveled to Staten Island to film The Teaching Kitchen at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House on the road. Clark captured our Teaching Kitchen Chefs providing an on-site farm-to-institution training for staff from a number of sites of Project Hospitality, a fellow settlement house on Staten Island. He spoke with Teaching Kitchen Executive Chef Lynn Loflin about the program and interviewed some of the program participants. Following his visit to Staten Island, Roger subsequently joined us at the Center @ Lenox Hill Neighborhood House to speak with more of our staff and our Center members about the healthy and delicious meals we serve every day. Special thanks to our friends at the New York State Health Foundation for their generous continued support of The Teaching Kitchen at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House!
Clients Enjoy Expanded Visual and Performing Arts Offerings

The Neighborhood House recently expanded our arts programming in the areas of drama, dance, visual arts and music—our clients love these new offerings! Women at our Women’s Mental Health Shelter at the Park Avenue Armory are creating masks from wire templates with foil and tape in order to learn about different shapes and facial expressions. At Casa Mutua, our permanent supportive housing residence in East Harlem, and at our Senior Center at Saint Peter’s Church, clients are enjoying a new Dance Movement class. While students sway, spin and twirl around the room, they use props such as colorful scarves to accentuate their movements. We have also expanded our theater classes across various programs with new offerings such as Improv, Theater Appreciation and Beginner and Intermediate Acting. Our wide variety of arts programming is exciting and interesting for our clients and allows our teachers to share their expertise in new and innovative ways.

James Cagney Film Festival Celebrates Legendary Neighborhood House Alum

Did you know that Hollywood legend James Cagney is an alumnus of Lenox Hill Neighborhood House? Cagney and his brothers all attended our after school programs in the early 1900s, where they were first introduced to the theater. While his brothers acted and directed, James was initially content to work behind the scenes. One night his brother Harry became ill and was unable to perform and James flawlessly stepped in, thus beginning his illustrious performance career right here on the Lenox Hill Neighborhood House stage.

In celebration of our 125th Anniversary, we were thrilled to honor James Cagney’s legacy by hosting this very special James Cagney Film Festival, featuring six acclaimed Cagney films including *Yankee Doodle Dandy* and *Angels with Dirty Faces*. The Festival also featured guest lectures from Former Chief Curator of the Museum of the Moving Image David Schwartz, who spoke about *The Public Enemy*, and from FIT Adjunct Assistant Professor of Film & Media Michael Bowen, who delivered an interesting lecture on *White Heat*. Festival-goers, including two of Cagney’s grandsons and other members of James Cagney’s extended family, were elated to see these classic films on the big screen and to hear and share stories about the legendary actor.
Leave Your Legacy to Ensure a Better Tomorrow for New Yorkers in Need

Planned giving, or legacy giving, is a wonderful way to support Lenox Hill Neighborhood House and to ensure that future generations benefit from our life-changing programs and talented staff. Those who make a planned gift to Lenox Hill Neighborhood House are recognized as members of the 1894 Society, ensuring that their legacy is forever tied to the history of Lenox Hill Neighborhood House and to the improvement of our community.

“The 1894 Society reflects the wonderful history of Lenox Hill Neighborhood House and our individual commitment to ensuring that the organization will continue to meet the needs of future generations of New Yorkers.” – Helene Goldfarb, Member of the Board of Directors

For more information, please contact Derek Samuelson, Director of Advancement, at 212-218-0544 or dsamuelson@lenoxhill.org.

Neighborhood House Hosts Ninth Annual Arthur L. Loeb Cup Bridge Tournament to Support Vital Programs

The Neighborhood House was overjoyed to welcome 165 bridge players to the Ninth Annual Arthur L. Loeb Cup Bridge Tournament. The players enjoyed a welcome breakfast followed by a morning of competitive bridge play, consisting of three main sections plus a Newplicate section for novice players. The Tournament was chaired by former Board Member Kristen Swenson, 2019 American Contract Bridge League Hall of Fame Inductee Judi Radin, Tournament Founder Amie James and Chair Emerita Cordelia Menges, and directed by Christopher Rivera, Judi Radin, Michael Radin, Giorgia Botta and Cordelia Menges, with hand analysis provided by David Yoon. This fabulous Tournament, in honor of our dear friend Arthur L. Loeb, is a very special tradition which raises essential funds that directly support our neighbors in need.
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