



The Volunteer Voice

THE NEW YORK CENTER FOR CHILDREN

333 East 70th Street · New York, NY 10021 · Phone (212) 517-3012

January 2009

www.newyorkcenterforchildren.org

Happy New Year NYCC Volunteers

As we start a new year, with a new President of the United States, I wanted to take a moment to look backwards and update NYCC volunteers on some of the wonderful things we accomplished in the final months of 2008.

Backpacks and School Supplies!

This last Fall, thanks to a very generous donation from the **Pedley family** and a wonderful partnership with the **New York Junior League**, The New York Center for Children was able to provide new backpacks and school supplies to twenty of our families. NYCC Staff and volunteer **Joan Pedley** presented at a Saturday meeting of the New York Junior League – a committee of the New York Junior League providing education, enrichment, and service activities for League members' 4-6 year old children. We told the children a little bit about our Center and what we do. The presentation discussed the difference between secrets and surprises and emphasized the importance of having at least two adults you know you can talk to, one – ideally – from outside your immediate family. We told them that some children who need a safe place to talk, about both good and bad things, come to our Center. After the presentation the children stuffed gift bags full of school supplies for NYCC clients.



Meanwhile, with the Pedley family's donation, NYCC purchased 20 new backpacks. The school supplies and backpacks were given to twenty hand-selected clients at the Center, based on need. The backpacks were received with excitement and gratitude. One teenage girl had been having her friends carry her books, as she had no backpack or money for one. A longstanding client here whose large family lives in one-room at a family shelter told his therapist again and again, "Thank you." The NYCC staff would like to echo that sentiment. Thank you Joan Pedley and the New York Junior League!

NYCC 14th Anniversary Celebration Hosted by Kate and Andy Spade



Kate Spade, NYCC Board Co-Chair, and her husband Andy graciously hosted a celebration for our 14th anniversary on September 25, 2008. The event was a phenomenal success and a wonderful time. Thank you to Gourmet Garage for donating the food and to **Allie Tabak** and **Joan Pedley** for volunteering at the event. The celebration raised more than \$36,000 for NYCC with over 100 guests attending.

Looking for more ways to help NYCC? We have a wish list! Just go to amazon.com and look up 'The New York Center for Children' under wish lists for an up-to-date list of requested donations that will benefit our programs and our families. THANK YOU!!

Manhattan Chamber of Commerce 2008 Raffle

The New York Center for Children again participated in the MCC raffle and – thanks to the wonderful efforts of many volunteers – sold around 500 tickets. All money raised went directly to helping NYCC evaluate and treat children who have experienced abuse. A special thank you to **Mandy Rabinowitz, Johanna Nevarez, and Joan Pedley** - our top sellers – who each recruited a wide range of friends and co-workers to purchase raffle tickets.



Cabi Fashion Fundraiser

Also thanks to volunteer **Johanna Nevarez**, in November 2008, NYCC started a partnership that we hope to continue with **Carol Anderson by Design (Cabi)**, a new style of clothing design and boutique shopping. Instead of setting up stores, Cabi operates via invitation-only, small, intimate shopping parties that allow groups of friends, co-workers, and family members to relax, drink wine, see a fashion show, and try on some great clothes. **Melissa Garske**, Cabi fashion consultant, brought this California clothing line to NYC on November 9th and held two exclusive events for friends of the Center at a rented studio near Union Square. The clothes were a huge hit – versatile, comfortable, classic – and everyone who attended had a wonderful time. Melissa generously donated 50% of the events' profits back to The New York Center for Children. Stay tuned for their Spring line and another NYCC/Cabi event!

Chocolate, Children's Art, and a Delicious Way to Donate to NYCC

Mariebel Chocolates is partnering with The New York Center for Children in an exciting children-meet-art-meet-chocolate collaboration. The chocolateria known for both their delicious chocolate and amazingly intricate designs will soon premiere a line of NYCC chocolates with art created by children at the Center. NYCC hosted an art night with our clients on November 17 attended by **Maribel Lieberman**, founder of Mariebel Chocolates, and **Lauren Vernon**, NYCC Board member.

Maribel brought chocolates for the kids to see and sample and the children created their own designs on the themes of love, safety, and care. Two drawings have been chosen to represent the Center in 4-piece chocolate gift boxes. The rest of the drawings will be included for viewing in an accompanying brochure about the collaboration and the work of The New York Center for Children. NYCC 'care' chocolates will premiere in time for Valentine's Day and 10% of the profits will be donated to NYCC.



Holiday Gift Wrapping

Over the holidays, volunteers wrapped for a cause at both Barnes and Noble and giggle. In addition to raising money for the Center – all tips from wrapping were donated directly to NYCC – gift wrapping is an opportunity for NYCC to be involved and visible within our community. Through conversations and promotional material, volunteers introduced our services to a wide range of customers and potential supporters. The material given out also educates our community on how to recognize and respond to abuse and where to go for help. Thank you to **Ellen Farrell, Rebecca Lowy, Deborah Schreier, Brooke Roseberry, Tatiana Malitskaya, Andrea Melton, Allie Tabak, Lindsey Lerner, Johanna Nevarez, Jennifer Chow, Amy Bluestone, and Nadia Moshtaghi** for wrapping.

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H o l i d a y P a r t y 2 0 0 8 ...

2008's Candy Land themed Holiday Party was a huge success. Children and families followed Candy Land game board squares around to different stations from the game. At Lollipop Woods they had their faces painted; in Gramma Nut's Peanut Brittle House there was a full dinner and delicious cakes; in Licorice Castle children made licorice bracelets; at King Kandy's they saw Santa and received presents for the whole family; at Gumdrop Pass participants had their picture taken as Jolly via a gorgeous hand-painted cut-out; at Queen Frostine's Ice Cream Sea they frosted and decorated cookies; at Peppermint Woods they made pipe-cleaner Christmas trees with candy cane ornaments; and at Plumpy's Gingerbread Plum Tree they played toss the plums in the tree and won prizes. Each station was beautifully decorated with depictions of the characters and hanging snowflakes and candy canes.



The entire event was made possible by an incredible outpouring of donations and donated time to the Center. NYCC intern **Ashley Kim** did an astounding job painting the character depictions. **Rebecca Lowy** and **Caitlin Knight** helped considerably with the decorations as did Tuesday night's New York Junior League committee. Donors bought online posted items from children's wish lists and had them sent to the Center almost faster than I could post them. Thank you **Stacy Asem, Philip Weinberg, Dennis Gillooly, Amy Bluestone, Pamela Bell, Diane Haza, Penny Oranburg, Peter Diamond, Michaela Guzy, Tara Barlin, Lisa Muscarella, and Mervin Freeman** for all of your gifts. We also received a number of anonymous donations. Thank you.

Returning volunteer **Kim Model** hosted an incredible fundraiser for the Center on December 4th from which money continued to come in even after the party. The event and her wonderful outreach efforts on our behalf yielded a net \$7,495 from 30 new donors and friends. This both covered additional party costs and contributed greatly to the Center's daily evaluation and treatment services. Donors from Kim's outreach also gave games and toys and Kim herself bought some great last minute gifts for the Center.

The **Horace Mann School Nursery Division**, through board member **Stacy Ruchlamer** and her sister **Lisa Plepler**, held a toy drive on our behalf gathering dozens of board games and puzzles for all ages: the perfect family games to add to everyone's bag from Santa! **Disney Theatricals** donated hundreds of themed shirts, pom-poms, backpacks, and picture frames plus smaller gifts used as prizes for the Plum Tree toss. The shirts and memorabilia made wonderful additions to our families' presents, especially for those with limited resources and clothing.

The food and drinks were provided by generous donations from **Gourmet Garage, Food Emporium, Arizona Beverages, Dallas BBQ, John's Pizza, and Lenny's**. **Cookie Magazine** donated Girl Scout cookies and additional toys. **Two Little Red Hens** heavily discounted the cost for two gorgeous, gourmet cakes and **Glaser's** donated the sugar cookies used at Queen Frostine's cookie frosting station. **Cambridge Floral** donated poinsettias and a lovely Holiday Wreath for the front door.

Each station was manned by volunteers, from those leading crafts activities to Santa himself. Thank you **Maria Doulis, Rebecca Lowy, Caitlin Knight, Daphne Shirley, Ewa Stefanska, Kim Model, Peter Bencivenga, Michaela Guzy, Ashley Kim, Bonnie Gerard, Amy Bluestone, Allie Tabak, Ellen Farrell, and Sid Mollin** for volunteering at the event.

An additional thank you to **Marty Richards, Michael Caplin, Louis Kleinman, Michele Herbert, Pilar Guzman, and Ken Mersel** for your donations and support.

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New at The New York Center for Children:

New Volunteers!

From September to December the Center also welcomed a number of wonderful new volunteers. Thank you for joining us! Also, welcome back to **Kim Model**, a returning volunteer from many years ago.

Jennifer Chow
 Michaela Guzy
 Alison Hoenig
 Janet Jacobson
 Caitlin Knight
 Lindsey Lerner

Tatiana Malitskaya
 Penny Oranburg
 Tara Regan
 Mandy Rabinowitz
 Brooke Roseberry
 Deborah Schreier

Erica Souied
 Laura Taras
 Millen Umoh
 Kerry Watson



New Babies!

Mary Pesses, former Therapist/Evaluator at NYCC as well as former Volunteer Coordinator, and husband **Josh Pesses** welcomed **Margaret Elise Pesses** (left) on October 22, 2008 at 7:32 pm. She was born 7 pounds, 4 ounces.



Volunteer **Amy Bluestone**, husband **Peter Bencivenga**, and son **Bryan** welcomed baby **Chloe** at 11:58pm on October 16, 2008.



Volunteer **Ashley Gray** and husband **Scott Gray** welcomed **Ella Covington Gray** on January 13, 2009. Ella was born at 2:03am and was 7 pounds, 8.1 ounces.

Winter Volunteer Birthdays

December	January	February	
4 Amy Bluestone	17 Millen Umoh	15 Nadia Moshtaghi	16 Patti Peressutti
7 Bonnie Gerard	26 Lindsey Lerner		17 Caitlin Knight
11 Janet Jacobson	27 Allie Tabak	March	23 Tara Regan
19 Ashley Gray		6 Jimmy Benson	24 Ewa Stefanska
			31 Weston Zisek

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Volunteer Voices: Part Two

By *Caitlin Knight*



I began volunteering for The New York Center for Children in October 2008 after searching online listings for a place that I could volunteer at on a weekly basis. With a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Criminology, The New York Center for Children and its emphasis on helping the victims and families of child abuse immediately stuck out to me. In addition, I had just finished a dissertation in April 2008 for my final year of university that focused on the presence of childhood abuse, as well as animal abuse, and its effect on later offending behavior. In my final year of university as part of a Criminology course I had volunteered at a small organization that answered letters from prisoners and so I was eager to find a new place to volunteer at upon moving to New York City.

As a volunteer case-tracker, some of the abuse cases can be hard to read. It can also be difficult to get some families on the phone. When I do speak to someone, sometimes they are distrustful of the system and do not want to take full advantage of the help I can give them and want to give them. Aside from these parts of the job, however, I have definitely had happy moments volunteering at NYCC. Perhaps the most notable experience since I have started volunteering has been the holiday party that was held this past December.

I was informed upon first starting work at the NYCC that the annual holiday party was an event not to be missed! When December rolled around I soon realized how much preparation went into this party and how much pride the staff at the NYCC took in it. In the weeks prior to it, I came in for volunteering more often, mainly to help with decorations. I painted, cut, drew, and colored numerous decorations and managed to find my creative side! The theme was 'Candyland' and so come the day of the party the Center was literally transformed into a tasty paradise with all the decorations and abounding donations of food.

Throughout the day at the holiday party I noticed how much all the children and their families enjoyed the different stations of crafts and food we put up for them. The children that made their way past my station, 'Queen Frostine' or the 'Cookie Frosting Station', had a smile on their face and joy in their eyes. I knew the children all varied, in not just their age and their ethnicities but also in their troubled pasts. But for one day they all got to be what they should be: carefree children enjoying a holiday party. It was this experience that cemented for me the fact that my time volunteering, albeit once a week, really does matter in the lives of these children and their families, because for that day I really did make a difference.

If you want to submit a personal account of volunteering at the Center, please contact Katie Schwartz, at katie@newyorkcenterforchildren.org

"If I have been of service, if I have glimpsed more of the nature and essence of ultimate good, if I am inspired to reach wider horizons of thought and action, if I am at peace with myself, it has been a successful day."

—Alex Noble

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."

—Anne Frank

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