



The PALetter

PAL Donors Quarterly, Volume 9, Issue 2

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LAUNCHING A NEW WEBSITE - WWW.PALNYC.ORG

It's been a year in the making by a skilled team of interactive marketing and design experts at BBDO New York. It's a pro bono gift from this topnotch worldwide advertising agency whose President and CEO, John Osborn, just happens to be the President of PAL's Board of Directors.

Just take a look and you will see a website that overflows with colorful photographs of PAL kids doing all sorts of things that look like fun. It's logically organized and easy to click thru to the page you want—Adolescent Services, Board of Directors or Donate Now. It's packed with accurate descriptions of the full range of programs and services PAL offers to children in all five boroughs with contact information for Centers.

The launching took place, without champagne, at the Byrne Center in Jamaica, Queens in mid-April and in front of 400 enthusiastic children attending Tournament of Champions II later in the day.

A quick pep rally led by Felix Urrutia Jr., Executive Director, and Rodney Fuller, Director of Center Operations, captured the attention of this young crowd. John Osborn was introduced and received a noisy and hearty welcome. He impressed upon the children how important this website is to he work PAL does on their behalf. **Mr. Osborn specifically asked each child to memorize the website address, hand it out to parents and friends, then sit down and "look PAL up and see for yourself."**

It's worth checking out www.palnyc.org. While you're there, leave a donation that will change the lives of New York City's children.



Appealing young faces adorn website pages



PAL Youth Volunteer Day

The last day of National Volunteer Week, Saturday, April 25th, was dubbed "The Power of Youth Volunteer Day." Nearly 200 PAL In-STEPpers braved the weather and spent this day as volunteers cleaning and revitalizing Flushing Meadows-Corona Park. They managed to turn the Park into a bright, cheery place after a very cold, shabby winter.

Flushing Meadows-Corona Park has an outstanding history and is well known as a place for family getaways and environmental and recreational education programs for young people.

In this volunteer effort to preserve the Park's landscape, PAL In-STEPpers painted park benches near the Passarelle building

and the Unisphere. They also worked hard to collect and dispose of trash and debris along the shoreline of Meadow Lake. By day's end, PAL In-STEPpers were stiff, sore and exhausted, yet proud and content with the important environmental contribution they made as volunteers.

COLLEGE BOUND

Congratulations are definitely in order for the following PAL InSTEP Seniors who have been accepted at colleges of their choice in the New York City area.

- Brooklyn:* Maya Henderson – Brooklyn College; Shaqueysha Glenn – US Air Force.
- Manhattan:* Lyteek Tucker – John Jay College.
- Queens:* Gabrielle Glasgow – Pace University and University of Bridgeport; Chaele Nicholson – Pace University.
- Staten Island:* Charntel Ali – NYC Tech College; Patience Sando – NYC Tech College, Medgar Evers College, and College of Staten Island



HOT 97 Fundraising

Wynn Center Directors, Kobla Moats and Cathy Joseph, arranged a partnership with Hot 97 Radio Staff and DJs to **host charity basketball games at PAL Centers in the five boroughs throughout the spring.**

So far there have been two games and, even with a valiant effort by staff, PAL managed to lose both games. The second did feature PAL's comeback capacity. After being down 20 points, PAL lost by only 4! Each of these games attracted around 250 people, including family and friends from the community, and provided evenings filled with fun and old-fashioned cheering and jeering. *continued on page 3*

PAL EVENTS

June 25

Super Star Dinner

September 25

Building New York's Future Luncheon

October 15

Women of the Year Luncheon

Tournament of Champions II

By Harold Robinson, PAL Alumnus

While the Edward Byrne Center in Jamaica, Queens was not around when I was a PAL kid, the events unfolding here this cold April day were all too familiar. It was Tournament of Champions II, a time honored tradition at PAL dating back over 25 years yet so real to me it seemed like yesterday.

Some 300 kids gathered restlessly in this gymnasium representing the best from 17 PAL centers across the city. Pool, 3 on 3 Basketball, Word Scramble, and Math Bee were just a few of the games kids practiced for weeks on end, culminating at this tournament.

I could feel excitement and anticipation in the air during the pre-game ceremony. Some kids had expressions of deep thought on their faces. Others were murmuring numbers and words to themselves; still others were practicing shots with an invisible basketball in their hands; all were mentally finalizing strategies with their team mates.

True to these changing times, Anthony W., an 11 year old Math Bee gold medalist told me, "I learned and practiced this math game on the Internet at home until I got really good. That's how I'm going to win." Anthony was not alone. With many games online now, more and more kids turn on computers at PAL centers and at home to prepare for this Tournament of Champions.

This day was not ever about winning or losing. Underneath the silence of the math room or the noise of boisterous crowds cheering on 3 on 3 basketball teams, one thing was clear—every champion, every child, was having a blast. And for these kids, having a good time and showing their much practiced sportsmanship was all that mattered. "I'm not too good at basketball," said 12 year old Robert T. "But I like playing it and coming here and 'versing' kids from other centers."

It was amazing to see, again, that **the small things that make PAL special remain very much intact.** I last played in this Tournament ten years ago. For me, this visit was a nostalgic reminder of just how valuable PAL was to my growing up and just how valuable it is now to the hundreds of kids waiting patiently this Tournament day.



Preparing to compete in Math Bowl

Foster Laurie Center Closing Postponed

On March 31st, children, parents, neighbors, and staff gathered with glum faces in the gymnasium of the Foster Laurie Center in Hollis, Queens expecting to hear the rumors confirmed—Foster-Laurie was closing its doors this very day. Instead, they learned the Center will stay open to the end of June, 2009. This good news prompted cheers, handclaps and hugs all around.

The children were relieved, especially some 9 and 10 year olds who had been "shocked about losing our home away from home." Most would miss their friends, counselors and favorite activities. They uniformly agreed that PAL shaped them into better students. One girl was in tears over the idea of "not having homework help every day."

PAL has managed this Center for almost 35 years. Today, Centers are expensive to run and PAL, in the recession, must streamline its operations in a cost effective manner. At Foster Laurie, enrollments have been declining for years. This combined with a shortage of government and private funds led to the decision that Foster Laurie was too expensive to maintain.

The imminent closing was fully shared with unhappy parents, community residents and three Queens politicians—Assemblywoman Barbara Clark, Senator Malcolm Smith and Councilman Leroy Comrie. At the very last minute, they stepped forward with \$120,000 in commitments to extend the life of the Center thru June.

MR. CARRION GOES TO WASHINGTON

President Barack Obama has named Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrion Jr., to direct his new White House Office of Urban Affairs.

Mr. Carrion is an urban planner by training who has served since 2002 as Borough President of the Bronx, once a symbol of urban blight but now an example of urban renewal. During his tenure, many of the bleakest neighborhoods in the Bronx improved dramatically. Mr. Carrion is credited with overseeing the addition of 40,000 housing units and 50 schools, spending \$7 billion on capital and infrastructure projects and more than \$400 million on parks and parkland renovation.

Mr. Carrion has been a close and influential friend to PAL. During his years as Bronx Borough President, he earmarked approximately \$2 million in capital improvements and renovations for PAL facilities in the borough. Mr. Carrion took time to attend PAL events and **invited PAL children to his office** and to City Hall for press conferences. In 2007, PAL honored him with an Achievement Award during its State of the Agency Day.

These remarks from last December give a true sense of Mr. Carrion at his best and his vision for his work in the White House. "We can't keep throwing money at a housing policy that concentrates poor families in massive housing projects and hopes for the best. We can't keep wishing kids into success by simply declaring that no child will be left behind. We must stop treating the poor as laboratory subjects that we tinker with in our pricey think tanks and universities."



Cooling down after a HOT 97 vs. PAL basketball game.

THE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A Thank You Note

The past months have been a hectic and worrisome time at PAL—as we faced the effects of the economy. Shutting our doors to children who show up every day expecting a safe, happy and positive environment is nothing, if not the most difficult of decisions. And while a few centers had to be closed and programs cut...we made sure that most of our kids were not affected.



Things could have been much worse if not for the proactive measures taken by our Board of Directors and Executive Director. They spent an immeasurable amount of time meeting and planning the organization's financial future—setting attainable goals and making small sacrifices for the short-term with an eye to greater and stronger long-term results.

There seems to be no end to everyone's concern for the youth of our city. After all, PAL provides a safety net for 55,000 boys and girls—all year round. Our legacy, as the leading provider of youth services throughout the five boroughs must be insured and will be, but only through the ongoing commitment of New Yorkers such as you.

PAL's kids are the future of our city—they must be given the best chance to succeed. Each child deserves the hope, opportunity and peace a good education will bring. To insure this we have got to take responsibility and make certain that our neediest kids are never forgotten.

Thank you for your past support and for enabling us to offer our City's boys and girls the very highest quality youth programs possible. Together we can rewrite their future.

Jami Landi

HOT 97 fundraising

continued from page 1

Assistance for these charity games comes from several sources: security from the NYPD Community Affairs Division; sports paraphernalia from Nike and Anaconda Sports; and refreshments from Redbull. Each evening also featured pre-game and half-time entertainment from local artists or dance and music troupes composed of PAL kids.

“Overall,” says Wynn Center Director Kobla Moats, “these HOT 97 evenings have been a smashing success. They are just the beginning of what is a great grassroots effort to bring local businesses, the community, the NYPD and PAL closer than ever before.”

Senator Gillibrand, PAL Guest Speaker

New York's newest Senator, Kirsten Gillibrand, was Guest Speaker at PAL's Business Luncheon on April 13, 2009 hosted by Mutual of America and Thomas Moran.

This luncheon has become a regular gathering since its inception in March, 2007. The purpose behind it is to bring New York City's businessmen and women together to discuss current economic, social and political issues with influential public officials.

The list of guest speakers reads like Who's Who in New York—Raymond Kelly, Andrew Cuomo, Charles Rangel, Joseph Bruno, Eliot Spitzer, Charles Schumer, Peter King, David Paterson, Dean Skelos, and Michael Bloomberg. Senator Gillibrand had kind words

for PAL saying, “PAL does extraordinary work and provides excellent role models for children in this City.” She spoke passionately about her legislative agenda for New York State—energy, infrastructures, fueling small businesses, and immediate tax cuts. The Senator intends to be “accessible and accountable and my website is transparent with earmark and meeting requests on line for everyone to see.”

The Business Luncheon was the brainchild of Mark Simone and John Catsimatidis—outstanding members of PAL's Board of Directors. It occurs four times annually and attracts 140 business people, raising an average of \$25,000 per event.

PAL BOARD PROFILE

Mark Simone

Larry King calls Mark Simone “the best, a truly great interviewer” and Mike Wallace described him as “one of the best interviewers anywhere.” Steve Allen says he is “brilliantly witty” and Mario Cuomo once joked, “If I had Mark Simone's voice, I would have run for higher office.”



Mark Simone is one of the longest running, most entertaining voices on the New York radio dial and one of cable television's wittiest talking heads. He is also a media and entertainment historian and noted musicologist.

The most popular talk radio station in America, WABC, hosts Mr. Simone's weekend broadcast which was number one in last winter's NYC rating book. He is a seasoned interviewer and his guest list of famous names—Jerry Seinfeld, Anderson Cooper, Regis Philbin, Brian Williams, Jay Leno, Mel Brooks, Donald Trump, Larry King—makes for revealing conversations.

Mr. Simone is a CNN contributor and appears on “Lou Dobbs Tonight” and “American Morning.” He co-hosts a popular NY1 program called “What a Week.” Now in its tenth season, New York Magazine believes this program is “a never miss for New York's movers and shakers and political insiders.”

As if he were not busy enough, Mr. Simone is one of New York's most popular emcees on the stages of Carnegie Hall, Radio City Music Hall, Madison Square Garden, Broadway theatres, The Kennedy Center, and The White House. In fact, Rudy Giuliani dubbed him “the toastmaster general and an outstanding Master of Ceremonies who handles these affairs with great skill and wonderful wit and humor.”

Mark Simone has been a Director on PAL's Board for nine years. He has generously supported the agency and graciously given of his time as emcee at our special events. While he has brought his sophisticated humor to Superstar, Sports Nite, and Building New York's Future, he is now in demand as emcee at our popular Business Luncheons. Whenever Mark is asked to help in some way, he always comes through for us.



PAL teens make their presence known at New York's State Capitol in Albany.

Action Day in Albany

On a cold, February day, fifteen teenagers from PAL's In-STEP program traveled to Albany to the New York State Legislative offices. This trip was organized as part of a statewide initiative known as Annual Action Day. PAL teens were joined by others from around New York State to lobby for a substantial increase in statewide funds for Summer Youth Employment programs.

PAL's In-STEPpers gave intelligent and compelling testimony to legislative officials who attended the Action Day rally. The hard work of everyone on Action Day paid off when the State Legislature, days later, approved sustainable funding for Summer Youth Employment programs. Speaker Sheldon Silver was especially impressed by the PAL contingent and "truly moved by the quality of their testimony on behalf of New York City children."

Volleyball Fundraiser

The Washington Heights Armory Center hosted its first Volleyball Tournament on March 18, 2009. Seven teams participated with teachers from the local junior high school, Armory staff, PAL Headquarters staff, In-STEP teens, parents and even local elected officials like Councilman Robert Jackson.



Each team paid an entry fee, as did every spirited spectator. There was a concession stand manned by children who attend the Center. There were many close tournament matches that wound down to the buzzer, including the championship game between PAL HQ and Armory staff with HQ coming out just on top.

This March night turned into a memorable evening as the Washington Heights community came together over volleyball and raised almost \$300. These funds will be used to purchase much needed new books that will upgrade the Center's library.

Dress for Success

This is a day when PAL In-STEPpers from all five boroughs focus on the idea of preparing themselves for successful futures. Looking good is an important part of their preparation. They literally dress up to look, feel and do their very best.

These teens exchanged information in workshops on topics like college readiness, financial literacy, professionalism, and job responsibilities. There was a job fair all day long with representatives from local businesses and colleges ready to talk about successful futures. Hopefully, the experience of this day and the lessons learned will carry these In-STEPpers well into a successful future.



Corporate Gifts

MetLife, once again, is supporting PAL Summer Play Streets with a gift of \$75,000. The JP Morgan Chase Foundation, once again, is giving \$50,000 for the PAL SMARTS program at the Wynn Center in Brooklyn.

Go Where Others Don't

Mayor Bloomberg and Youth and Community Development Officials announced in February that PAL has been chosen to operate three community centers in New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) sites with a grant of \$1.1 million for the remainder of the current year.

The three NYCHA sites are in Cypress Hills, Brooklyn, and Ocean Bay and Redfern, both in Far Rockaway, Queens. PAL will staff these sites with well qualified people and replicate its highly regarded comprehensive youth programming down to the last detail, including summer activities.

Mayor Bloomberg strongly believes that PAL does very important work. "Public housing residents are among those most threatened by the economic challenges we currently face. These centers play a major role by providing crucial programs and services that teach skills to help students stay in school and families better their lives."

DARLING DAVID DUIN

Your \$100,000 gift in May and other checks in past years make you an absolutely favorite donor. You respond directly to the needs of our kids and expect nothing in return. Please know that we treasure you and applaud your generous nature. PAL owes its thanks to you for a very long time.

MISSION Applying early learning and youth development strategies with an emphasis on prevention and intervention programs, PAL inspires and supports New York City youth challenged by the highest risk factors to overcome obstacles and realize their full individual potential as productive members of society.

VISION In partnership with the New York City Police Department and the District Attorney of New York, PAL will continue to be New York City's most recognized and far-reaching youth agency. While PAL is a private non-profit corporation, its civilian workforce will facilitate more positive interactions between police officers, kids and their families than any other youth agency in the country. With law enforcement and youth development professionals working together to help kids, PAL will reach across neighborhood, educational, cultural and socio-economic lines to form lasting and transformational relationships.

Before kids can go places, they need a place to go.

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