

have a direct impact on those in undeveloped countries. Combined with the encouragement and support of COC, I have no doubt these people can begin to overcome the circumstances in which they live, and in time, thrive. This project not only benefits a community of people in need but also allows COC to expand our horizons. This is an opportunity for us to share the programs we have designed and have proven successful with a global community.

As this project progresses, we will continue to bring you updates on the direct impact Children of the City is making in the countries of Rwanda and Uganda.

- Joyce Mattera | Executive Director

Highlight on the New Chairman of the Board

A member of the Children of the City for over six years, Joe was initially introduced to the organization after hearing a promotion on The Fan Sports show regarding the annual gala featuring special guest and former Giants player David Tyree. Intrigued by the mission of Children of the City, he attended the event with his son Doug and had the opportunity to learn more about the programs and services. His subsequent enthusiasm resulted in an invitation to a COC committee meeting and eventually being asked to join the board. Reflecting back on his first reaction to the organization, Joe says, "I felt like it was a no-frills grassroots organization focused on helping local children and families".

Having spent the last 40 years as a successful business owner and shouldering the responsibility as a principle in a large dental lab at the age of 25, Joe has serviced some of the highest profile dentists and their celebrity clients in the New York metro area. And yet, it is the welfare of those in need that he considers to be a priority in his busy life. An avid enthusiast in sports, skiing, golf, baseball and football are favorites in his free time. Joe considers his family to be his most treasured blessing and can often be found in the stands cheering on his grandchildren as they participate in soccer, baseball, track and basketball. One of his proudest moments came while watching his son play division one golf and his daughter excel at tennis. With their 40th wedding anniversary approaching in March, Joe beams as he speaks of his wife Angela. She is, he says, without a doubt the best cook in the world. Not just the USA, he specifies, but the world.

Over the past years, we have had the opportunity to witness firsthand the results of Joe's involvement at COC. His dedication and championing of COC's mission has been essential as we work to expand our programs and reach even further into the communities desperately in need of our assistance. And he is not done yet! When asked about his goals for COC as we quickly approach our 31st year anniversary, Joe is determined to increase awareness of the services offered and, in turn, help additional children and families.

"Giving, caring and sharing are universal spirits that appeal to all people, especially those in crisis and/or facing challenges." **Joe Travaglione**



UPCOMING EVENTS

November 24th, 2013 – Annual Thanksgiving Dinner Distribution. Families will receive a full Thanksgiving meal (a 25-lb box of food to feed a family of six). More than one in five children in NYC live in poverty and close to 40% of the families we serve live below the poverty line. Volunteers are needed to pack Thanksgiving boxes and hand them out to the hundreds that attend the distribution event.

December 18, 19 & 21st, 2013 – We invite families to a special Christmas Gift give-away event each year. During the months of November and December, we collect new toys and unwrapped toys to distribute to needy children in the communities we serve. We are in need of volunteers to organize and distribute the donated toys on December 21st. We also hold volunteer Giftwrapping parties the evenings of December 18th and 19th. You can come with a roll of wrapping paper, a scissors, a roll of tape, and a heart full of cheer.

For more information about volunteering or donating, please contact us at (718) 436-0242 x17.

CHILDREN OF THE CITY

CHANGING THE CULTURE OF POVERTY THROUGH EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

ISSUE
17

CHANGING
THE WORLD
TOGETHER

"Education is the most
powerful tool you can
use in the world"
- Nelson Mandela



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GOES GREEN

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visit
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THIS ISSUE:

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Create Success!

The Create Success Summer Program drew to a close on August 23rd with the class of 127 students showing remarkable improvement in writing, math, and reading comprehension. The program, one of the few available with a focus on academic achievement and retention during the summer months, addresses the challenges facing school-age children in the community. In a time when the majority of kindergarten classes are struggling in classrooms filled with over 50 students per class, COC maintains a limit of 15 children per classroom to guarantee individual tutoring assistance.

Working hand-in-hand with local schools and parents as well as a strict adherence to supporting children educationally over the long-term, COC was once again able to have a significant impact on the educational progress of our participants. Children expressed notable increases in their confidence levels in being able to excel upon returning to school. Through assessment and outcomes we found that once again all the students improved in their reading capability over

the summer and 45% increased a full grade level. An overwhelming amount of children in Southwest Brooklyn struggle daily from the effects of poverty, neglect, language barriers and pre-existing trauma. Our program, designed to directly address and combat these challenges, has proven successful in returning students to the classroom with a newfound self-assurance and readiness to learn.



A detailed report of our outcomes can be viewed on our website (www.childrenofthecity.org).

2013 Community Carnival

SPONSORED BY
UnitedHealthcare

Children of the City, partnering with United Healthcare along with sixty volunteers, invited disadvantaged children and families to the 2013 health and Community Carnival filled with free games and activities on Saturday, September 14th.



Children were greeted with a Sesame Street bouncy ride and tables offering nail art, face-painting and games. For the tenth year in a row, COC provide a lighthearted and relaxed day to families with a safe and fun environment. Volunteers worked alongside COC staff to put together a day that included music, a dance performance by acclaimed dancer Chris White, a watermelon eating contest, tug-of-war, relay races, nail art and face painting. Parents were given the

opportunity to learn about nutrition in a parent workshop led by a certified nutritionist as well as a chance to sign their children for the afterschool program offered by COC. The carnival also offered families the chance to apply for Winter Wishes, a Christmas program that distributes requested toys to children in need.

The carnival embodies the mission of Children of the City. "We work to ensure that our community has a safe place where children can learn and play," said Joyce Mattera, Founder and Executive Director. We need Out of School activities that will engage them in learning and help navigate them through the social challenges that keep them from focusing on and finishing their education. Our year-round after-school program, in addition to the Saturday events, is designed to meet the diverse needs of children's academic development."



Diana's Story

Diana, who has been in Children of the City Create Success Summer Program for several years, is learning to overcome her many disadvantages and plans to make a difference. Living in a low income household with very little resources, and being the eldest child, she has all the associated responsibilities, caring for her younger sister, and feeling the expectations of carrying herself more maturely, even though she is only a child. She has been a determined English language learner, and interestingly enough, aspires to be an ELA teacher. Diana saw that her dream required college and that she would be among the rare few in her family to enroll; the first in her immediate family. She is setting goals, aiming to do as well as she

can next year to get into a good high school. Unfortunately, school had not always been a positive experience for her. She witnessed many teachers abandon the students that seem to be lagging. With the help of her Create Success tutor, Diana made a great effort in math, admitting that it does not come naturally to her. She has overcome a lot of reluctance, and now opens up to contribute in spite of what was formerly an embarrassing language deficit. By the end of the summer, she took risks for sharing and raising her hand in class, with increasing enthusiasm. Diana also absorbed what she needed from the mentoring portion of the Create Success Program, especially in regards to raising her self-worth. She has

gained confidence and a renewed outlook on life; a testament to her success and in turn, the positive influence her life will have on others. That is success.



Return To Uganda



This August I returned to Kampala, the capitol of Uganda, for the third time. I was overjoyed to revisit the children we had literally rescued from death's door with a mere twelve dollars. That, however, proved to be a bright spot in a country overwhelmed by poverty and disease. Once again, I was confronted by the appalling circumstances under which the poor (constituting over 80% of the country) live on a daily basis. Imagine my shock upon learning that a child's life can be saved from the plight of malaria with only \$6.00. I returned to Uganda determined to honor our pledge to do whatever we can as an organization to help this community, so desperately in need of assistance, to secure the most basic of needs.

Children are abandoned on a daily basis in Uganda. Generally, people will report the abandoned children to the authorities and the authorities then deliver the children to group homes such as that run by Arnold Muwonge, our close friend and partner. Unlike the United States, there are no government services in place to assist those desperate for help. While we have the option of turning to social services and welfare as well as Medicaid and food pantries to help us through tough times, there are no such options in Uganda. Humanitarians such as Arnold, who has devoted his life to providing housing and an education to these children, step forth in an attempt to fill the gap brought on by the lack of available services. Unfortunately, the need far outweighs the resources available. I am excited by the prospect of partnering with the Kampala Children's Home in Uganda to not only house and educate orphans, but to empower their own people to bring positive change to this country.

I also had the opportunity to visit Rwanda during this trip. I met with a community of people ravished by AIDS. The widespread lack of education continues to perpetuate the increasing numbers of those affected by the disease. It was heartbreaking to see so many 'AIDs orphans'; children left to their own devices after losing parents to the devastating disease. I was able to spend some time encouraging

disease. I was able to spend some time encouraging and consulting with the amazing Rwandese people that are voluntarily giving of themselves and their resources to educate these communities of people on the realities of AIDs and how to prevent it from spreading.

While in Rwanda I was also brought to visit with another community of people. In an effort to take people that were still living in the Bush into civilization, the government had created a village of mud huts to house these families. The move forced them to abandon their way of life and they weren't taught how to survive in their new surroundings. Unfortunately, the newly located families weren't doing well, many of them dying, leaving more orphans who were hungry and not attending school.

We know that without an education, children have no future. They cannot help themselves or be an asset to their communities. Not attending school leaves them vulnerable to the streets begging, spreading sickness and disease, and unable to have a voice in a government dominated by corruption. As I spent time with these children, I was struck by their resilience and the gleam in their eye, a gleam of hope and promise, if only someone could come alongside them.

After much time talking and strategizing with the nationalists who were assisting these children, I was pleased that they themselves were able to come up with a plan. As a result, we are now working on a project



that will provide children with a bowl of porridge at school. This will give them the incentive to attend school, and in turn, will guarantee that they are receiving an education and at least one healthy meal a day. We don't plan to underwrite this plan totally ourselves, but are helping the Rwandese people to utilize the resources of people and support right there in their own country. This is a big step in breaking the mindset of dependency that keeps poor people from seeing that they can do something. This very same principle is what has worked in the inner city communities of New York where COC has been successfully working for over 30 years, and we are seeing that it can work in Africa as well.

Here at COC, our motto is "changing the culture of poverty through education and outreach". That principle works anywhere in the world where there are challenges. I am excited that the experiences, knowledge and resources garnered by Children of the City over the past 30 years can