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Teamwork Makes the Dream Work
Transforming the Bronx through partnerships.

The August 2016 Newsletter

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![Image of children with a sign that says "Enchanted Forest"]
Volunteer Day at Betances Community Center

BronxWorks was honored to host volunteers from Digitas LBi at the Betances Houses and Betances Community Center. Facilitated through the nonprofit volunteer organization, Break a Difference, almost 300 Digitas employee volunteers took on a variety of tasks to improve the BronxWorks Betances Community Center. From exterior and interior painting to tackling the much needed cleaning out of a storage room and even mulching the gardens, it was a group effort. One Digitas volunteer noted, "It's really amazing to see how much work can get done in one day. Between our group, the Break a Difference volunteer leaders, and the BronxWorks staff at the community center - this was absolutely a team effort. Everything was so smooth."

Break a Difference is a nonprofit organization which serves to connect volunteers with other nonprofit organizations to partner in the completion of meaningful and impactful service projects. Since its founding in 2013, Break a Difference has been mobilizing over 25,000 volunteers on service projects, working with over 100 colleges and universities.

Digitas LBi is a global marketing and technology agency that transforms businesses for the digital age. With more than 7,000 employees in 44 countries, Digitas specializes in insight, brand building, creative storytelling and real-time distribution. BronxWorks thanks the employees of Digitas and Break a Difference for their efforts in improving the space for the Betances Community and looks forward to our next project.

History Makers Program

Since 2006, the BronxWorks Center for Achieving Future Education (CAFÉ) has partnered with the Fordham University Summer Scholars program to present the History Makers Scholar Program to students of the Bronx. The BronxWorks Café Program is a program that helps young people and their families with a potentially critical life stage: the transition from high school and/or HSE completion to college.

Sponsored by the Teagle Foundation, the History Makers program supports the academic achievements of high school students by providing a five week college prep summer intensive program that challenges the students to complete college level academic work and conduct themselves as college students. Through the program, the students are exposed to research projects, prepare presentations, complete college level reading assignments, and have the opportunity to visit college campuses.
This year’s program culminated in a final presentation ceremony on July 28th in which students shared their research on Social Justice issues facing youth in the Bronx. Mirline King, Program Director for History Makers said that seeing the students grow in confidence over the duration of the program is the most rewarding part. “For the shyest student to go from barely saying her name out loud to standing in front of her peers and presenting on such powerful topics - it’s wonderful to watch them discover this confidence is already in them.”

BronxWorks congratulates its newest History Makers program graduates and wishes them much success in all their future achievements.

The group enjoyed a healthy lunch at the BronxWorks E. Roberts Moore Senior Center.

On August 4, BronxWorks was a participating organization in the South Bronx Learning Tour, an event organized by Community Food Funders (CFF) aimed at providing funding entities opportunities to learn more about what community based organizations in the South Bronx are doing to improve the community through food-centric programming. The Food Tour visitors participated in a variety of activities including touring a local urban farm, La Finca de Sur, visiting a community garden that grows fresh food and raises chickens, and visiting local farmers markets such as the one run by the nonprofit Harvest Home.

BronxWorks was pleased to host the tour participants for lunch at the E. Roberts Moore Senior Center where participants were greeted by Program Director Wanda Abeyllez. Javier Lopez, Assistant Commissioner at the Center for Health Equity of the NYC Health Department spoke to the attendees over lunch. Youth participants from the BronxWorks Hyphen Project, a food justice service learning project, gave a demonstration along with some of the senior program participants in healthy meal preparation. Eva Santiago and Anita Gonzalez of the BronxWorks senior center treated the guests to a traditional, healthy Caribbean and Latin American sauce of tomatoes, onions, peppers, garlic, and herbs called Sofrito. BronxWorks youth also demonstrated their ‘Grab N Go’ bodega healthy food intervention, a partnership with Family Cook Productions.

Community Food Funders (CFF) is a philanthropic organizing project that aims to provide funding organizations in the New York, New Jersey and Connecticut areas opportunities to network, connect, discover resources and participate in events to foster information sharing and professional development. "Many of the events provided by CFF are in the form of panel discussions or presentations" noted Adam Liebowitz, the Food & Environmental Program Officer at the North Star Fund and a key coordinator of the event. "We thought the summer provided us with a great opportunity to get out and do something different where we could provide funders of the South Bronx with the chance to see a different side of the community and help make the case for investing in the South Bronx."

The funders tour allowed the group to meet a wide array of community organizations and individuals that tackle food-centric issues such as food access and security, food justice issues and food in relation to health and wellness. The tour participants were able to gain a better understanding of how issues surrounding food can also be seen through the lenses of poverty, income and racial inequality. The success and demand for the tour has already prompted the planning of the next one.
Staff Profile: Meet Wanda Abeyllez

Since 1995, Wanda Abeyllez has been an invaluable member of the BronxWorks staff. Over the span of more than 20 years, Wanda’s career has included serving as a case manager in several BronxWorks homeless services programs, working her way up to Assistant Program Director with the Moving On Up program and finally to her current position as the Program Director at the E. Roberts Moore Senior Center.

Wanda holds a Bachelors Degree from the College of New Rochelle and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Metropolitan College. She first came to BronxWorks (then Citizen’s Advice Bureau) as a volunteer during her college summer break. Wanda remembers connecting right away with the mission of the organization and began to set her sights on achieving permanent employment with BronxWorks. To this day, Wanda credits Development Director, Ken Small with personally responding to her letter of employment inquiry and connecting her with her first potential opportunity.

Wanda has been the Program Director at the Senior Center for the last 11 years. When asked what she enjoys most about her job, she simply states,” It's my seniors. It's the relationship I have built with my seniors combined with the confidence and trust of the BronxWorks leadership in me.”

Wanda was pleased to host participants of the Community Food Funders tour as they stopped at E. Roberts Moore this past month to learn more about BronxWorks healthy food and wellness initiatives. Wanda notes, "It's incredibly important to provide opportunities to address issues of obesity and allow access healthier food."

Back to School Shopping!

On August 7th, students from BronxWorks programs were once again invited to kick off the new school year by shopping for school supplies at the special Back 2 School Store organized and funded by the National Council of Jewish Women New York (NCJW NY). The shop included a large selection of school supplies as well as backpacks and clothes, and the students were each assisted by a volunteer personal shopper to help pick out items that appealed most to them. Not only did the shop leave the students outfitted with confidence for the first day of school, NCJW NY staff also felt honored with the opportunity to meet such a practical need for families and children.

"We were so happy to partner with BronxWorks once again in this important project. In total, we served 186 children from 8 different community agencies around the city, and each child received $180 worth of clothing and gear to prepare for that all important first day of school. But the numbers only tell you so much. Seeing the faces of the children and feeling the excitement in the building that day was inspiring to all of us who worked together to make the day happen." stated Andrea Salwen Kopel, NCJW NY Executive Director.

NCJW NY has been a key partner and collaborator with BronxWorks for over two decades, supporting and funding our Home Instruction for Parents of Pre-School Youngsters (HIPPY) program since 1992. We at BronxWorks thank NCJW NY for their loyal support, and are looking forward to working together on future projects in the future.
Familiar Faces of Community Affairs Officers

Among the many people coming through the BronxWorks Betances Community Center during the busy summer months are officers Jimmy (left) and Eddie (right) from the Community Affairs division of Police Area 7. The officers love interacting and playing games with the youth and have come to know many by first name. BronxWorks Site Director Suzette Walker (center) says the relationship with the local police is made strong by friendly and helpful officers like Jimmy and Eddie.
Sunshine & Flowers

Students from South Bronx Prep summer program enjoyed a field trip to the New York Botanical Garden right here in the Bronx. Summer is the perfect time to wander around the beautiful grounds and see the collection of over one million living plants!

Summer Camp Carnival

Summer Camp programs at the BronxWorks Carolyn McLaughlin Community Center finished with a special day of celebration including snacks, prizes, games and epic battles over ownership of the half-court tug-of-war zone.
Promoting Balance Across the Bronx

BronxWorks and the Balanced Calorie Initiative joined several NYCHA Family Day gatherings to remind neighbors to “Balance what you eat, drink and do.” The Coca-Cola Tasting Vehicle was also on site, offering samples of low and zero calorie drink options!

Congratulations to Olympian Anthony Ervin!

Last December, Olympic gold medalist swimmer Anthony Ervin visited BronxWorks to share some inspiration and swimming tips with the BronxWorks Blue Waves Swim Team. He recently won his second Olympic gold for the 50m Freestyle in Rio. Congratulations Anthony!
Did You Know? Fresh Food Box

BronxWorks and GrowNYC bring fresh, affordable locally-grown produce to Bronx neighborhoods through a program called Fresh Food Box. For just $12 anyone can sign up to get a week's worth of fruits and vegetables packed full of nutrition important to a healthy diet. Come by and sign up for your box from 3:30-6:30 PM every Wednesday afternoon at the BronxWorks Carolyn McLaughlin Community Center (1130 Grand Concourse) and every Thursday afternoon at Bronxchester (725 St. Ann's Ave).

#GivingTuesday

BronxWorks will be participating in #GivingTuesday.

More details will follow on how you can support BronxWorks and this Global Day of Giving.

Black Friday. Cyber Monday.

#GIVINGTUESDAY™

November 29, 2016

Donate Now

STAY CONNECTED:
If you have any questions or would like more info about BronxWorks, please contact Tiana Rogers at trogers@bronxworks.org or 646-393-4002.

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