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A Season of Giving Thanks
The BronxWorks Newsletter
November & December 2016

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A Wonderful #GivingTuesday

Over 70 BronxWorks friends, supporters, and staff enjoyed a wonderful evening during the agency’s second annual #GivingTuesday event on...
BronxWorks staff and program participants shared personal stories about the impact of BronxWorks programs.

The Hard Rock Cafe Yankee Stadium provided the perfect space to meet new friends and reconnect with familiar faces!

BronxWorks Welcomes Altice USA & John Leguizamo

November 29, 2016. Held at the Bronx’s iconic Hard Rock Cafe Yankee Stadium, the evening included networking over delicious food and drinks, raffle prizes, and listening to personal stories of how BronxWorks is Lifting Lives and Building Futures in the community. As a kick-off to the Year-End giving season, the #GivingTuesday event highlighted BronxWorks programs that help to welcome and support immigrants and new Americans as our newest neighbors. Four BronxWorks staff and program participants -- Soukaina, Daichun, Samsunnahar, and Priscilla -- shared inspiring stories of how BronxWorks has impacted their lives as new Americans. The audience resonated with the important message of creating communities that are welcoming, diverse, and inclusive.

BronxWorks sends a heartfelt thank you to all who attended the event including Laura Behnke (ABC7 Weekend Sports Anchor), and to those who donated to support this important work during #GivingTuesday. An extra-special thank you goes out to our community partner Metro Optics and all of the event sponsors listed below.

See more photos of the event in our Facebook album.

If you did not have a chance to attend or give, it is not too late! The BronxWorks Year-End Appeal is now in full swing and continues to focus on programs that build welcoming communities for immigrants and new Americans! Join BronxWorks by giving generously this holiday season!

DONATE

Special thanks to our #GivingTuesday community partners and sponsors!

On November 30, nearly 200 children and adults from the
John Leguizamo entertained and inspired the whole crowd.

BronxWorks staff sporting clothing from their alma maters.

A group of BronxWorks students visited the Dorothy Day Center for Service and Justice at Fordham University.

College Application Week

Pursuing higher education is one of the most significant investments that young people can make in their futures. While the college application process is full of excitement and anticipation, the big decisions -- including where to apply, what to study, and how to pay for it all -- can seem overwhelming. BronxWorks is extremely thankful for knowledgeable staff that help students navigate this process and for the talented young men and women that are motivated to make their dreams a reality.

As part of last month’s National College Application Week, the BronxWorks CAFÉ (Center for Achieving Future Education) program guided students through a full week of college fairs, application workshops, and campus visits to help them better understand the many options they have in pursuing higher education. With just over 40 students participating, BronxWorks CAFÉ College Advisors, staff, and workshop leaders were able to provide individual attention to each student’s interests and help them make progress in starting their applications.

In addition to workshops on scholarships and financial aid, the youth also toured local campuses, like Fordham University and Borough of Manhattan Community College, and attended a college fair. Raynelle Booker, BronxWorks CAFÉ Program Coordinator, was excited to see how these experiences opened the students’ minds to college programs and careers that were not previously in their consideration. "I think the whole week was eye-opening for the students, and broke down barriers that they thought stood between them and attending college."

Beyond the activities of College Application Week, the BronxWorks CAFÉ office is open to students every day after school to provide guidance and assistance as they complete their applications!
Lilac Kiki Ball

Last month, the BronxWorks Positive Living program co-hosted a Lilac Kiki Ball in collaboration with Montefiore Adolescent AIDS Program and CK Life, to commemorate Spirit Day — a day founded to promote the self-esteem of LGBTQ youth, remember those lost to suicide and to stand against bullying. BronxWorks is proud and thankful for such a community dedicated to the values of inclusiveness and equality!

With over 200 participants, the Lilac Kiki ball was a great display of solidarity among the LGBTQ youth community and numerous local organizations that work to support and protect their rights. The evening began with a resource fair in which organizations offered information about important topics like HIV, PrEP & PEP (HIV medication), and STDs as well as the respective services provided. Montefiore and the AIDS Healthcare Foundation offered on-site testing, both before and during the event.

The ball commenced with lots of energy, excitement and a focus on positive messages. Themes of self-confidence and self-esteem were on full display through a slideshow of quotes like “Nothing can dim the light that shines within” and “Beauty begins the moment you decide to be yourself.” The announcer began the event by paying tribute to a few well-known LGBTQ icons in attendance for their leadership within the community. The dancing competition kicked off with participants proudly wearing their purple gowns and showcasing their talents within six different competitive categories. Even those who were not competing got into the spirit by vogueing along with the winners. The evening was a fantastic time to recognize the inclusiveness and openness that many in the community long for and deserve. BronxWorks is grateful for each of the participants, for our community partners and for the positivity that is possible when we all come together!

Recent Program Highlights

Community School Kickoff

BronxWorks is extremely excited to open its newest and 35th site as a Community School partner at IS 313 and 339 on Webster Ave! With the goal of improving attendance and academic performance, BronxWorks will offer a range of services to the students and families including Workforce Development, Health Insurance Navigators, college prep, and more. The kickoff event took place on November 9 with a DJ, photo booth, games and a meet & greet with some of our great BronxWorks staff!

Colon Turkey Giveaway

New York Jets Guard and Bronx native Willie Colon returned with his family and several of his Jets teammates to the BronxWorks Classic Community Center as part of his annual Willie’s Turkeys and Toys
Willie Colon (far right) and his NFL teammates helped to make the holidays special for many people this year.

BronxWorks staff did their part in supporting the 2016 NYC Marathoners!

Staff Profiles

Jose and Vicky manage the front desk at the BronxWorks Carolyn McLaughlin Community Center.

Anyone that has been through the BronxWorks Carolyn McLaughlin Community Center in the past decade is likely very thankful for the friendly faces of Vicky Villa and Jose Acevedo. Amid the daily hustle and bustle of the Community Center, Vicky and Jose manage the front desk with a warm welcome and a seasoned knowledge of BronxWorks that help visitors, clients, and fellow staff to feel right at home.

Vicky Villa joined BronxWorks 26 years ago. Born and raised in the Bronx, Vicky has watched many community members participate in various BronxWorks programs - even having witnessed younger members of the community grow up and then return to BronxWorks programs with children of their own. She truly enjoys creating an atmosphere where people feel comfortable and welcome from the first moment they step in the building. This year Vicky is especially thankful for a supportive family, a reliable job, and the memory of her beloved sister.

Jose Acevedo is the Safety Monitor at the Community Center and takes pride in caring for the security and essential details of the building. When he’s not at the front desk greeting and pointing visitors in the right direction, Jose completes regular safety rounds throughout the building and ensures things are running smoothly. Jose’s work is notably marked by a contagious smile and a great sense of humor. He has been with BronxWorks since 2002, and thoroughly enjoys the relationships and daily interactions his job brings. This time of year he is most thankful for the love of his family and girlfriend and looks forward to spending the holidays together.

Photo Essay
BronxWorks was well represented in the 2016 Tour de Bronx free ride! Cash Kunze (left) and Scott Auwarter (right) joined several other BronxWorks staff and Board members to ride over 25 miles through the borough on a beautiful fall day!
BronxWorks children attended a SPOOKTACULAR Halloween party co-sponsored by Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC) and United Way NYC. Among the games and activities, the children even made costumes for a few of the PwC Executives!

In mid-November, several members of the BronxWorks Board and Senior Staff participated in a tour of BronxWorks programs to hear about impact and updates. Here, Juan Rivera (right) shares a report on the Homeless Outreach Team.

Give to the BronxWorks Year-End Appeal

The end-of-year giving season is now in full swing! For our Year-
End Appeal, BronxWorks will continue to focus on programs that help immigrants and new Americans feel welcome and supported in the Bronx. As 2016 draws to a close, please consider giving to this important work that is making a real difference in the lives of our newest neighbors!

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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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