

Ossining Children's Center



Because of YOU!

As a member of the OCC community of donors, volunteers and ambassadors-

You are giving children the foundation for life-long achievement and well-being.

Enjoy this issue of our bulletin with all of the news that YOU helped to make possible.

THANK YOU!



Ready to take on the world!

At the Children's Center, one of the things we want the children in our care to develop is self-confidence. A strong sense of self is vital for many reasons, but one that's particularly important to personal success, both in school, and in life, is the willingness to take risks. Without being willing to chance failure, creativity is stunted, new opportunities are avoided, and the thrill of accomplishment is never realized.

This past year in each and every classroom, our Center has embraced risk-taking.



Helping children to take on new physical, cognitive, and emotional challenges has been a daily mission in each classroom. For example, in the Infant class, it took the form of encouraging the babies to expand their sensory and creative experiences by playing with Jell-O, and having toddlers walk barefoot in bins filled with a wide variety of textured materials. Similarly, our preschoolers were cheered on as they undertook a

specialty- created playground obstacle course.

Our Pre-K and Kindergarten students were challenged in a wide variety of ways throughout the year. They learned the delicate process of **creating Chinese**

summer rolls from our own Darryl Moy, and they were encouraged to think about art in a different way by using a wide variety of materials from the natural world in their art creations.

On an enrichment trip to Theatre O, the children had to cast aside their inhibitions, to act out the voices and movements of animal characters in the stories they heard.





Learning to walk the runway to model their own creations fosters children's self-confidence while teaching them how to accept guidance and to apply it.



Helping students take risks in their school work and activities is an important part of our after-school program. One event that encourages children to stretch themselves is the Project Greenway Refashion Show, sponsored each fall by Scarborough Presbyterian Church. Participants transform donated clothing into contemporary styles (using newly learned sewing skills), then model them in a fashion show for families and friends.



"Music and rhythm find their way into the secret places of the soul." – Plato

Another such activity is the **drumming program** provided by renowned jazz musician Art Hightower and his wife Carolyn Black. The children get to learn the basics of a new instrument, and then perform their skills in a special OCC drumming concert.



OSSINING CHILDREN'S CENTER

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Not surprisingly, our amazing teaching staff takes constant risks in order to improve their programs. For example, as part of the **Prekindergarten classes with the Jacob Burns Film Center**, our teachers took on the role of directors in the process of filming the children's original stories. And in order to make their Parent Night presentations more effective, **teachers asked parents to engage in actual curriculum activities, as if they were children in their child's classroom.**



Happy Preschool Graduates

OCC Alumna returns to join Summer Camp Staff

Erika Acuapoco has been part of the OCC family for as long as she can remember. She first came to the Gerri Desilva's classroom as a quiet sweet, shy three-year-old speaking very little English. Gerri watched her gain confidence and come out of her shell as she connected with the OCC staff. Over the next ten years Erika continued to flourish as she progressed through OCC all the way through the before- and after-school enrichment program. When Erika graduated, she wanted to give back and began volunteering after school. Gerri was so impressed with her maturity, dependability and her ability to connect with the children,

that she recommended hiring her as part of our summer camp staff.



Gerri believes Erika has a gift. No matter the age or the classroom, children gravitate towards her and want to be around her. She loves reading to them and making them laugh. Erika says her favorite thing about working at OCC is taking care of the children, developing a bond with them and seeing them smile. When she is not at the center she is chasing after her one-year-old little sister McKenzie.

"We are so proud of the young woman Erika has become," says Gerri, "We are thrilled to have her as part of the OCC family."

In memoriam

Earlier this year, the Ossining Children's Center bid sad good-byes to two great champions for children.

David Swope

David Swope grew up in Ossining in a family with a long tradition of community service. His family donated the land that became the core of Teatown Lake Reservation. David's father served on the board of Phelps Memorial Hospital, and his mother Sally Swope was a devoted board member of the Ossining Children's Center.



As a young man, David took his family's service ethic global. He served as a Peace Corps volunteer in India, where he helped set up the first legal-assistance program in Bombay (now Mumbai). After completing his Peace Corps service, he worked as a lawyer in New York City.

In the 1970s David returned to Ossining to manage his father's business: the Jefferson Valley Racquet Club. He and his business partner, Beth Beck, transformed that 800-member club into today's "Club Fit," two cutting-edge multi-sport recreational complexes, with more than 14,000 members.

While building Club Fit, as well as his real estate investment company, David also immersed himself in local community service. He was involved with Teatown for more than four decades, serving on the board and in many leadership positions, including board chairman. He was an active board member of Phelps Hospital, the Open Door Family Medical Centers Foundation, Westchester Community College and its Foundation, and the Jacob Burns Film Center).

Following in his mother's footsteps, in 1998, he joined the board of the Ossining Children's Center. He was an extraordinary leader. He zeroed in on the most important aspects of an issue; he looked at problems from multiple viewpoints; and he could take an unexpected slant on things. David was also the consummate matchmaker and he knew everyone. He loved making connections; if he couldn't help you he knew someone who could. In one of his successful collaborations he brokered a partnership between the Ossining Children's Center and the Jacob Burns Film Center, to the enrichment of both organizations.

Although David stepped down from the Board of OCC in 2006, he continued to serve as a valued advisor, literally until his final days. David left OCC the gift of his big picture philosophy; he thought outside the box and he believed that nothing is impossible if you set your mind to it.

Paul Rosen



Paul's longstanding involvement with the Ossining Children's Center goes back almost 20 years. He was an Ossining Children's Center Board Member from 2002 to 2009. He then continued as an associate board member and advisor until very recently.

Paul's work as an education lawyer enabled him to provide the Center with invaluable expertise. Because OCC is often the place where parents first discover that their child has a special need, issues related to the challenge of obtaining the appropriate services frequently arose. Paul was always available to offer advice to our social worker and the families themselves on the best way to proceed. The Center's high success rate in helping these children was established early on thanks, in large part, to Paul. *(continued on page 6)*

Volunteering at OCC: A Family Tradition

Joey Schluger has been volunteering in the Older Three-Year-Old classroom for four years. He comes in every Friday with a big smile and his face. The children and the teachers are always excited to see him. Joey loves to read to the children, help them with snack and push them on the swing. When his school gave him \$50 to give to a charity he chose OCC – specifically the three-year-olds' class. He combined the gift with his own money to buy art supplies and magnet tiles, one of the children's absolute favorites.

As the year came to an end, Joey expressed his appreciation for the teachers and promised to come back and visit along with his two siblings, Ben and Julia, both former OCC volunteers. The children threw him a party to thank him for his love and dedication for OCC.

"We wish him well as he goes off to college," said assistant teacher in the three-year-old classroom Trish Zaccardi. "We will miss him!"



Briarcliff High School students produce Dance Benefit



A big thank you to Briarcliff High School students **Madeline Elkes, Sarah Kaul, Rachel Sukonik and Zoe Landen** for organizing "Dancing for the Children," a benefit concert supporting enrichment experiences for our children and OCC's tuition assistance program.

The event was the brainchild of Columbia University student **Jasmine Bar** four years ago, when she was a junior at Briarcliff High School. Dancing for the Children continues to delight audiences each year, showcasing talented dancers from all over Westchester. Six dance studios participated this year, performing many different dance genres from Bollywood to hip hop.

"The ultimate goal of Dancing for the Children" said Madeline "is to support a wonderful organization while simultaneously fostering appreciation for the dance arts." Madeline and her committee surpassed their own expectations, besting last year's turnout and raising \$5000 for the children at OCC. We appreciate their hard work, and that of the dance studios that participated in the concert.



Featured in this photo are Anushka Sunder, Nishta Handakamar, Pragna Sashidher and Sanjana Jaisuel performing "Bollywood Medley," choreographed by Nithya Nandakumar.

Save the Date!

Sunday, October 14

5:00 – 7:00 pm

**Happy Hour
on the Hudson**

**at FIN & BREW,
Charles Point,
Peekskill**

**to benefit
CHILDCARE
TUITION
ASSISTANCE**

*Enjoy craft beer,
wine, cocktails, hors
d'oeuvres, and a
breath taking view of
the Hudson.*



**Your support
strengthens families
and empowers
children to achieve
their potential.**

THANK YOU!

In Memoriam – Paul Rosen *(continued from page 4)*

Paul was never one to shy away from confrontation. He once took on the State licensing agency on our behalf when he thought that a violation we received was unjust. The letters he wrote succeeded in having the violation removed.

Paul was active in helping to raise money for the Center so that low income families could have high quality childcare. He also had a particular interest in supporting our Teen Parent program, believing strongly in the goal of providing care for the children of parenting teens so that the students could graduate high school.

Paul's dedication to our Center was evident in the countless ways that he made himself available to support its mission. He also was always upbeat and was a pleasure to work with.



**Dine A-Round raises \$122,000
for Tuition Assistance**

The Dine-A-Round, a perennial favorite event among OCC donors, was held on June 2 this year, under the able leadership of **Connie Curran** and **Clorissa Gioscia**.

More than 100 supporters attended the cocktail party at Connie Curran's home, and then went to dinners at the homes of a dozen hosts and hostesses.



Friends enjoy the Dine-A-Round *(Left to Right): Anthony Shropshire and Vanessa Pairis* (Anthony and Vanessa are OCC parents; Vanessa is an OCC Board member); **Ella and Alex Campbell** (Alex is an OCC alumnus and has recently joined the Board.)