



WINTER 2011

NEWS

ISAACS CENTER

Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center, Inc.
415 East 93rd Street, New York, NY 10128 • Tel. 212-360-7620 • www.isaacscenter.org

Youth Employment: A Snapshot of Success



Matthew Elgandy is a young man who's just starting out in the world of work. He came to the Isaacs Center in 2008, a timid 18-year-old who wanted help getting his GED. After passing the test in 2009, he kept coming back in order to build his confidence and prepare for college.

We gave him a job as a clerical intern, and were so pleased with his performance that we hired him to work for us part-time. Last fall, Matthew enrolled in the Borough of Manhattan Community College and got a part-time job at Duane Reade. Matthew stops by often to visit. He truly appreciates the support the Isaacs Center has given him. "The Isaacs Center gave me confidence," he

told a staff member recently. "I did not think I would make it this far."

Marina Niceta, who runs our **Youth Employment Program (YEP)**, reports that last year was "amazing," in terms of both support from funders and success stories like Matthew's. Our heartfelt thanks go to all of our many supporters, and especially to the Clark, Guggenheim, Robin Hood, Tiger and Pinkerton Foundations. All of them generously funded YEP and made our stellar results possible.

The recent recession has made it hard to reach the 70% job-placement rate of



Matthew Elgandy

past years — but our staff has stepped up their efforts and Marina says that placement rates have slowly returned to former levels.

"Our clients have serious barriers to success," she explains. "Nearly 90% have no real home. Instead, they spend one week with a relative, the next with a friend. In order to address this and other issues, we hired a career counselor who works with each young person to help find stable housing and address any health or personal

(continued on page 4)

Meals on Wheels...and Sometimes on Foot



Meals on Wheels deliverers complete their "appointed rounds" despite snow and ice, delivering nutritious meals to homebound seniors.

All that beautiful snow we've been seeing this winter poses quite a challenge to our **Meals on Wheels** deliverers, who are determined to reach

all the homebound elders who depend on us for a nutritious meal each day. For them, our deliverers must get through even on unplowed streets.

We're happy to tell you that, as bad as the streets have been, our clients haven't missed a single meal! Program Director Frank Geritano explains: "We always make sure that our clients have food. If there's any possibility of a storm, we make sure they have food in advance."

That's what happened after Christmas, and again throughout January. For each of the big snowstorms, our deliverers brought their clients an extra meal the day before. Then, the day after the storms, they braved lakes of slush and bitter winds

to make sure every **Meals on Wheels** client got a nutritious meal.

Al Fields, a five-year veteran **Meals on Wheels** deliverer who currently walks his route on foot, tells the story:

"The wind goes through you like a knife, I don't care how many layers you wear. I walked from 111th and the FDR Drive to 106th

(continued on page 2)

New York City Seniors in Need

- One in five New York seniors are poor — twice the national average.
- 55% of seniors live alone.
- Seniors age 85+ are the fastest growing segment of the city's population.



From the Executive Director

I can't tell you how often I hear the words, "I am so grateful to the Isaacs Center"— from elderly people who depend on **Meals on Wheels** — from young adults who grew up attending our programs and are now in college — from seniors who look to our **Senior Center** for companionship and a nutritious meal.

The Isaacs Center has plenty to be grateful for, as well: to our many volunteers for their invaluable support throughout the year, and especially during the holiday season, when they help serve our Thanksgiving and

Christmas Day meals. Some volunteers even create their own events to support the Isaacs Center. (In the story below, you can read about the Holiday Tea organized by Board member Leslie Perkins and supporter Brenda Earl, for example.)

We're also grateful to the Moses Fund for its support of our library, college readiness and scholarship programs, and to the Robin Hood, Guggenheim Tiger, Pinkerton and Clark Foundations for their support of our **Youth Employment Program**, which plays a more important role than ever during these dire economic times. As young people without high school diplomas and college degrees and often handicapped by homelessness, our participants belong to a very hard-to-employ population, yet we continue to place

them in jobs, training or education programs every year.

Finally, we're deeply grateful to all of our donors for their support all year long. Many have gone beyond the call of duty in their support of our Gala and our Wine Event, buying tickets, participating in the silent auction, as well as making additional donations.

Thanksgiving may be a few months past, but all year long, all of us at the Isaacs Center give thanks to our generous donors and dedicated volunteers. In everything we do, we rely on you — and we're truly grateful! ✧

Wanda Wooten

Holiday Tea Benefits the Isaacs Center

"This holiday season, let's share with our children the feeling that comes from the joy of giving back. This is a wonderful time to support families who are struggling right here in our neighborhood."

So began the invitation from Board member Leslie Perkins and supporter Brenda Earl, welcoming friends to bring their children to a Family Holiday Tea at Brenda's apartment. Guests were asked to contribute a holiday gift or to make a donation for **Families First** and **Youth Employment Program (YEP)** whose participants provided the gift ideas by writing letters to Santa.

While adults enjoyed socializing at the event, their children had fun making holiday crafts, their parents enjoyed refreshments along with their conversations, and contributions exceeded all expectations. Thank you, Leslie and Brenda — and all of your generous friends — for sharing the true spirit of the season with all of us! ✧



Left Photo: Holiday Tea co-host and Isaacs supporter, Brenda Earl (left) with Board President Lee Wareham, Executive Director Wanda Wooten and Tea co-host and Board member Leslie Perkins (right). Right Photo: Children attending the Holiday Tea enjoyed making crafts and socializing, too!

Meals on Wheels... and Sometimes on Foot

(continued from page 1)

and Park Avenue, and it took twice as long than usual. But I'll tell you, when I see that first person's face at the door, none of it matters in the slightest. Most of them said things like, 'I didn't think you would be here today. Thank you so much!' And I had two who said, 'God bless you, you are a fabulous person.' It's always like that. When I see that first client of the day, and the smile, 'I'm so glad to see you, Al,' no matter what other things have been bothering me, it all goes out the window. That's why I chose this job."

As grateful as our clients are to see Al at their door, we're just as grateful for all the dedicated men and women of our **Meals on Wheels** staff, making sure that the homebound elders who depend on us get the meals they need, no matter what the weather brings. ✧

Rededication of Library for Young People



Executive Director Wanda Wooten shows a young audience the plaque dedicating the library to former Board member Jacqueline (Jackie) I.B. Schneider, at the recent rededication ceremony.

Thanks to the generous support of the Henry and Lucy Moses Fund, and its president, Irving Sitnick, we were recently able to refurbish our library, which serves children, adolescents and young adults in our programs. The improvements include new books, a new part-time librarian, and a fresh and cheerful coat of paint, as well as an alphabet-design rug, a TV and a computer.

At a rededication ceremony last July, we celebrated the legacy of Jacqueline I.B. Schneider, an Isaacs Center Board member from 1979 until her death in 2007. Jackie loved nothing more than helping young people learn. An early champion of our Youth Scholarship Program, she helped set up a college preparation program for our young clients. We are pleased to remember her by naming our library in her honor.

The library's collection includes fiction and nonfiction for children and young adults, in both English and Spanish. There are also children's and teen's periodicals, student/parent reference materials, poetry for all ages, picture books, and beginning-to-read books for all ages.

The Moses Fund, which made the renovation possible, is also a major supporter of our Scholarship Fund, and last year awarded eight scholarships to our college-bound youth. Jackie would have been so proud! ✧

GALA 2011

Join us for cocktails, dining and great entertainment

The University Club
One West 54th Street
New York City

For further information please contact the Development Office at (212) 360-7620 or visit www.isaacscenter.org

Benefiting the
Stanley M. Isaacs
Neighborhood Center

THURSDAY APRIL 28, 2011

SAVE THE DATE

WISH LIST

You can also support the **Isaacs Center** by donating the following items for our programs. If you can help, please contact our Development Office, at 212-360-7620. Thank you!

Arts and Crafts Supplies: paints, paper, markers, jewelry making supplies.

Electronics: digital and video cameras, speakers and dvd players.

Exercise Equipment: Yoga mats and workout dvds.

Magazine & Newspaper Subscriptions: *Time Magazine*, *New York Times*, *O Magazine*, other news and current events periodicals.

Office Supplies

Plastic Storage Containers

Tickets: concerts, shows, sporting events.

Holidays at the Isaacs Center

Each year as the weather turns cold, our **Senior Center** members look forward to good fun, good food and cheering entertainment at our Holiday parties.

Seniors began arriving at 10:30 on Thanksgiving morning, socializing while staff and volunteers prepared for the festive holiday. A quartet featuring a saxophonist, drummer, pianist and singer serenaded guests until the dining room opened. In all, 150 seniors enjoyed the warm, delicious staff-prepared Thanksgiving meal on beautifully decorated family-style tables.



On Christmas morning, seniors came in their holiday best.

A pianist, staff member and volunteer led an hour-long holiday singalong as the staff prepared food and volunteers hung festive decorations and set the tables.

Once again, our 150 guests enjoyed a delicious hot meal featuring Cornish hens as they listened to classical music. As they left the party, each senior received a hand-wrapped Isaacs Center 2011 calendar along with all our good wishes for a happy and healthy New Year! ✧



Stanley M. Isaacs
Neighborhood Center Inc.
415 East 93rd Street
New York, NY 10128
212.360.7620
www.isaacscenter.org

Board of Directors

Honorary Chairman
Doris C. Halaby*

President
Lee Wareham

Vice Presidents
Cornelia Clifford
Susan A. Rubinstein

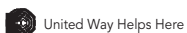
Treasurer
Gretchen H. Stone*

Secretary
D. Rebecca Davies

Estelle P. Bender, M.D.
Graham Bodel
Tiawanda N. Brown
Patricia A. Falkenberg
Marion S. Hedges
Mary Ellen Johnson
Theodore P. Klingos
Ursula Lowerre
Christopher P. Mahan
Andrea P. Martin
Glenn McAnanama
April Dow Michas
Deborah Quinones
Frederic A. Rubinstein
C. Michael Spero*
Peter W. Timmins
Ray Wareham

President's Advisory Council
Barry J. Alperin*
Ann Williams Chapman*
JoAnn Fox-Weingarten
Frederick D. Hill
Anne H. Lindgren*
Kirsten Manges
John J. McDermott*
Leslie Perkins
Lena O. Townsend
Judith C. Zesiger

**Past President*
Wanda Wooten
Executive Director



Seniors Send Artistic Greetings to Homebound

Ten of our **Senior Center** members gave generously of their time and talents last fall, creating 300 handmade holiday greeting cards for homebound **Meals on Wheels** recipients. Each Friday afternoon, these elder artists socialized as they created the cards out of cardstock, markers and glitter. They also hand-wrapped 300 Isaacs Center 2011 calendars. A few even took their gift wrapping home, just to make sure everything was ready in time for the Holidays.



Senior Center members creating handmade greeting cards for Meals on Wheels' homebound recipients.

Also leading up to the holiday season, our **Senior Center** members were busy designing cards for our annual contest. Each year, the winning image is printed and mailed to Isaacs' generous donors, along with a note asking them to send the cards back with personal greetings to the **Meals on Wheels** homebound. This year's winner, Susan Bloom suggested the clever idea of printing extra cards with her beautiful snowflake design. These were sold in sets to friends as a fundraiser for the Isaacs Center arts program.



Isaacs Holiday card design contest winner (and fundraiser!) Susan Bloom.

Thank you, Susan — and thanks to all of the volunteers who helped send loving greetings to our homebound friends! ✧

Cheers to Success!

Despite bone-chilling 3° temperatures, 75 undaunted Isaacs Center supporters gathered for our second Glass is Half Full wine tasting event. Partygoers socialized in the festive surroundings of Steuben, tasted a wide array of wines generously provided by Wines of Spain, and sampled delicious appetizers from Murray's Cheese. A percentage of all the evenings purchases went to help support Isaacs Center programs. Many thanks to our host committee: Alexa and Graham Bodel, Christina Cox, Peter Timmins, Quyen Tran and



Left Photo: Wine Tasting committee member Christina Cox (left) with attendees Elyssa Stein and Tira Grey. Right Photo: Board member Christopher Mahan and his wife Merrill Mahan.



Ashley Wareham. Also, a big thank you to Steuben for generously providing the space, and Wines of Spain and Murray's Cheese for the refreshments. ✧

Youth Employment: A Snapshot of Success *(continued from page 1)*

problems. "Helping clients overcome these barriers is a long, slow process, but it's very important for their long-term success," Marina says.

Participants undergo an intensive training program, in which they learn both "hard" and "soft" skills. Word processing, interviewing and resume writing are some of the hard skills they learn. Conflict resolution and anger management training enable them to succeed in their new jobs despite workplace stresses.

According to Marina, "The strongest part of this program is the connection we make with our participants. They feel they are part of something here, and come back for follow-up services. We have weekly groups for unemployed people, and monthly groups for the employed. These are young people who tend to be disconnected, so the fact that they're staying connected to us signifies major progress." ✧

