

News from Henry Street

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Summer 2005



Rhonda Harrison

Inset: Jose Ortiz gives remarks at a Neighborhood Youth Workforce Graduation in 2004. The center has been placing clients in good jobs since it first opened its doors in November 2003. Kindergarten students from the 301 Henry Street day care celebrated their coming promotion to first grade with a ceremony on June 10, 2005.



Sari Weintraub

GRADUATION FOR ALL AGES

New York City changes dramatically each spring from bleak gray and brick to something green and alive. Henry Street Settlement clients make no less visible a transition this time of year as several programs “graduate” their participants into elementary school, into specialized high schools, off to college, and into the work world. The Settlement is proud of the guidance given to Lower East Side residents through these life changes.

Congratulations all around for clients throughout the Settlement

From humble beginnings

Children enrolled in Henry Street Settlement’s day care services, ages two to five, get a strong start in the transition from a parent’s hip to the uncertainties of school. Before moving on to public or parochial elementary schools, Henry Street’s day care children learn how to assert their independence, interact in groups, adjust to classroom structures, and, in many cases, communicate in English.

While the children are actually enrolled through the summer until school starts in September, 22 of this year’s kindergarten and pre-K students celebrated their coming promotion to first grade and kindergarten,

respectively. Two of Henry Street’s day care programs, at 301 Henry St. and 710 E. 9th St., hosted short ceremonies on June 10.

For many immigrant families in the neighborhood, these programs are the first exposure their young ones have to an English-speaking environment. Some children start out unable to say much more than “good morning,” but by the time first grade begins, they know enough English to survive, says Sandy Kwok, assistant director of day care at 301 Henry St. Even the bilingual teachers immerse their students in English, she says. Kindergarteners master the alphabet and practice speaking and writing simple words. Henry Street makes sure teachers have all the support they

need during the school day to teach their students English, says Kwok, even if it requires another teacher in the room.

Youth Services nurtures scholarship goals

Henry Street youth services programs help carry students across the academic spectrum with after-school activities and enrichment programs such as YIPEE, Youth In School Program for Education and Employment. YIPEE targets high school students with educational and career training and encourages positive attitudes about school and work.

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A Letter from the Executive Director

Settlement undertakes strategic plan for the first time in its history.



Henry Street Settlement has been a model of leadership and innovation among community service agencies since its founding in 1893. Henry Street has pioneered a community-based method of promoting health and well-being, offered a wide range of services to raise the quality of life for the urban poor, and become a haven for people of all ages, ethnicities, and backgrounds.

With its success, Henry Street Settlement's scope has grown vastly over time. Today the agency has 19 sites and a \$34 million budget. With more than 56,000 individuals served in some fashion each year, through an estimated 45 programs, Henry Street is the most multifaceted settlement house in New York City.

In the last few years, Settlement staff have seen great changes from within the agency and within our professional operating environment. Economic, political, social and demographic trends on the Lower East Side are greatly affecting the way we can fulfill our mission, public funding is harder than ever to come by, and agency expansion has taxed infrastructure. Many staff members are expressing a need for more time and more opportunities for innovation. They are saying that, while they have the energy to be bold and creative, they feel too confined by their busy schedules to step outside of their normal routines. It has become more important than ever for us to prioritize our programs, improve their quality, and better coordinate them to provide our services as efficiently and effectively as possible.

To meet these internal and external demands, we began a strategic planning initiative in fall 2004, bringing board members, Settlement leaders and staff together to develop and articulate a coherent vision for the work of the agency over the next five years. Our strategic plan looks at how programs may better cooperate and combine resources and how the Settlement might partner with external individuals and organizations—all for the purpose of strengthening Henry Street as a whole and, most importantly, continuing to make a real difference in the lives of New Yorkers.

Since taking initial stock of the challenges and opportunities before us, we've been busy meeting in various groups to shape and refine that vision. When our plan is fully developed, we'll have some challenging work ahead of us to make it happen and assess the outcomes.

I am looking forward to sharing our vision for Henry Street when our work is completed. We are as dedicated as ever to providing the quality of services we have been known for. Henry Street Settlement continues its commitment to be the model of leadership—regionally and nationally—that it has been for most of its life.



Visitors browse and wander through gallery spaces created for the 2005 Art Show preview.

The Art Show and Mardi Gras Masquerade make fundraising glamorous

The 2005 Art Show raised more than \$1,000,000—a first for Henry Street Settlement. In February, 70 of the nation's leading art dealers gathered at the Seventh Regiment Armory in Manhattan for five days to exhibit a highly concentrated group of extraordinary works in virtually every medium and in a rich mix of styles. The Gala Preview of the Art Show is an institution on New York's cultural and social calendar and attracts an international group of collectors, connoisseurs, media leaders, and celebrities. This year, more than 2,400 people attended the prestigious benefit.

The Art Show raises critically needed funds for the social services and arts programs Henry Street Settlement offers to Lower East Side residents. Since 1989, the Show, organized by the Art Dealers Association of America to benefit Henry Street Settlement, has raised more than \$8 million.

The Young Friends of Henry Street brought warmth to a windy winter night with a reprise of their Mardi Gras Masquerade on February 11, this year at a private club on Park Avenue. The annual Casino Night raised over \$71,000 in funds crucial to Settlement programs. More than 350 guests turned out for the festive food and drink, spirited music from Captain Squeeze and the Zydeco Moshers, and the midnight Krewe d'Henri parade led by a beautifully costumed Mardi Gras Queen from New Orleans. More than 100 high-quality prizes donated by top New York merchants were snapped up by lucky guests with chips won in the glamorous casino room.

View pictures from these and other events at <http://www.henrystreet.org/photos>.

Galas/Summer Camps



From l to r: Art Show Steering Committee Co-chair Elizabeth Reid, Henry Street Executive Director Verona Middleton-Jeter, and Honorary Board Member Mary Louise Reid gather to greet Art Show visitors.



Camp Ralph and Rose Hittman



photos: Ken Willenberg

The famously colorful Krewe d'Henri parade makes its descent to march among the gathered guests, tossing beads and candy at the Mardi Gras Masquerade.



Camp Henry



photos: Sam Weintraub

Barbara L. Tate Summer Arts Camp

Three summer camps offer youth diverse opportunities

Many Lower East Side children are spending their summer at one of the three camp experiences offered by Henry Street Settlement. **Camp Ralph and Rose Hittman** is a one-, two-, or three-week sleep-away camp located in Harriman State Park, NY. Away from the city, more than 300 campers get their first crack at summer activities such as swimming, boating, fishing, archery, hiking, nature walks, and mountain biking. **Camp Henry** is a day camp offering many recreational and enrichment activities and after-care programs in the city for children of working families. The **Barbara L. Tate Summer Arts Camp** offers five weeks of dance, music, theater, and visual arts education at the Abrons Arts Center. Classes are taught by experienced artists and teachers, assisted by junior counselors. Visiting artists in a variety of disciplines present their work, lead workshops, and provide gallery tours. Students also take weekly field trips to cultural attractions.

Please visit us online at <http://www.henrystreet.org/summercamp>.



Betsy Schroll

2005 Youth Services Scholarship recipients: (l to r) Kendra Farra, Roselyn Castellanos, Lori Val, Teddy Dalton, Andrea Booker, Giselle Ortiz, Delilah Rosario, Grissel Ortiz, Annie Wu, Dianna Wu, Yan Chan

Graduation for All Ages at Henry Street *continued from page 1*

One stand-out YIPEE graduate is Curtis McLeod Jr., a winner of the \$100,000 Posse Foundation scholarship. Starting in September, McLeod will be attending Brandeis University in Boston as part of a select, multicultural team of 10 students who are trained to promote cross-cultural communication on campus while pursuing their degrees.

YIPEE case managers watch for students who might be a good fit for the Posse awards. When they met McLeod as a 9th grader they saw his potential and began grooming him for the application process he would encounter as a high school senior. “Just being part of this program, we support individuals in whatever their interests are,” says program coordinator Vance McDowell. “When opportunities come, we push.” Case managers personally nominated McLeod and supported him through the series of grueling interviews he had to endure to be considered.

College prep expands academic horizons

Henry Street also makes strides in guiding students through the often Herculean task of college application. By the time they are ready to consider higher education, students have at their disposal the Expanded Horizons program, devised to help them perform better in high school and to prepare them for the application process with SAT courses, application seminars, financial aid assistance, and essay-writing workshops. This year, students have been accepted to about 40 colleges, including CUNY and SUNY schools, Cornell, Hofstra, and Juilliard.

Many students try for a Youth Services Scholarship. With the assistance of the Abrons/Aranow Scholarship Fund, Henry Street Settlement provides more than a dozen students each year with a financial boost toward an advanced degree. The awards honor Richard and Herbert Abrons and Rita Abrons Aranow, children of Louis and Anne Abrons, and lifelong Henry Street Settlement supporters. A former Henry Street board president, Herbert Abrons passed away in January 2005.

At a June 9, 2005, ceremony at the Abrons Arts Center, 18 students received awards ranging from \$100 to \$1,000 each. Since the initiation of the scholarship fund, 71 young people have received over \$57,000 in support.

Abrons Arts Center sets the scene for success

Outside of the standard academic pursuits, Henry Street Settlement has long been a strong advocate of arts education—from its first painting and pottery classes, through its various music, dance, and dramatic performances, to today’s modern Abrons Arts Center and Harry de Jur Playhouse. Founder Lillian Wald strongly believed that all individuals can benefit from positive and creative self-expression.

Jonathon Ward, director of the theater department, notes the success of high school graduate Shadai Williams, from Urban Youth Theater’s spring production of “The Red Sneaks,” as well as several previous productions. Williams, 17, of Brooklyn, is a young woman whose academic life has been enriched through her experiences at Abrons Arts Center. She has taken classes there for two years. She loves acting and says she remembers the moment she looked around herself in class and realized that she “wasn’t the only one with that passion for it.”

Williams graduated from Midwood High School in Brooklyn, and now hopes to begin classes at a CUNY school and then transfer into NYU to study business and communications and work toward a master’s degree. She says she will continue acting and auditioning on the side—“Wherever it takes me,” she says—and maybe even try out for film and television roles.

Another student following her chosen path through artistic endeavors is 13-year-old Chinatown resident Morgan Cady-Lee, who recently won admission, beginning in September, to La Guardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts to study photography.

Cady-Lee needed to build a portfolio of work to apply to La Guardia, so in the summer of 2004 she attended the Saturday Visual Arts Academy. The academy “provides an opportunity for children who want to go to a specialized high school to develop their portfolios,” says instructor Sandy Balboza.

“Planning for high schools, such as La Guardia, can be nerve-racking,” says Cady-Lee, “and sometimes it’s hard to come up with pieces for a portfolio.” Her work in Henry Street’s art classes helped her put together the mixed-media pieces she needed, including drawings and oil pastels, which she says contributed to her audition and acceptance to La Guardia High School.

Henry Street Settlement would like to congratulate all of its clients who are making major transitions in their lives and moving toward success. Thanks for making Henry Street a part of your experience. ■



Amy Benz



Shadai Williams (top), from Urban Youth Theater, just graduated from Midwood High School in Brooklyn. Youth Services case workers helped usher Curtis McLeod Jr. through the application process for his \$100,000 scholarship to Brandeis University.

Kristen Nunez-Lee took her summer leadership group to a program at Manhattan College called Camp College in August 2004. (l to r) Shivonne Wheatly, Nunez-Lee, Shaquana Gardner, Tequan Worthan, Fatisha Quianco, Felisha Quainco, and Yanil Perez.



**Speaker Silver
Dedicates
New ATTAIN Lab**

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The lab comprises 24 high-speed, Internet-connected workstations and offers free e-mail accounts and interactive software on such far-ranging topics as English as a second language, the SAT, and carpentry. Use of the lab is free to community members of all ages.



Jessica Tagliaterra

ATTAIN Lab manager Charles Mister assists lab visitors in October 2004. Mister teaches software courses at the lab. He says what excites him most is the dramatic progress visitors make.

The purpose of the ATTAIN initiative, administered by the State University of New York, is to overcome digital shortcomings in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods and immigrant communities by developing community-based technology centers. "This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for Henry Street Settlement, with SUNY providing about \$700,000 to \$800,000 in equipment, staff, furniture and technology," says Catherine Cullen, chief administrator of operations. Henry Street provides a newly renovated space, security, and utilities for the lab, as well as general oversight of the facility and its programs.

The lab comprises 24 high-speed, Internet-connected workstations and offers free e-mail accounts and interactive software on such far-ranging topics as English as a second language, the SAT, and carpentry. Use of the lab is free to community members of all ages. The lab has drawn more than 820 registered users since its informal opening in October 2004.

In following its mission, the ATTAIN Lab will increasingly become a site for Henry Street's Workforce Development Center (WDC) and Youth Services programming. To this end, the lab has been located in Henry Street's Youth Services headquarters at 301 Henry Street.

Studies have connected computer literacy with academic achievement, higher earning potential, lower rates of risky behavior

among youth, and increased civic engagement. Unfortunately, youth on the Lower East Side are among the most economically disadvantaged in the state. According to recent data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, only 25 percent of households earning less than \$15,000 a year have Internet access. A 2003 community profile of the Lower East Side indicates that 49 percent of youth under age 18, and 70-99 percent of the youth enrolled in Henry Street programs, live in poverty.

Lab Manager Charles Mister recalls one particularly successful program. Employees from investment advisory firm Select Equity visited the lab and met with neighborhood youth to create a Power Point project about New York City, teaching them important workplace skills and engaging them in a project that had real meaning for them.

Anyone can go to the lab to search for jobs online, work on a resume, or take one of many occupational skills and Microsoft Office training courses. The lab works in close partnership with the WDC. "What they do and the goals of the ATTAIN initiative are very close," says Mister. Job training programs, such as WDC's Earnfair, and the adult basic education and GED preparation programs, run out of WDC in partnership with Literacy Partners, make use of the lab's space and software.

The ATTAIN Lab draws visitors from all Henry Street Settlement programs. Mister says one of its main missions is to strengthen and enhance the offerings of the whole agency. Henry Street's 21st Century Community Learning Center program is already using the lab to its advantage. Software manufacturers Adobe Systems Inc. and Microsoft Corp. recently awarded the Settlement software grants that directly enhanced ATTAIN Lab computers with design and publishing tools, educational software, and office applications. Now 21st Century Community Learning Center students from several local public schools are using the lab to produce a student-run literary magazine. Additionally, children from the Settlement's day camp, Camp Henry, are using the lab all summer long.

Mister says that what excites him most is the dramatic progress made by people with no former computer experience. He says he has seen many visitors enter the lab not even knowing how to use a mouse and leave fully able to use email and browse the Web.

As usage of the lab grows, it will be Mister's task to build even stronger links between the lab and Henry Street programs. The lab is ready to hire an assistant manager, a step Mister believes will allow him the freedom to expand the lab's hours, outreach initiatives, and class offerings. ■

Speaker Silver Dedicates New ATTAIN Lab

Henry Street uses computer technology to enhance programs and bring the Lower East Side online

State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver cuts the red ribbon at the grand opening ceremony of Henry Street Settlement's ATTAIN Lab with Executive Director Verona Middleton-Jeter.

Henry Street Settlement took a great leap forward in eliminating the digital divide on Manhattan's Lower East Side on June 17 with the dedication of a brand-new computer lab. It was the grand opening of countless opportunities for an underserved community.

The ceremony was an official welcome to surrounding communities to visit the Settlement's state-of-the-art Advanced Technology Training and Information Networking (ATTAIN) Lab. Special guest State Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver made the dedication.

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or contact Eric Walter at 212.766.9200 x343 or info@henrystreet.org to be added to the mailing list.

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