CAMBA CELEBRATES PARK DAY

Question: What takes 2800 bottles of water, 1200 program T-shirts, 1000 youth, 180 staff members, 40 school buses, 18 volunteers, 13 program chants, 10 portable toilets, 4 soccer goals, 2 first aid tents and 1 sunny day to make it happen? Answer: CAMBA’s Annual Park Day for youngsters enrolled in our elementary and middle school after-school programs. On June 5, close to 1000 young people participated in CAMBA’s 9th Annual Park Day. As in years past, this year’s event was held at Randall’s Island.

CAMBA’S NEW LITERACY PROGRAM TARGETS DISCONNECTED YOUTH

CAMBA’s new Literacy Services for Disconnected Youth Program, which began this spring, targets young adults aged 16 to 24 who are out of school, unemployed and reading at a fourth- or fifth-grade level. Many participants are parents juggling childcare and other family issues, while others may need help with income support or housing.

Program staff assesses each participant’s strengths and helps them develop inventories of talents and skills. Farah Joseph, who is enrolled in the program, explains, “This program helps me do many good things, such as get ready to take the GED exam.” Program participant Latoya Merolus, notes, “Since I started this program I have more self-confidence.”

The case manager helps each young adult create a personalized service plan and then helps them achieve the tasks and goals set. Staff engages program participants by using meaningful real life contexts and situations. Activities are student-centered, and lessons address issues such as employment, health and parenting.

To learn more about the Literacy Services for Disconnected Youth Program, call 718.940.3453 and speak with Jude Pierre at ext. 424 or Valerie Bazelais at ext. 433.

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From the Executive Director

Joanne M. Oplustil

Summer time is in full swing and CAMBA is abloom with new programs, new supporters, new opportunities for our clients—and new gardens.

We have expanded our literacy programs to include disconnected youth.

We dedicated the Anna Gonzalez Apartments, enabling us to offer new supportive housing to formerly homeless individuals.

We’re opening new paths of opportunity for expectant immigrant women, as well as refugees and asylees.

Our Shona sculpture benefit sale in June and our upcoming gala Celebration for New York Kids in November provide funds for programs offering even more opportunities for our clients.

Finally, CAMBA is literally planting new gardens for our clients and communities.

It’s gratifying to provide tools to help CAMBA clients become self-sufficient.
CAMBA DEDICATES ANNA GONZALEZ APARTMENTS

CAMBA dedicated its Anna Gonzalez Apartments at 880 Willoughby Street in Bushwick on June 12. The 100-unit building provides permanent, affordable housing for formerly homeless special needs and low-income individuals, who also receive on-site supportive services.

Anna Gonzalez, chair of Community Board 4 received a plaque at the dedication ceremony. A staunch supporter of the housing project’s development, Ms. Gonzalez helped provide seed money and space. CAMBA and Central Brooklyn Community Services partnered to complete the building’s development and leasing.

Guest speakers included Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz; District 34 Councilmember Diana Reyna; Abby Jo Sigal, Vice President and New York Director of Enterprise Community Partners, and Tim O’Hanlon, Assistant Vice President of New York City’s Housing and Preservation Department. Tenant Ramon Velasquez moved the crowd of nearly 100 people attending the event with his words of appreciation.

SHONA ROCKED!

More than 100 people helped kick off our Annual Benefit Sale of Stone Sculptures from Zimbabwe by attending the June 19 opening reception honoring Tim O’Hanlon, New York City’s Assistant Commissioner of Housing, Preservation & Development, Special Needs Division; architects Cindy Harden and Jan Van Arnam, and Diane Louard-Michel, Director of Corporation for Supportive Housing/New York. The three-day sale that followed the reception was well attended by art enthusiasts from the tri-state area. Sales netted additional funding for CAMBA programs.

CAMBA OFFERS S.P.I.C.E. TO IMMIGRANT WOMEN

We’re spicing things up for immigrant women with the S.P.I.C.E. program (Supportive Pre-conceptional Individuals through Cultural Cooking and Coping Essentials). S.P.I.C.E. provides nutrition counseling, aerobics and relaxation techniques for 50 women of childbearing age living in Central Brooklyn. The goal is to reduce birth disparities for women of color who fail to obtain timely prenatal care, resulting in high-risk, pre-term deliveries of low-birth babies. A five-week course, S.P.I.C.E is targeted to cultural/language needs and consists of instruction, mutual support and hands-on activities in three areas: nutrition, fitness and planning. Participants learn to make healthy, price-wise food choices by learning to read supermarket labels, prepare healthy versions of traditional meals, and practice simple, basic exercises before and during pregnancy. The S.P.I.C.E. program is sponsored by The March of Dimes.

CAMBA IS WORKING WITH RUGGED CROSS HOUSING

CAMBA is providing 27 studio apartments, on-site case management and 24/7 security for single residents at the Rugged Cross Apartments, a supportive and affordable housing facility in the Bedford Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn. The 27 residents that CAMBA services are mentally ill, homeless adults who are exiting the shelter system. A joint venture between Brooklyn-based Dunn Development Corp. and Rugged Cross Baptist Church, the Rugged Cross Apartments offer an affordable mix of studio and two- and three-bedroom apartments.
CAMBA HOSTS CHESS MATES

In June 7 at Beacon P.S. 269 for CAMBA’s Annual Chess Tournament for young people ages 8 to 18. Congratulations to these top players: Advanced—Kevin Marseille, 1st place; Chris Rene, 2nd place; Intermediate—David Faloye, 1st place; Shaun Knights, 2nd place; Beginner: Sean Harris, 1st place; Justin Guillaume, 2nd place. First- and second-place winners in advance, intermediate and beginner categories received trophies and plaques. All participants received a ribbon of recognition.

A NEW GARDEN GROWS IN PARK SLOPE

Thanks to volunteers from CAMBA’s Park Slope Women’s Shelter, the Park Slope Presbyterian Church and the local community, the shelter now has a tranquil, flower-filled garden. The $3,000 project was funded by CAMBA, Park Slope Presbyterian Church, Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, State Assemblyman James F. Brennan and a donation from State Senator Eric Adams. Kudos to Judy Hilkey and Christy Hayner, church members who served as project leaders. Thanks to Pastor Matt Brown, florist David Shannon and Bilen Berhanu of Green Thumb/City of New York Parks & Recreation. We especially thank the shelter residents and CAMBA staffers Kwame Rennie, Candace Bowen, Jeff Caltabiano, Pier Imbriano, Gail Wheatle, Tressie Meredith, Beekram Ramlakhan and Shawn Young for their hard work. Finally, special thanks to Park Slope resident, community board advisory member and longtime shelter contributor Roger Meltzer, who inspired this garden project.

CAMBA HONORS NEW REFUGEES, ASYLEES AND SUPPORTERS

On June 10, CAMBA hosted a dinner to salute 200 recently arrived refugees and political asylees who gained economic self-sufficiency within four months of their arrival in the U.S. All of those honored are successfully employed and supporting themselves and their families without public assistance.

Held at the Prospect Park Picnic House, the event also acknowledged 40 community members of CAMBA’s Matching Grant Program, whose contributions have been critical to refugee and asylee success.

Notable invitees to the festive event included Congresswoman Yvette Clark, CAMBA board members, attorneys from several law firms who have provided pro bono legal work for asylees, members of fellow non-profit organizations dedicated to resettling Iraqis endangered by their U.S. affiliation and other service providers.

CAMBA’s Matching Grant Program began in 1999 and currently serves 300 individuals from over 50 countries. These highly motivated participants receive intensive case management, job preparation and placement, and English language training, along with benefits advocacy, document advocacy and childcare solutions.

The dinner allowed supporters of CAMBA’s Matching Grant Program to witness and celebrate their clients’ success. The event’s underlying goal is to expand the program’s available openings to 400.

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CAMBA is a non-profit agency that provides services which connect people with opportunities to enhance their quality of life.
YOU CAN HELP CAMBA MAKE AN IMPACT.
Please consider making a tax deductible contribution of:

- $50
- $100
- $250
- $500
- Other: $_______

Enclosed please find my check

Please charge my credit card:
- ☐ Mastercard
- ☐ Visa
- ☐ Amex

Name

Company Name (if applicable)

Address

City/State/Zip

Email

Phone

Please mail this completed form and your contribution to:
CAMBA
Attention: Director of Development
1720 Church Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11226

THANK YOU!
We salute the following for their generous support during the spring quarter.

- Buchbinder Tunick & Company LLP
- Carnegie Corporation of New York
- The Clark Foundation
- Assemblywoman Rhoda Jacobs for the Client Choice Food Pantry
- Jimco Associates, Inc.
- Sam Rittenberg
- United Way of New York City
- Washington Mutual Bank
- WellPoint Foundation, Inc.

YOU’RE INVITED TO “A CELEBRATION TO BENEFIT NEW YORK KIDS”

CAMBA is collaborating—for the fourth straight year—with Youth, I.N.C. (Improving Nonprofits for Children) and 20 youth-serving organizations for A Celebration to Benefit New York Kids. The event on November 20, 6 p.m., at the Sheraton New York will include a cocktail reception for CAMBA’s donors, board members and staff, followed by a private performance of The Best of Broadway, opening with the hit band from “Movin’ Out.”

Youth, I.N.C. underwrites most of the event’s costs, with nearly 100% of donations going directly to support CAMBA’s programs. This year’s goal is $150,000—the largest so far. If CAMBA reaches its goal, Youth I.N.C. will match 15% of the total amount raised.

CAMBA is asking all of our friends to contribute whatever they can to this year’s Celebration to Benefit New York Kids. Please visit www.camba.org for information on purchasing tickets or call Bonnie Osinski, CAMBA’s Director of Development, at 718.287.2600 ext. 265.

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