

## Yoga instructor wins over hearts of TLC youngsters



It may seem like a game to preschoolers at the YCS Therapeutic Learning Center, but unbeknownst to them they are actually learning the ancient meditative art of Yoga thanks to volunteer, Julia Ruth. Ruth was first introduced to the TLC, when she volunteered to paint a mural in the hallway (see below). She later offered to introduce them to Yoga. Now each week when Ruth visits a classroom the children automatically get into a yoga position, according to Dina Midiri, TLC director.

As part of each session the children share their feelings as they sit in a Peace Circle. "It means so much to me to see the smiles on their faces, to hear them open up and talk about the things and people they love," says Ruth. Ruth's enthusiasm to support the TLC has been infectious. With the help of her friends she has been able to supply each child with a yoga mat, art smock, water color set and other art supplies.



*How can we thank you enough for all your caring, ingenuity and generosity as a YCS volunteer. You have brightened the lives of our children over and over again with your commitment.*

*Thank you!*

Here is just a sampling of the numerous acts of kindness of our many volunteers.

*Of*

## May Events

**"Komedy for Kids" Benefit  
Buffet, drinks and laughter  
Friday, May 1, 2009  
Ridgewood**

**YCS Blossoms Art Exhibit  
Opening & Awards Presentation  
Saturday, May 2nd  
bergenPAC**

## Children pluck at the strings of music teachers hearts

When five children at the Holley Center expressed an interest in learning guitar, YCS supporters, Guy Prandstatter and Glenn Weber, volunteered to give the children lessons.



Over the past two months the children have made subtle, steady progress as they get used to the feel of the guitar. "It is electrifying to see the kids light up when they strike a chord that allows them to express themselves musically," says Prandstatter. Prandstatter is currently working on developing voice lessons for other children who would like to learn how to sing.

## Therapy Dogs bring laughter to YCS residence

Three children sitting on the ground in the Holley Center courtyard giggle with joy as a frisky little poodle jumps over their out-stretched legs.



The poodle is one of three canines from Therapy Dogs of Tenafly that visit the Center with their owners. "We have only been visiting Holley for several weeks, but the word has already gotten out about how rewarding it is to work with the children and now all my volunteers are anxious to get involved," said Diane Tulp, founder of the non-profit, volunteer program. According to Tulp, the beauty of the program is that the children get to play with the dogs and enjoy their unconditional affection.

## Anything's possible with The Animation Project



One Thursday afternoon, 14 year-old Ishmael had a private session with animator Tim Fielder. Fielder guided Ishmael as he created his fantasy bedroom. "I waited 7 weeks to do this," said the boy. Ishmael is one of a small group of boys from the YCS Kilbarchan (KB) residence selected to be part of The Animation Project (TAP). TAP is a non profit organization that conducts animation therapy workshops that "propels adolescent development in emotional, social and cognitive areas."

Fielder along with art therapist Jim Andralis and Brian Austin have been working with the boys on creating a 3D computer animation since January. Each week, while one teen works on creating their virtual bedroom, the group collectively works on redesigning the entire facility. "We are designing a basketball court on the roof of KB with a slide that goes down into a [outdoor] swimming pool," said Ishmael. Funding for the year-long project is provided by the ESA Foundation.



### A Champ in the ring and out

Gerry Cooney's glory days as a Golden Glove champion may be long gone, but in the eyes of the boys at Kilbarchan (KB), he towers as a father figure, friend and hero.

Cooney is always finding new ways to encourage the youth. Using his celebrity power, he has gotten tickets for the boys to attend the semi-final round of the Golden Gloves in Red Bank; arranged for a 90 minute golf lesson with golf pro Don Holland at the beautiful High Hills course in Clark; and a visit to Giant Stadium to participate in a football clinic with the 2007 NFL champs. To show him how much they care, KB surprised Cooney with a party in his honor and a poster collage of photos of Cooney with the teens.

### MWC presents check to Sawtelle at its 94th Birthday celebration

For the past two years, the Montclair Women's Club has made Autism one of their primary causes. It was fitting for the club to present a generous donation to the YCS Sawtelle Center on April 3rd in commemoration of Autism Awareness month and the celebration of the club's 94th anniversary.



### Pajama Drive keeps kids warm and comfy at bed time

Bed time is especially difficult for children who have experienced trauma or are separated from loved ones. Having new pajamas may seem like a small thing, but for the children in our residences it makes bed time a little easier. Thanks to the employees of sanofi-aventis who donated more than 250 pairs of pajamas for children in our southern region homes, all the children received new pajamas and programs have extra pairs in case of emergencies.

In the northern region, volunteer, Andrea Samuels, put out a call to all her friends and received bags filled with new nightwear. All the clothing was laid out at the Foundation and Andrea and her daughter Katie helped some of the children pick out their own pajamas.





### YCS shows its appreciation to NCJW

Members of the NCJW Bergen Section got a tour of the YCS Kilbarchan residence and heard from 14 year-old Issie about how the program has helped him. The volunteers also saw a sample of the baseball shirts that the site was able to buy for the boys softball team with the Council's donation. Later, Barbara Bishop-Wells presented the Council members with a plaque of appreciation for all their support.

In a thank you letter Carol Benson said, "The plaque you gave us will be treasured, and we thank you for the recognition you have afforded us."



### HAPI springs into action and the children had a blast

Hoop-A- Paluza, Inc. has raised important funds for renovations of play areas at our residences and elementary school in Hackensack. But what makes these volunteers so special is their commitment to visit our sites and get to know the children.

As a spring project, approximately 20 volunteers brought lunch and a lot of energy to play with the children in the renovated outdoor play area at Holley. At the end of the afternoon, the kids and volunteers were pretty worn out, but very happy.



### Volunteers celebrate the start of spring with the children

A dozen employees from Cole Schotz law firm in Hackensack decorated pin wheels and pencil critters with children at a YCS residence. Each year the firm plans three fun events in the spring, summer and autumn. "It's become a company tradition, and it's a lot of fun," said Toya Randolph, one of the event organizers.

### Kids have a "devil" of a time

Thanks to the New Jersey Devils organization nearly 100 children in YCS therapeutic residences in Hackensack, Paterson and Newark were able to attend at least one of three events at the Prudential Center. The younger children were awed by the Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus and the older youth attended the first and second rounds of the NHL playoffs. When we told the kids they were going to a professional hockey game, their reaction was "Huh?" Most knew very little about the sport, but they quickly got caught up in the excitement at The Rock as the Devils battled in both matches. New fans were definitely born.



### Lessons in acts of kindness and generosity

Despite the current climate of economic uncertainty, many parents are making sacrifices to teach their children the importance of remembering others. Sharma Preeti commemorated her daughter Sharma Asmita's fourth birthday by taking her shopping for art supplies which they then donated to the YCS Foundation. "I want to teach her that sharing is good," said Preeti, who has pledged to continue to donate supplies with her daughter on a regular basis.

At Clara E. Coleman School in Glen Rock, second graders conducted a toy drive. With the help of their parents, they collected cartons of new toys, games and sporting equipment. Several of the children and mothers visited the Foundation to drop off the items.



Twelve year-old Courtney Cooperman has already made her mark as a philanthropist. About two years ago she formed the Peace Friendship Club. The children at YCS have been the recipient of their caring. Most recently, a group of children from the club visited our preschoolers. They donated six tricycles to the TLC and read books to the children