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October 2012 NEWSLETTER

You know that good feeling you get when you help make things better?

It happens every day at The Trust. This newsletter looks at the results of grants that were made possible by generous New Yorkers who wanted to make a difference—and set up endowed funds with us. To find out how you can leave your own legacy, contact our general counsel, Jane Wilton at (212) 686-2563 or janewilton@nyct-cfi.org.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2 Homecoming: Juvenile Justice Reform Comes to New York
- 4 Support for Precious Lives: A Suicide Prevention Program
- 5 Staten Island Gets Reproductive Health Clinic
- 8 Results from our Long Island Division
- 10 Results from our Westchester Division

30% of the workforce

Help for Freelancers

Freelancers are you know a least a handful of them. They tote laptops, look for the perfect coffee shop ambiance, and find space for a “home office”—even in New York! They troll job postings and have their fingers in a lot of pots. When asked what kind of work they do, they reply, “this and that.” The government calls them “contingent workers.” You know them as “freelancers.” They are part-timers, independent contractors, temps, and consultants, and they make up almost a third of the American workforce.

This isn't the workforce as we used to know it, the kind in which people built a lifelong career at one company, earned steady promotions, and eventually retired with a pension and insurance. Now, an estimated 42 million workers are freelancers who work on a project basis for various clients, measuring out their employment in “gigs.” With more and more people becoming independent workers, more and more people have no voice and no benefits.

The Freelancers Insurance Company (FIC) [...] today covers more than 23,000 New Yorkers at rates up to 40 percent less than other insurers.

Sara Horowitz foresaw this growing trend back in the nineties. Horowitz, the daughter of a labor lawyer, the granddaughter of the vice president of the Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, and herself a labor lawyer and union organizer, saw power in numbers. She envisioned a new kind of workforce advocate, one that would unite independent workers to help them exercise influence in politics and the marketplace. In 1995 Horowitz founded Working Today—now called **The Freelancers Union**—a national nonprofit membership organization to create a portable health insurance product for New York City's growing number of independent workers.

In the late nineties, the Freelancers Union was in research and discovery mode. It examined the legal, structural, and regulatory barriers independent workers face in getting affordable health care and looked for a practical solution. The New York Community Trust was one of the organization's early supporters, recognizing the plight of uninsured freelancers as a significant, growing need. In 1999 and 2001, The Trust provided the group with two grants totaling **\$90,000**, first to study the feasibility of creating an affordable health insurance option for freelancers in New York's media and technology industries, and then to promote the plan. Studies show that even in 2000, independent health insurance plans had premiums that ran as high as \$10,000 a year and that only 5 percent of freelance workers could afford them. Working with consultants and researchers who had expertise in employee benefits and health insurance, the Freelancers Union started to figure out how to help.

And help they did, founding the Freelancers Insurance Company (FIC), which today covers more than 23,000 New Yorkers at rates up to 40 percent less than other insurers. The Freelancers Union has grown, too, with more than 165,000 members in all 50 states. It has become a trusted authority on protecting this increasingly important demographic. The challenges the organization foresaw and sought to remedy are gradually gaining more attention. This past March, the Affordable Care Act was passed and made way for private insurance options that would offer affordable health care options for American workers. It's no surprise that government chose to award the Freelancers Union with \$340 million in federal loans to help create these so-called "CO-OPs" (consumer

operated and oriented plans) in New York, New Jersey, and Oregon. This is just the kind of gig they're made for.

Homecoming: Juvenile Justice Reform Comes to New York

Rarely is an economic downturn something to be thankful for, but when it comes to juvenile justice reform in New York State, the rotten economy probably deserves some credit. Reform has come at last with Close to Home, legislation that will allow juvenile delinquents to serve sentences in their own communities rather than in upstate facilities. Signed in March by Governor Cuomo, Close to Home builds on years of advocacy by countless lobbyists, community members, and youth service organizations. But what really pushed Albany to reform the dysfunctional juvenile justice system was its price tag. The existing system was dysfunctional, but it was also expensive. Albany realized that reform could mean valuable savings.

In the past, family court judges sentenced juvenile delinquents to terms at upstate residential facilities operated by the State's Office of Children and Family Services. These juvenile programs cost an estimated \$250,000+ per child annually. Despite their staggering price tag, they did little to help young people who had committed crimes: 66 percent were rearrested within two years, and 82 percent of the boys were arrested on felony charges by age 28. Conditions at the facilities were bad, kids were subjected to corporal punishment, and those who needed mental health care were neglected. And it was difficult for families to make the trip upstate to visit.

Over the last five years, The Trust had provided a total of \$475,000 to organizations fighting for juvenile justice reform. We funded the **Correctional Association of New York** and **Fight Crime New York's** efforts in 2007 to build legislative support for Re-Direct New York, an earlier attempt to redirect funds from youth incarceration to alternative programs. Years of lobbying had gotten the issue attention in Albany, but new legislation was slow to emerge. **Public**



Youth Leaders at the Safe Passages Program of the Correctional Association. Photo courtesy of Juvenile Justice Project, The Correctional Association of New York

Interest Projects was managing similar efforts across the country for the MacArthur Foundation, and with our grant hired M+R Strategic Services to push the campaign in New York. M+R assembled a team of experts who worked with another grantee, the **Juvenile Justice Advocacy and Action Project**, the only organized coalition in New York advocating for reform of the State's juvenile justice system.

Roderick Jenkins, Trust program officer, says that the coalition's strategic campaign was essential to passing Close to Home legislation. He says that campaign has taught him that "you have to hammer away at reform and have more than just the usual suspects at the table. You have to have logic, data, and statistics behind you."

The sad fact about juvenile delinquency is that it follows a person into adult life; just a few misdemeanors or a single felony can preclude access to federal loans for college or housing. Employers are usually jumpy about hiring someone with a criminal record, even one with a minor crime. And if that's not enough to dissuade them, a former delinquent's lack of a high school diploma surely will. Detention interrupts young people's progress so gravely that they often give up on earning a high school diploma, a basic requirement for most jobs.

Close to Home has garnered widespread praise from advocates

and providers, but it's only the first major step towards addressing these lasting consequences. As Fateerah, an 18-year-old youth leader in the Safe Passages Program of the Juvenile Justice Project at the Correctional Association points out, "Youth in detention are most often youth of color. There is already a stereotype that they don't finish high school. Youth in facilities who are not able to get their diplomas are only increasing that stereotype. Close to Home must make sure that youth are able to work toward their diplomas. And they must provide sufficient support in that process."

Peter, another youth leader at Safe Passages, believes that Close to Home will be "a first step toward a positive outcome" for youth in placement and help them "stay more a part of their communities." "Youth must be able to maintain relationships with family," Peter says. "This will ensure less emotional damage to children."

The last pieces of the legislation needed will get non-violent 16- and 17-year-olds offenders treated as juveniles and protect current levels of public funding for alternative programs. Private support is needed to ensure that court-involved New York City kids mandated to alternative programs thrive. If justice programs can ensure academic success and emotional well-being for young people who've gotten into trouble with the law, they stand a much better chance of putting the mistakes of their youth behind them.

Support for Precious Lives:

A Suicide Prevention Program Helps Troubled Latina Teens

At the age of seven, Diana Martinez moved with her mother from Mexico to the Bronx. Diana tried to fit in, struggling to learn a new language and the traditions and culture of the City, but it was hard. Kids at school teased her and called her a “Mexican immigrant” years after she had moved to New York. At the age of 12, Diana fell in with a gang and for the first time felt as if she was part of something. But she could feel her attitude changing: she skipped classes and she started fighting with her mother all the time.

Diana began hurting herself. “I started cutting my wrists as a way of dealing with my problems and emotions,” she writes years later. “I felt like nothing was important to me, not even my life. I use to think about killing myself at times.” Her mother sent her to the hospital, where she was referred to a suicide prevention program for Latina girls. It was this program, aptly named Life is Precious, that helped turn everything around.

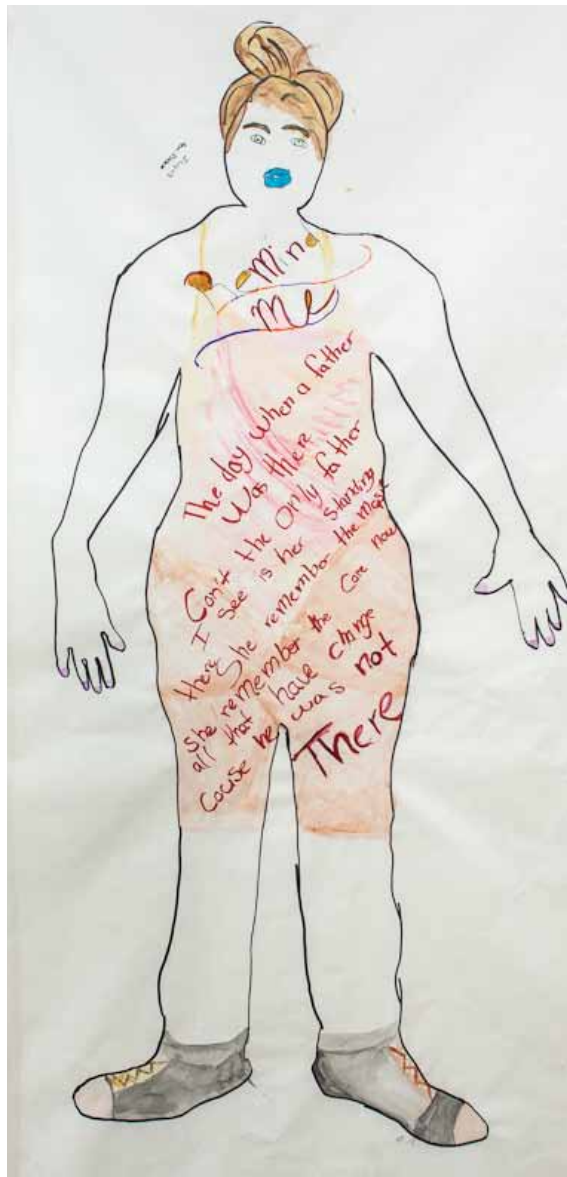
Some might assume Diana’s case is an outlier, but the shocking reality is that suicidal thoughts and actions like Diana’s are all too common among Latina teens. In 2006, the Centers for Disease Control reported that 30 percent of Latinas in New York City between the ages of 13 and 19 have given serious thought to suicide. Nationally, 15 percent of Latinas made suicide attempts, compared to 9 percent of their white or African-American

peers. New York City has the highest rate of suicide attempts among Latina youth—10 percent greater than the national average. Most Latinas who attempt suicide are like Diana, from low-income immigrant families. Unlike Diana, many don’t display signs of their distress before taking action to end their lives. And although more Hispanic girls are hospitalized for depression than girls of other ethnicities, for many, mental health care isn’t enough; 60 percent of Latinas who have received mental health care attempt suicide again.

So why are young Latinas particularly susceptible to these desperate feelings? Dr. Rosa Gil, president and CEO of **Comunilife**, the organization that runs Life is Precious, explains that Latina adolescents experience an inordinate amount of emotional stress due to conflicts with their mothers. Schools often undermine a mother’s authority by having her misbehaving daughter serve as the translator in disciplinary meetings. As a result, Dr. Gil says, Latina girls lack the guidance they need and feel very isolated because

of a constant feeling of uncertainty over their ethnic and racial identity. Suicide feels like the only way out of this oppressive sadness.

Comunilife is a nonprofit health and human services agency that provides services to individuals living with mental illness, addictive disorders, and HIV/AIDS. With grants in 2007 and again in 2009, the Trust provided a total of **\$225,000** to Comunilife and its original collaborator, the **Puerto Rican Family Institute**, to begin a suicide-prevention program in the Bronx. The program, originally called *Mi Casa Es Su Casa* (my home is your home) and later renamed *Life is Precious* to reflect the high value of life in Latin culture, helps troubled Latina teens build self-confidence, reduce social isolation, and overcome differences with their families.



Girls in the Life is Precious Program created drawings of themselves and the feelings they attach to their bodies. Nine of these artworks were exhibited at El Museo del Barrio. Photo courtesy of Comunilife

Life is Precious takes an informal and responsive approach with teens and their families, combining traditional mental health interventions with academic support and cultural, social, and family activities. In addition to receiving psychotherapy, girls get tutoring and homework help and take part in creative arts therapy, using photography, visual arts, and dance and movement. Another key facet of the program is its non-stigmatizing approach to engaging Hispanic families in their daughters' mental health. Every Saturday, parents get involved through *Tertulia*, casual social gatherings where mothers can chat over coffee and fathers can play dominoes.

Growing and Getting Results

Life is Precious has been a great success in only its first few years. Since 2008, the program has helped more than 150 girls, many of whom stay involved with the program through peer-mentoring for current participants. None of the girls who have been through the program have committed suicide and many have gone on to college. Comunilife has raised awareness of Latina suicide and now legislators are taking note; with additional State and City funding the organization has been able to expand its impact. U.S. Congresswoman Nydia Velasquez allotted \$167,000 in discretionary funding to help Life is Precious establish a presence in Bushwick and Williamsburg, Brooklyn, two neighborhoods in her district where suicide attempts by Latina teens are also rampant. In the past two years, the City Council has given nearly \$200,000 in support of Life is Precious. The NYS Office of Mental Health made a three-year grant of \$300,000 to turn Comunilife's Bronx center into one of five youth suicide prevention centers across the State. The newly dubbed Latino Youth Prevention Center will now have the resources to help boys and mount a public awareness campaign beyond the Bronx, teaching parents, schools, and churches the signs of potential suicide.

And Diana? Thanks to Life is Precious, she doesn't cut herself anymore and thoughts of suicide have lifted. She's stopped hanging out with gang members. Her grades have improved and so has her relationship with her mom. "Now I realized that life is a beautiful thing," says Diana. "You could be so happy with many things. *La vida es preciosa.*"

Staten Island Gets Reproductive Health:

The Long Process of Establishing a Health Center

The 60,000 girls and young women who live on Staten Island are breathing a little easier about getting safe, affordable, and confidential reproductive health care. Until last October, none of the City's major reproductive health providers offered services on the Island. Young women who needed contraception, sex education, and screening and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases, but didn't want to go to their families' doctors, had very limited options.

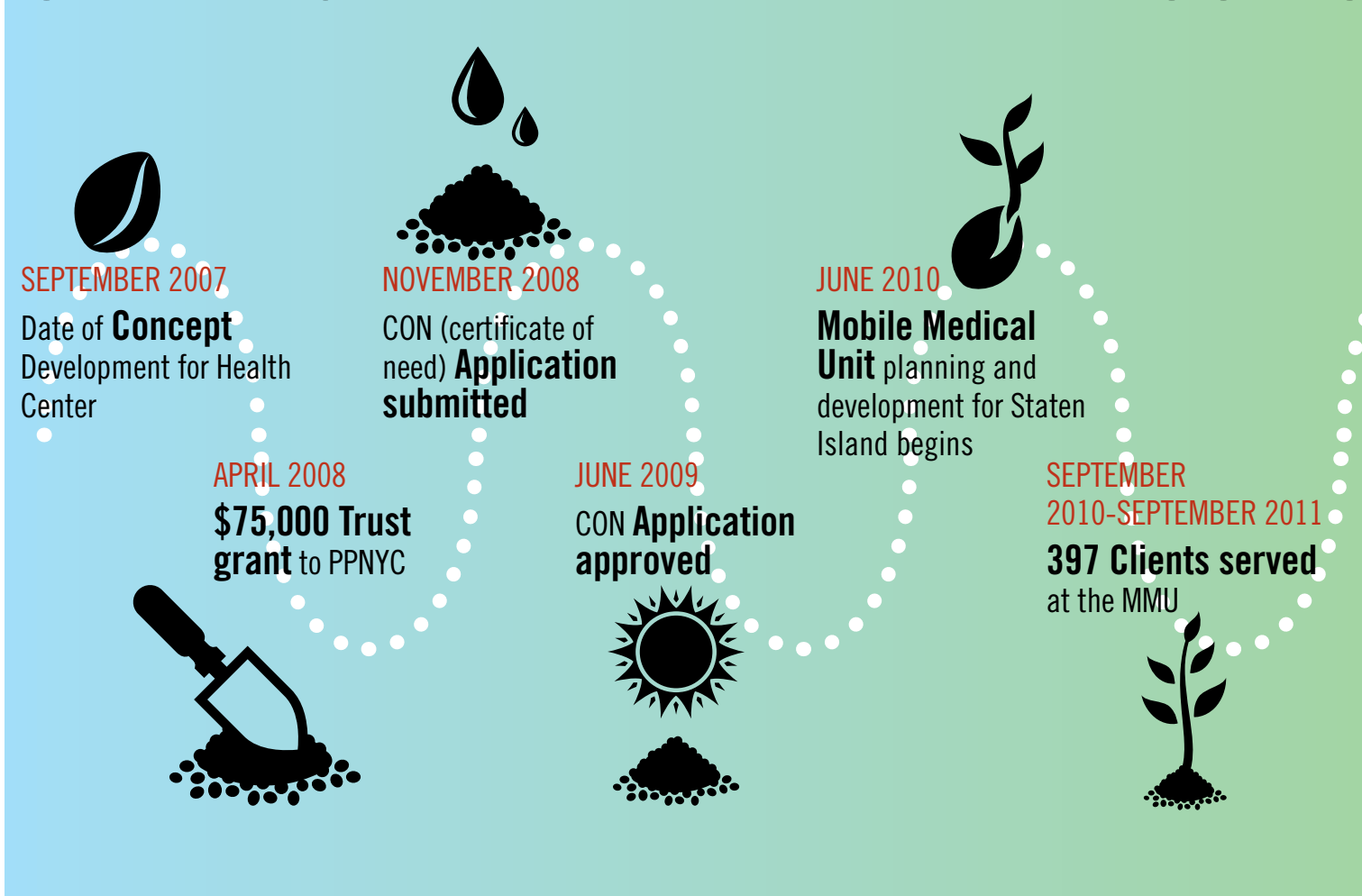
All of that changed when **Community Health Action of Staten Island (CHASI)** and **Planned Parenthood of New York City (PPNYC)** joined forces to open the Staten Island Health Center. CHASI is a multi-service health and social service agency, and PPNYC established the nation's first reproductive health clinic in New York City back in 1916. The advent of the Staten Island clinic expands Planned Parenthood's presence in the boroughs: the organization now serves more than 49,000 people a year through full-service reproductive health clinics in Manhattan, the Bronx, and Brooklyn, and a mobile medical van.

Plans for bringing a reproductive health clinic to Staten Island began gaining momentum back in 2008 when The Trust made a \$75,000 grant to establish a center, but actually getting things up and running was many more years in the making. "Just because you want to deliver a service doesn't mean you can set up shop and jump in right away," says program officer Irfan Hasan. "Even a good idea has to go through a long process to have staying power." For PPNYC and CHASI this meant navigating the complex process of applying for a license, and obtaining funding, facilities, and patients. The task required a great deal of patience and persistence, not the least because Staten Island is home to some of the most vocal and active opponents of reproductive choice and young people's rights to reproductive health services.

Nonetheless, the partnership was up to the challenge, combining the technical expertise and trusted reputation of Planned Parenthood with the community expertise and sensitivity of CHASI. The two groups decided to locate in Community Health Action's store-front office, which serves Stapleton, St. George, and Port Richmond, neighborhoods with the borough's highest rates of sexually transmitted diseases. While Planned Parenthood took the lead in applying for a Certificate of Need (CON), the license to operate in New York State, and tackled setting up Medicaid and other billing systems, CHASI used its local reputation to publicize the clinic's client-friendly focus on girls and young women. CHASI and PPNYC both made presentations at local youth agencies; placed posters on bus kiosks, trains, and in the ferry terminal; and distributed catchy brochures and wallet cards.

Setting up any kind of clinic is challenging, but setting up a reproductive health clinic is even more complex, since it adds concerns about confidentiality to the mix. Questions race through patients' heads when they consider visiting a reproductive health clinic: "What if this shows up on my insurance? Will it be scary? Will it be safe?" Planned Parenthood and CHASI calmed these concerns by educating the community about their expertise and their deep care and concern for patients' safety and confidentiality. Though interest in the center was growing, logistics and legalities were complex. As is often the case with licenses, the CON took some time to get approved, requiring resubmissions regarding construction code compliance. In the meantime, however, there were young women eager to get services, so while planning was underway between September

OPENING A PLANNED PARENTHOOD C

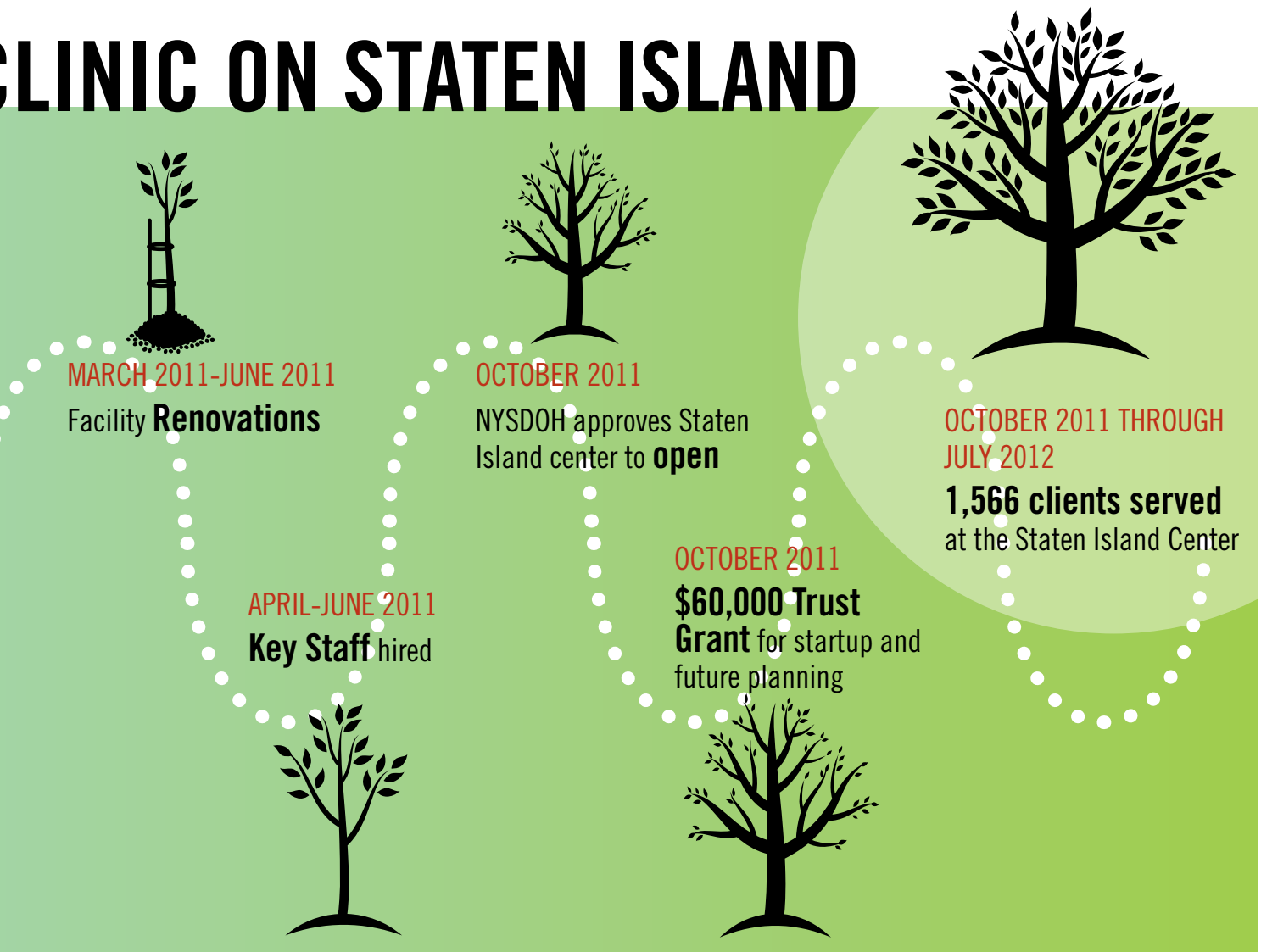


2010 and 2011, Planned Parenthood stationed its mobile medical unit van in front of the storefront one day a week. The 397 clients served by the van foreshadowed the enthusiastic patient response to newly available services on the Island. Establishing a reproductive healthcare facility on Staten Island was a marathon, but as with the story of the tortoise and the hare, slow and steady progress eventually paid off; the Staten Island clinic opened its doors in October 2011. Already, the center has served 1,600 patients. PPNYC’s Vice President of Clinical Services, Anne Robinson, refers to the collaboration with the Community Health Action of Staten Island (CHASI) as “instrumental in helping us to connect with community partners.” Robinson says the most gratifying aspect of the long process has been the response from the people on Staten Island for whom the

center has quickly become a go-to resource: “It’s been particularly wonderful to see that 24 percent of all clients we are seeing are teens.”

With the opening of the center, The Trust granted another \$60,000 to CHASI to develop a plan for sustaining the center. There are still administrative kinks to work out—for example, figuring out how to enroll the large volume of walk-in patients in public insurance when many don’t come to the clinic with sufficient documentation. It will take some time for the clinic to sort out these growing pains, but from a dearth of options only a few years ago to a medical van parked out front to a freshly-renovated clinic awaiting patients with open arms, reproductive healthcare on Staten Island has already come a long way.

CLINIC ON STATEN ISLAND



Creating Positive School Climate Change through Empowered Students

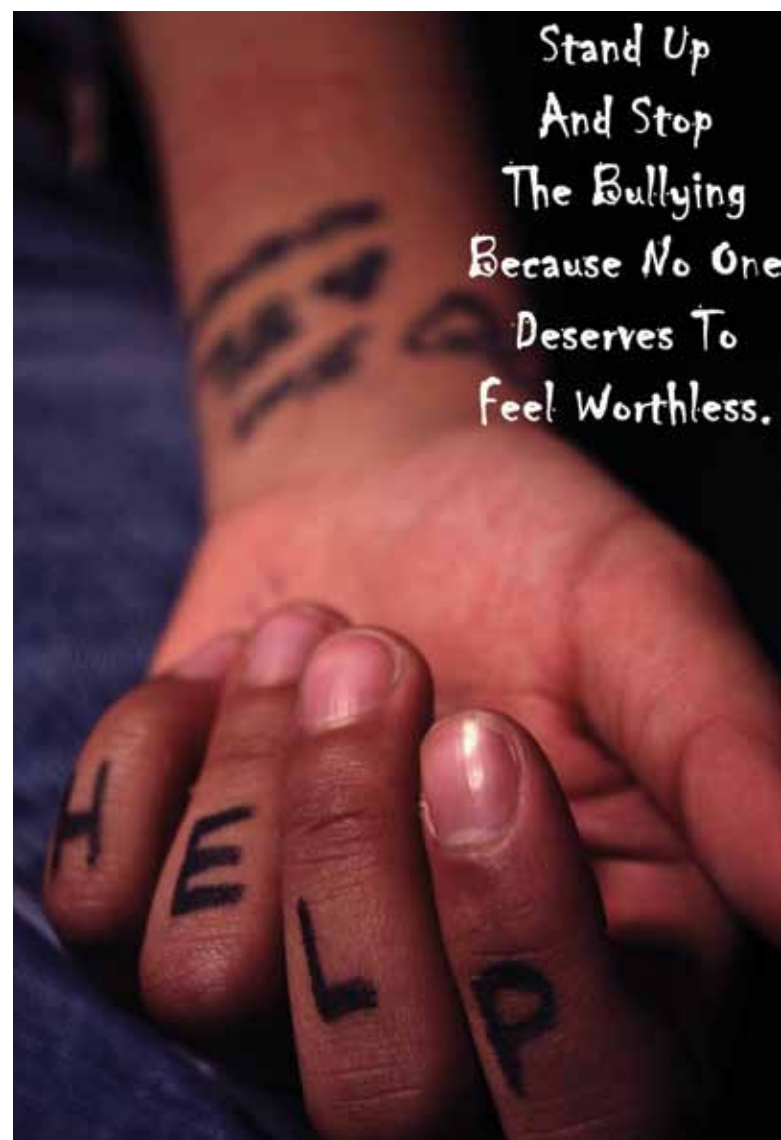
Although they may not always admit it, most kids look forward to the start of school. But for some, returning to the classroom can be terrifying.

New legislation may help ease their fears. The Dignity for All Students Act (DASA), which went into effect on July 1, requires public schools to make sure that no student suffers discrimination, harassment, or bullying. Cash-strapped school districts are turning to nonprofits to help them set policies, procedures, and guidelines to carry out the new law.

Child Abuse Prevention Services (CAPS) is one of Long Island's leading organizations focused on bullying prevention. With a **\$25,000** grant from the Long Island Community Foundation in 2011, CAPS started a student-led campaign to promote tolerance, end bullying, and change culture.

“School culture is the key factor that determines whether young people will be bullied or not,” said Alane Fagin, executive director of CAPS. “If culture changes, everything changes.” Sol Marie Alfonso Jones, LICF's program director, believes that student leaders also contribute to school culture: “So much emphasis is placed on adults—teachers, parents, administrators—but it's the students who are affected the most, so it only makes sense that they are actively involved in the solution.”

CAPS tested its program at Clarke High School (East Meadow), Comsewogue High School (Port Jefferson), Central Islip High School, and Seaford High School, where it helped the schools create student leadership



teams. Students United for Safe Schools (SUSS) developed activities, messages, and communication tools to tackle bullying and cyber bullying. SUSS students

NOW AND THEN,
I GET INSECURE
FROM ALL THE PAIN,
I'M SO ASHAMED

I AM BEAUTIFUL
NO MATTER WHAT
THEY SAY
WORDS CAN'T

BRING
ME
DOWN

Anti-bullying messages from the Students United for Safe Schools (SUSS) team. Photo courtesy of Comsewogue High School

“So much emphasis is placed on adults—teachers, parents, administrators—but it’s the students who are affected the most, so it only makes sense that they are actively involved in the solution.”

— Sol Marie Alfonso Jones, program director at LICF

classes in each grade were surveyed, providing a random sample. CAPS repeated the survey at the end of the school year to assess the efficacy of the program.

“As we all know, change doesn’t occur overnight, but we were pleased to see certain changes that had occurred in a short period of time,” explained CAPS director Fagin. “For example, in one school, the survey indicated that there was almost an 8 percent increase in the response to ‘students standing up for one another when they see a peer being mistreated either in school or online.’ For us, this was particularly significant because one of our objectives was to mobilize youth from bystander to ‘upstander.’” In that same school, Fagin reports they saw a 4 percent decrease in the incidence of sexting by the end of the school year.

Fagin adds: “The Long Island Community Foundation has given CAPS a unique opportunity to systemically facilitate shaping positive school culture and changing peer norms using a whole school approach.”

“This project really unites the students, teachers, and administrators and has already had a substantial impact of naturally changing school culture to where all students feel a sense of respect, safety, and belonging,” affirmed David Okorn, executive director of LICF. “It certainly shows promise as a model for culture change in schools across New York State.”

acted out ‘real-life’ skits during lunch periods to start kids talking; worked with art and photography students to create visually powerful messages; and taught younger students how to stop future incidents of bullying, reaching more than 9,000 peers. As one SUSS student commented: “We have to bring this into the classrooms, into the cafeteria, online, we have to make it so no one can say they didn’t know it was happening.

Joseph Coniglione, principal at Comsewogue High, was proud to report that its student team will be going to Washington in November to receive the Promising Practice Award. It recognizes schools, school clusters, or districts that demonstrate an outstanding character education program that produces positive results in student behavior, school climate, and academic performance.

At the program’s outset, each participating school surveyed its students to assess their attitudes and behavior, as well as the overall climate of the school. Two

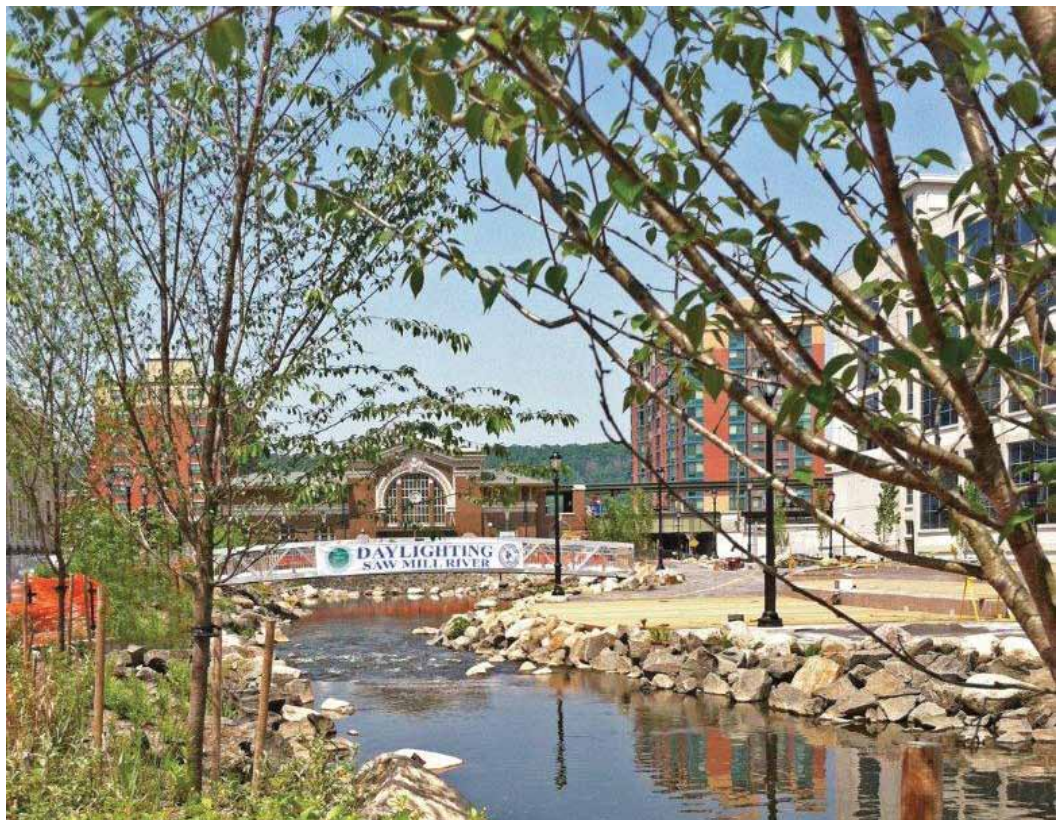
Restoring Urban Rivers, Revitalizing Older Cities

If you've ever spent time along the Hudson River waterfront, you know it's a special place. The river is a vital part of Westchester County's heritage, providing opportunities for economic development, inspiration, and recreation. It's also an important natural resource for scores of species, including bald eagles and eels. But the Hudson is more than its stunning waterfront. It relies on tributaries that flow through the region into the river. In Westchester, these small rivers and brooks have long borne the brunt of 200 years of commercial activity, population growth, and development.

Over the past ten years, the Westchester Community Foundation has supported a number of nonprofit organizations in efforts to restore long-neglected tributaries. Our sustained support is now bearing fruit – small rivers and brooks are once again public assets, and old cities that have suffered the degrading effects of industrialization and pollution are prospering.

The Saw Mill River

Most motorists along the Saw Mill River Parkway have never seen the river that bears its name. The Saw Mill, which flows from Chappaqua to Yonkers, has been choked with invasive vines, weeds, industrial debris, and



garbage. Residential and commercial activity along its shoreline led to pesticide, fertilizer, and sediment run-off that dirtied the small river's waters. In Yonkers, where the Saw Mill meets the Hudson, the river was buried under a parking lot for nearly a century.

It's safe to say that the Saw Mill River had become an afterthought until 2001 when **Groundwork Hudson Valley** formed the **Saw Mill River Coalition**. The coalition began as a group of dedicated volunteers who rolled up their sleeves, pulled vines and weeds, and



collected tons of debris. The Coalition now includes nonprofits, government agencies, municipalities, businesses, and dedicated volunteers committed to keeping the river clean and healthy. It has been recognized by the Environmental Protection Agency as a model stewardship program for urban rivers.

Even as the Saw Mill became cleaner, it remained buried under concrete in Yonkers. Groundwork Hudson Valley needed to make the case that the river is also a natural habitat in need of protection. Its survey of fish and other aquatic life in the Saw Mill led to a watershed plan that recommended uncovering — “daylighting” — the river in Yonkers. Groundwork joined forces with **Scenic Hudson**, which has championed the restoration of the Hudson’s riverfront as a catalyst for economic growth and community revitalization. Scenic Hudson conducted a feasibility study that demonstrated how daylighting the Saw Mill River could be the crown in the jewel of a renewed downtown Yonkers.

Working with grassroots groups, Groundwork and Scenic Hudson pushed for funding to uncover the Saw Mill and make downtown Yonkers a place for public enjoyment. Today, the Saw Mill sparkles in a brand new riverfront park at Larking Plaza, planted with native shrubs and flowers for the enjoyment of all.

MacGregory Brook

In Peekskill, a new group of volunteers has also donned gloves and dug in to clean a degraded stream that flows into the Hudson. The Peekskill Conservation Advisory

Council has restored MacGregory Brook, which starts in Cortlandt and runs mostly underground through Peekskill. As with the Saw Mill, the brook had been neglected — overgrown with vines and weeds and clogged with dead trees and years of accumulated debris. Our support helped **Teatown Lake Reservation’s Environmental Leaders Learning Alliance** launch a stream conservation and restoration training program for local conservation groups. Teatown helped the Peekskill group identify an accessible portion of the river and developed plans to clean and restore MacGregory Brook. They rallied community members across the city to restore the riverbank and plant hundreds of native trees and shrubs where the brook meets the Hudson River, flowing between Riverfront Green and Peekskill Landing.

A cleaner MacGregory Brook will complement the newly restored Peekskill Landing, a 4-acre park on the shores of the Hudson. Since 1998, Scenic Hudson has worked with the City of Peekskill to purchase and restore the property, which hosted industrial and commercial operations for over 150 years and was contaminated with gasoline, oil, and heavy metals. Today, Peekskill Landing is being transformed from an eyesore into a magnificent new park featuring an array of public amenities, including a kayak launch, amphitheater, sculpture garden, picnic pavilion, boardwalk, and pathways lined with native plants and interpretative signs.

Healthy rivers and streams make for a stronger natural habitat and a better quality of life. Thanks to years of joint efforts, the cities of Yonkers and Peekskill are revitalizing their future by restoring their past.

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INSIDE:

Juvenile Justice
Reform, Suicide
Prevention Program,
Reproductive
Health, Positive
School Climate
Change, Restoring
Urban Rivers,
Revitalizing Older
Cities and more ...



Staff at the reception desk of the new reproductive health clinic on Staten Island.

The October issue of our newsletter reports on the results of past grants. Most of them were made possible by individuals who set up charitable funds with us during their lifetimes or through their wills. If you would like to learn more about how to do this, please contact our general counsel, Jane Wilton, at 212.686.2563. We've also included reports on grants made by our divisions on Long Island and in Westchester.

This issue and past newsletters can be found at www.nycommunitytrust.org.

If you'd prefer to receive our newsletter by email, write to newsletter@nyct-cfi.org.