



Exchange

NEW YORK CENTER for INTERPERSONAL DEVELOPMENT • Volume 2, Number 2 • Fall 2003

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Training

The Training Institute of the New York
Center for Interpersonal Development

Announcing a New Opportunity to Nurture Respect and Understanding

Are you a racist? If you're on the New York Center for Interpersonal Development mailing list, the odds are against it. However, you may be uncomfortable around people whose background is unfamiliar. You may feel awkward asking questions about another's traditions. Most of us do. And, you may have inadvertently offended someone from another culture. We all have at one time or another.

Research shows that two things facilitate building respect among people of different backgrounds. For people to develop tolerance we need opportunities to learn about and reflect on our differences. And, we need opportunities to work, play and learn together. The NY Center endeavors to provide those opportunities through the **Mosaic Project: Community Forums for Cultural Awareness.**

Here's an opportunity to learn as you play

On Sunday afternoon, November 2nd, from noon to 5 p.m., you and your family can explore the culture and traditions of our neighbors with roots in Egypt, Pakistan, Liberia, Italy, and

Mexico. NY Center and Wagner College invite you to **Celebrate Diversity! A Step Toward Peace at Home, in our Community, and in our Ever-changing World.**

Celebrate Diversity! fulfills the need identified by participants in last winter's Mosaic Project study circles to offer Staten Islanders a large-scale, informal, fun event where people can learn more about their neighbors.

Each year at **Celebrate Diversity!** we'll highlight several ethnic or cultural traditions from the rich mosaic that makes up our Staten

Island community. Families can learn about their neighbors through workshops and panel discussions, browse through the marketplace, play the games and sports of the highlighted countries, and feast on ethnic treats.

Honor their leadership

In addition, we'll honor the leaders who work to foster cross-cultural understanding and support their community's integration into the fabric of the Island. This year's honorees: RUFUS ARKOI, Roza Productions; JOSEPH BOTROS, Egyptian

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New York Center for Interpersonal Development

Leaders in training and services for conflict management, youth and community development, effective communication, and intercultural awareness

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Dawn Rannie, C.S.W.
New Beginnings Site Supervisor

A copy of our latest annual report can be obtained from the New York Center for Interpersonal Development or from the Department of Law by writing to the Charities Bureau, The Capitol, Albany, NY 12224.

Join us at

Celebrate Diversity!

Sponsored by the New York Center for Interpersonal Development and Wagner College
November 2, 2003, Noon – 5:00 p.m.
at Wagner College

Music, marketplace, workshops, panel discussions, games. See the full program at www.nycid.org on the Celebrate Diversity! page.

HONOREES:

Rufus Arkoï Ramon Carreon
Joseph Botros Dr. Richard Guarasci
Sr. Kathleen Byrnes Dr. Mohammed Khalid

Celebrating the culture and traditions of Egypt, Pakistan, Liberia, Italy and Mexico



Dominick J. Brancato

Letter From the Executive Director

How to Build the Community We Want...

This fall Staten Island exploded into the news with a series of bias incidents. In response, there have been press conferences and speeches and marches. But when the publicity fades, the issues remain.

Few of us have been victims of hate crimes. But many of us have suffered from slurs, insults, or lost opportunities for work. Or, perhaps you've been left out of social events or walked into a room and felt uncomfortable because you were 'different.'

That difference might stem from ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual preference, race or culture. Too often, instead of stimulating curiosity, that difference inspires fear, embarrassment or loathing. Instead of celebrating the richness and creativity that could come from our differences, we read about hate crimes.

If we want to live in communities that are respectful and appreciate diversity, we must commit ourselves to building those communities ourselves. Changing attitudes is a complex business. Changing behavior takes serious work. There's no quick fix.

The New York Center for Interpersonal Development has made that commitment — it's part of our mission.

If you belong to an organization that shares our commitment to building respect and understanding, we invite you to join the Mosaic Coalition. Or join us as a concerned individual.

The Mosaic Project: *Community Forums for Cultural Awareness*, initiated in the fall of 2002, now functions as a loose coalition of organizations and individuals. The time has come to formalize this **Mosaic Coalition** and to commit to the hard work of changing attitudes and behavior.

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. – LaoTse

We've taken the first step. Now, together, we'll take the second, third and fourth.

Some of the short-term work is bureaucratic ... by-laws, committees, grant applications. However, much of it is creative: study circles, special events, and lecture series; music festivals, Sacred book discussions, organizing and publicizing opportunities for us to share the richness of our traditions and beliefs — facilitating the process of getting to know each other better.

Let's get started.

- Bring your family and neighbors to *Celebrate Diversity!* on November 2, 2003

- Join the **Mosaic Coalition** by returning the membership form on page 3

Thank you for your ongoing support of the New York Center for Interpersonal Development. Whether you're a Mosaic Coalition member already or you intend to join, I thank you.

Dominick J. Brancato

Three High-Tech Ways to Stay Up-To-Date on New York Center News

Put www.nycid.org on your favorites list. Subscribe to our new e-newsletter, **Exchange On-Line**. Join the Mosaic Project discussion group. We're moving into the world of high tech. Well, maybe medium tech!

ONE: visit our Web site regularly. We've made some changes. You can now check out the latest NY Center news, read recent articles, make a donation, and see a detailed calendar of events.



TWO: read our e-newsletter. To stay abreast of the issues we're all concerned about while reducing our mailing costs, you can subscribe to Exchange On-line, our e-newsletter. We now publish once a month. If something time-sensitive happens, we'll send you a special edition. You can subscribe on our Web site (and choose text or HTML) or send us your e-mail address.

If we already have your e-mail address, you will receive Exchange On-Line. (Please make sure email from nycid.org will make it through your spam filter.) If you choose to cancel, just click unsubscribe at the bottom of the issue.

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Exchange

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The Training Institute

Youth & Community Development

The Meaning of Shalom

New Beginnings Center Offers Hope



By ADAM J. BERNER, J.D., M.A. Director, The Training Institute

Some time ago the board and staff of the New York Center for Interpersonal Development attempted to find the right word or phrase to describe the work we do. We were considering what to call ourselves. We needed a new name. The phrase 'peaceful community' emerged. It described both the intended result of our work and our commitment.

Every language has a word for peace, and every culture, in its own unique way, certainly holds this concept in the highest regard. It means something important to everyone, especially during times like these when we can't take peace for granted.

The biblical word for

peace has a meaning particularly relevant for the work we do at the New York Center. In the Bible's original language, Hebrew, peace is 'shalom.' Shalom doesn't mean merely the cessation of war and hostility. It has an affirmative meaning. Its root word is shleimut — or wholeness.

Shalom is the process and the result in which differences are integrated into a whole greater than the sum of its parts.

Let me demonstrate the concept of shalom with some parallel examples from our own experience. First, let's look at music. Different musical instruments create sounds very different from one another. However, if these different instruments are played together with an integrated plan we hear beautiful music. The different sounds from different instruments playing different parts can create a magnificent symphony.

As another example, let's look at a puzzle. A puzzle is

continued on page 6

By DAWN RANNIE, C.S.W. New Beginnings Site Supervisor

Whenever a person struggles with problems, especially interpersonal problems, one hopes for the opportunity for a new beginning. And that's just what this new school is offering 60 high school students.

For these students a new beginning means an opportunity to get their disruptive behavior under control and to acquire the personal, social, and academic skills they need to graduate from high school. Their behavior has prevented them and their classmates from learning effectively in the traditional school environment.

This fall the New York Center for Interpersonal Development partnered with the Department of Education and The After-School Corporation (TASC) to open Staten Island's New Beginnings Center. This center, one of 17 opened around the city, offers students a



Dawn Rannie, the New Beginnings Site Supervisor

chance to earn credit toward a high school diploma while participating in an intensive guidance program. In addition to their academics, the students will gain study skills, decision-making, and conflict resolution tools. They'll also participate in credit-bearing, service-learning activities, and benefit from small group advisory sessions, individual counseling, and parent/caregiver meetings.

Dawn Rannie, the New Beginnings Center's site director, exclaimed, "We're pleased and excited to have the

opportunity to make a difference in the lives of these challenging students."

The model marries the educational expertise of the Department of Education with the successful youth development strategies practiced by the New York Center in Peace Power, peer mediation, and other programs. And the staff to student ratio is 1:10. That provides each student with the support of two teachers and a counselor.

The young people referred to the New Beginnings Center will participate for at least one semester. At the end of that semester, each student working with his or her team and parents, will weigh his/her realistic options — returning to high school, enrolling in another school, GED classes or vocational studies, or finding a job — to make an informed decision.

YES, I SUPPORT THE MOSAIC PROJECT!

Please enroll me as an individual member of the Mosaic Coalition. Name and mailing address (if different from mailing label):

Email address is: _____

Please enroll my church, civic group, or organization as a member of the Mosaic Coalition.

Organization name: _____

Contact name and mailing address (if different from mailing label):

Email address is: _____

- I've also enclosed a donation to get the Mosaic Coalition off to a good start. \$10 \$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 Other

MAIL TO: NEW YORK CENTER FOR INTERPERSONAL DEVELOPMENT • 130 STUYVESANT PLACE, 5TH FLOOR • STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK 10301

Community Builders of the Year Recognized and Appreciated



Ellis Brown Community Builders of the Year honorees Kathleen Feola (left) and Luis Pavia.

Everyone should be a community builder but few people rise to the challenge as do these honorees. Luis Pavia and Kathleen Feola exemplify all that we value in interpersonal development. The New York Center celebrates their contributions by naming them ELLIS BROWN COMMUNITY BUILDERS OF THE YEAR.

Luis Pavia may be only a junior in high school but he's already proven himself as a community builder par excellence. In the past year he's given more than 100 hours of community service on a variety of projects, recruited new members to the Unity Council and served as its secretary, and improved his grades.

Luis attends Curtis High School and is interested in pursuing a career in medicine.

Luis learned a lot about himself, his community, and his peers when he volunteered to work with the New York Center and the Partnership for After-school

Education (PASE) on *YouthConnect!*, a project to survey and interview young people in New York City about their feelings and needs post-9/11. Luis continues to volunteer in Phase II of this project.

Kathleen Feola began volunteering at the New York Center in 1997. Her professor in graduate school introduced her to us saying we needed each other. Kathleen volunteered immediately. The Board recruited her as a board member in 1999 after seeing the talent and energy she brought to the Gala Committee. She's played a leadership role in the Center's financial development and we are very grateful.

Kathleen has her own Wall Street company, Credit Consultants, where she advises small- and mid-sized broker-dealers on credit risk management. She's spent more than 33 years on Wall Street, 15 of them with Solomon Brothers as Vice President in the Global Credit Review Department.

Throughout her career, Kathleen has always devoted

a portion of her time to community organizations whose missions she shares. She loves fundraising to support those organizations and brings enthusiasm and fun to the job. She was named a 'Heroine in the Community' by Assemblyman Robert Stranieri in 2000. From her daughter's school to the S.I. AIDS Task Force and the New York Center, we are all fortunate to have her as a Community Builder. ☺

Ellis Brown, in whose memory this award is given, spent his life as a community builder. He worked as an educator, administrator, and principal in the Bronx. He participated in the New York Center's first mediation class in 1982 and continued as an active mediator for many years. As a board member he was instrumental in shaping the New York Center's community development activities in the Stapleton and Clifton neighborhoods. The Center has bestowed the Community Builder of the Year Award in his honor since 1999.

MILESTONES

BEST WISHES: **Alberto Charles** has moved on after 14 years at the NY Center. Thanks, Alberto, for all your contributions to building alternative dispute resolution (ADR) services on Staten Island. **Carolyn Starkey** left NYCID to be the parent coordinator at McKee High School for the Department of Education. They recognized her talent while she supervised the Unity After-School Program there.

CONGRATULATIONS: **Mike Bayer** was promoted from administrative assistant to New Beginnings program associate. **Todd Sasaki** takes on the challenges of site supervisor for the Unity After-School Program. **Dawn Rannie** moves to the position of site supervisor for New Beginnings. **Dominick Brancato** serving as President-Elect of the Association of Conflict Resolution.

THANK YOU TO OUR RECENT DONORS: **Stephen Bayer, Desiree Black, Dominick J. Brancato, Pamela J. Carlton, Linda DeClara, Kenneth Dieppa, Anne Marie Dimalanta, Margaret Eck, Kathleen M. Feola, Anthony I. Giacobbe, Jr., Elaine Gregorio, Christopher Gregorio, Denise P. Gregorio, Leslie S. Gumbs, Tara Jamison, Margaret D. Kelly, Carolyn Lawler, Alfred F. Mahoney, Marlene Malanga, Ruth Mingoia, Veronica Mormando, Joseph Ambrosiole, Joan O'Kray, Russell D. Olsen, Joan B. Rannie, Kristin Severino, Darrell Starkey, Kathleen Vaughan, John Velez, and Mary Jo Vercillo.**

High Tech *continued from page 2*

THREE: join the Mosaic Project discussion group.

This discussion group (listserv) is a high-tech way for those of us supporting the Mosaic Coalition to share information, events, opinions, and strategies about our goal of making our community one that counts diversity as an asset rather than a liability. Unlike the one-way communication of a newsletter, anyone can contribute to the discussion group.

To join send an email to mosaicproject-subscribe@topica.com. You'll receive all of the instructions you need to participate.

For the record, here's our privacy policy: we won't share your information with anyone for any reason.

Mediation Settlement Day

Please join NY Center staff and New York City citizens when we travel to Manhattan to observe The Honorable Janet Reno delivering a key note address, "The Promise of Mediation." She's the honorary chairperson of Mediation Settlement Day and her speech on Tuesday, October 21, 2003, kicks off a series of events commemorating Mediation Settlement Day throughout the state. Mediation Settlement Day is to get parties involved in court cases to settle their disputes through mediation programs in Civil, Small Claims, and Family Court.

Later in October the NY Center brings the third annual Mediation Settlement Day to Staten Island. We'll have mediators available for small claims and civil matters in Civil Court on October 28, 2003, and for custody and visitation cases in Family Court on October 30, 2003. In addition, NY Center staff will make a presentation about the benefits of mediation to the court.

NY Center staff from our school-based Peer Mediation Programs will be promoting mediation as a conflict resolution tool in Port Richmond, Curtis, and McKee High Schools on October 29, 2003.

Want to observe Janet Reno? Join us at the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, 42 W. 44th Street (between 5th and 6th Aves.) at 7:00 p.m. Or come at 5:30 p.m. for the open house when the NY Center and other mediation centers will showcase their services.

Fall 2003 and Winter 2004 Events

Mark Your Calendar!

October 28 (Tue.)

MEDIATION SETTLEMENT DAY
1 p.m. – 2 p.m.
Richmond County Civil Court

October 29 (Wed.)

MEDIATION SETTLEMENT DAY
8 a.m. – Noon
Curtis, McKee, and Port Richmond High Schools

October 30 (Thu.)

MEDIATION SETTLEMENT DAY
8 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
Richmond County Family Court's program will be held at New York Center offices

November 2 (Sun.)

CELEBRATE DIVERSITY!
Noon – 5 p.m.
Wagner College
CELEBRATE DIVERSITY! Building an Appreciation of Diversity: A Step Toward Peace at Home, in Our Community and in Our Ever-Changing World. This Sunday afternoon gathering will offer families a variety of interesting and fun opportunities to lean about our neighbors. Registration begins at 11:30 a.m. For details see our Web site: www.nycid.org

December 4

NYCID HOLIDAY PARTY
5 p.m. – 8 p.m.
Join us at our annual holiday celebration when we thank our many volunteers and supporters, announce the 2003 Mediators of the Year (peer and adult) and the 2004 Community Builders, and kick off the holiday season. For information contact Liz Bonici, ebonici@nycid.org or (718) 815-4557, ext. 30.

January 14 – 16 (Wed. – Fri.)

January 19 (Mon.)
BASIC MEDIATION TRAINING
NY Center for Interpersonal Development
For details contact Candace Gonzalez at cgonzalez@nycid.org or (718) 815-4557, ext. 10.

February – dates to be announced
PARENT/TEEN MEDIATION TRAINING
NY Center for Interpersonal Development
For details contact Candace Gonzalez at cgonzalez@nycid.org or (718) 815-4557, ext. 10.

For up-to-date information about events sponsored by the NY Center, or of interest to our community of friends, visit our Web site www.nycid.org.

Have an event you'd like included in Exchange Online and on our Web site? Send the information to editor@nycid.org.

Interested in offering training in-house?

All of the training opportunities referenced in this issue of Exchange can be adapted to meet your organization's training needs. For a free consultation, contact Candace Gonzalez at (718) 815-4557 X10.

SIDE TRACKS ...

New York Center's **Young Adult Borough Center** at Staten Island Technical High School graduated 50 young people this year – double the number that graduated in 2002. The Department of Education is very impressed with the success of the NY Center's program and views it as a model for other young adult borough centers.

★★★★★★★★

In August, 16 people completed **basic mediation training** through the Training Institute. **Adam Berner, Candace Gonzalez, and Kathy Vaughan** taught the course. The four participating attorneys will receive CLE credit. Eight of the participants were Center staff. Every Center staff member completes mediation training without regard to their job responsibilities. Mediation training provides a values-base for all of the

Center's work, and the communication skills learned in the course are invaluable.

★★★★★★★★

The District Attorney's Office, in conjunction with the US Department of Justice and the Center for Court Innovation, has initiated planning for an innovative Staten Island **Community Court**. A Community Court fosters cooperation among the different branches of the justice system and the community, seeking to ensure public safety and improve quality of life. Assistant D.A. **Karen Schoenberg** is coordinating the effort. The District Attorney has invited NY Center Executive Director **Dominick Brancato** to serve on the Community Court's advisory board.

★★★★★★★★

Thirty teachers from **PS 273** in East New York, Brooklyn, partici-

pated in a recent workshop facilitated by **Dawn Rannie** and NY Center board member, **Diane DiResta**. During the workshop, teachers focused on mastering conflict resolution skills and communication styles that strengthen their work with disruptive children.

★★★★★★★★

New York Center's **individual giving initiative** is slowly growing. One hundred percent of the staff participated in the in-house effort this summer. Now we are looking to our community of volunteers, friends, and supporters. We greatly appreciate your moral support; now we need your financial support. Have you given yet?

★★★★★★★★

Citibankers' Community Fund has awarded \$10,000 to the NY Center to plan, implement, and evaluate four youth study circles

as part of the Mosaic Project. A study circle will bring together 12-15 high school students of diverse backgrounds. After a kick-off event this winter, the study circles will meet four times to explore their differences and the impact of those differences on their lives. Each study circle will have both a youth and adult facilitator to guide the discussion. All four of the study circles will then report on their experience at a closing public forum. They'll also share any recommendations they have that can enhance understanding and respect among young people. Planning will begin this fall. Any high school students interested in serving on the planning committee or as facilitators can contact Liz Bonici at (718) 815-4557, ext. 10.



Announcing a New Opportunity

continued from page 1

Arts & Cultural Foundation; SR. KATHLEEN BYRNES, Saint Vincent's Catholic Medical Centers, SI; RAMON CARREON, El Centro de Hospitalidad; DR. RICHARD GUARASCI, Wagner College; DR. MOHAMMED KHALID, Pakistani Civic Association.

This fall the publicity surrounding several bias incidents painted Staten Island as, at best, fertile ground for bias crimes and intolerance. But we know that most Staten Islanders care about their neighbors. Join us on

November 2 to get to know each other better. ☺

Our appreciation and thanks to Honorary Co-Chairs Ed Josey, NAACP; Dr. Syng Kwak, Asian American Coalition and the Korean American Association of Staten Island; and Dr. Salman Zafar, American Muslim Alliance and the Pakistani Civic Association of Staten Island. This event is co-chaired by Dr. Lori Weintrob, Wagner College, and Dominick Brancato.

Shalom

continued from page 3

made up of different pieces, each with different colors, shapes and interlinking parts. On their own, each piece is very different from the next and represents no unified picture. When properly assembled, however, a picture emerges. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

One last example: New York's famed autumn arrives as I write. From close up the falling leaves seem like one big mess, a pile someone needs to rake, all shades and shapes — greens, reds, pur-

ples, browns, pinks, rusts, crimsons, and many more. But from a distance, the foliage appears glorious and majestic. The sight leaves us in awe. It's not one color or the other; or even one tree that creates this breathtaking view. It's all the different colors and shapes blending together that make people stop, breathe deeply, and appreciate the simple wonders of the world.

This is how I envision the work we do at the New York Center for Interpersonal Development. Although as we go about our daily work every staff member and volunteer can't always see how the pieces fit together, the larger picture is awesome and breathtaking.

Our mission states, in part, that we 'promote the improvement of human relationships and the strengthening of communities as fundamental to achieving a civil society.'

I feel our goals are loftier, though, than mere 'civility.' Every day the New York Center demonstrates an active commitment to bringing together people with differences. We recognize their

uniqueness and support their individual interests. If we are successful in our mission, each and every person we touch achieves more understanding, makes better informed decisions and experiences greater competence.

All these individuals, on their own, are special, but as they leave enriched by our work, a network of wholeness and harmony is developed that is greater well beyond the sum of its parts. Through our work a peaceful community emerges that has potential far beyond a civil society.

In our world, though, intensely felt conflicts frequently spring from our differences. If we can see these conflicts as opportunity for growth and learning then conflict resolution, peace, or shalom can lead to creative solutions. Conflict can be transformed into growth and a greater awareness and appreciation of the self, the other, our community, and the divine. ☺

Adam Berner has a private mediation practice and directs the Training Institute at the New York Center for Interpersonal Development.

A Holiday Party Invitation for You

Join us on December 4, 2003 at our

Annual Holiday Party

5 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Location to be announced

We want to say thank you to all of you who support the work of the New York Center for Interpersonal Development.

We promise you a festive atmosphere, excellent food, short speeches, plenty of awards (especially Mediators-of-the-Year, both peer and adult, and Community Builders of the Year), and a chance to visit with some of the nicest folks in our region of New York.

RSVP by calling Liz Bonici at (718) 815-4557, ext. 30



New York Center for
Interpersonal Development

130 Stuyvesant Place, 5th Floor
Staten Island, NY 10301

**You Can Help Build
a Community Based
on Respect and
Understanding**

– Details Inside