



# PARTNERSHIP PRESS

A PUBLICATION OF THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY COMMUNITY SCHOOLS PROGRAM

*C.S. 61/I.S. 190:*

## **Two Schools, One Campus, One Mission**

*by Richard Negron*

In 2002, the K-8 Francisco Oller School (C.S. 61) in the Bronx was notified that the school would be divided into two schools: one would include grades K through 5 (C.S.61), while the other would become a middle school, with grades 6 through 8 (I.S.190).

The decision brought considerable anxiety to Oller for several reasons. There was very little space available in the aging building. There was also the need to add two parent associations, two school leadership teams and generally make a transition for staff, children and their families, all of whom were accustomed to one school with one principal. The Children's Aid Society (CAS) had initiated a partnership with the school a year earlier, making C.S.61 its 10th community school; Children's Aid immediately made a commitment to support the transition, inasmuch as the programs and services begun a year earlier had become important elements of the school.

A little more than four years since the reorganization, there is no doubt that it has not been easy. There have been challenges: the issue of space and very limited prospects for expansion, changes at the regional level, competing priorities between the two schools and the tension of maintaining and advancing the mission of the individual schools while also creating

a sense of one campus. For Children's Aid, the pressures included building relationships with two schools and participating in two school leadership teams, two pupil personnel committees and so on. As Patricia A. Quigley, the principal of C.S.61, observed, "there have been bumps along the way but there also has been more cohesiveness." Ample evidence supports this case.

Today, C.S. 61/I.S.190 and CAS are serving more students than ever during the after-school hours, more than 300. Activities range from academic enrichment, tutoring, fashion design and media

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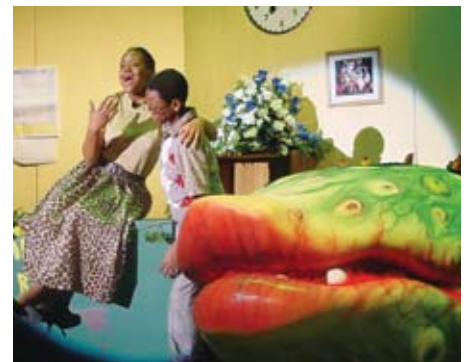


The partners at C.S. 61/I.S. 190: Diana J. Santiago, Principal of I.S. 190, CAS Community School Director Robin Flesham, Patricia A. Quigley, Principal of C.S. 61.

*How Do You Measure  
Success?*

## **I.S. 90 Student Shines Onstage and Off**

*by Ellen Lubell*



Shaniqua Jeffries starred as Audrey in I.S. 90's recent staging of "Little Shop of Horrors."

Shaniqua Jeffries' toothy smile is even wider these days. The 8th grader at I.S. 90 is headed for Professional Performing Arts High School next year, to pursue her dream of becoming a performer, and more. But at I.S. 90, one of the middle schools on the Mirabal Sisters Campus in Washington Heights, she feels like a star now. "Kids from other schools [in the building] come up to me and say 'hi' and I don't even know them!"

Shaniqua is already quite an accomplished performer. She played the lead role of Audrey in I.S. 90's recent staging of "Little Shop of Horrors," the lead role of Martin Luther King in "Road to Freedom," in January, the lead in "The Tempest" last year and many other roles in her three years in the school. "Being in the drama program [in the school] has helped me adapt to any situation: drama, comedy or musical." The Children's Aid Society's involvement in the Mirabal Sisters schools has meant more to her than just a chance

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## Two Schools, One...

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tech to a homework center. These programs are offered to the students from both schools; some programs, such as archery, have been so successful that the schools have contributed their own funding to enhance the program. CAS has stepped forward to help the crowded school, offering mini-clubs during lunch period that include accelerated math and chess clubs, for example. Children's Aid has also helped to organize a number of "campus"-wide activities.

Additionally, CAS has worked closely with both schools to engage parents by offering classes in GED, ESL and computers. This process has been greatly facilitated by CAS' participation as a voting member in the School Leadership Team meetings. Children's Aid is also an active participant in the school's safety and pupil personnel committees. In the case of the latter, Children's Aid's participation led to the development of the Achievement Program, an after-school program for special education students.

The partnership between CAS and C.S. 61 and I.S.190 goes beyond after-school activities, however. The partnership is defined by what is in the best interest of the schools, the students and their families, whether it happens during the school day or after, on Saturdays or during holidays. The most important element is sharing a common vision for the school. "I'm delighted to say that there is a strong commitment from the principals and a great interest in maintaining the partnership," said CAS Community School Director Robin Fleshman.

Despite the pressures and the obstacles of creating a productive and healthy learning environment in a school with two principals, a wide age range of students and too little space, C.S. 61, I.S.190 and Children's Aid have made significant gains; everyone knows that there is still significant work to be done, but the respective principals and community school leadership feel that they are on the right course. As Diana J. Santiago, principal of I.S.190 stated, "this has been the best year yet." ■



## How Do You Measure...

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to shine onstage, however. "When I first got here, I didn't have a doctor. But then I learned that I could have a physical right down the hall!"

From the superb Advantage after-school drama program, led by Rob McIntosh, to medical and mental health services, I.S. 90 is one of Children's Aid's full-service community schools, partnering with the Department of Education to provide full out-of-school time, health and social services at the school. "It's one seamless day, 24/7," declared Sharon Weissbrot, principal of I.S. 90. "Children's Aid is in the building all day long. The social/ academic/emotional needs of the children are all being met. Together, we attend to children's needs and parents' needs," Ms. Weissbrot added.

The principal noted that Shaniqua has blossomed this year, academically and emotionally; when asked if it was a Department of Education Program or Children's Aid that made the difference, Ms. Weissbrot said, "You can't really say...Children's Aid and I.S. 90 are enmeshed." Meanwhile, McIntosh, who is Children's Aid's Director of Theater and Film Programs at Mirabal

Rob McIntosh, CAS Director of Theater and Film Programs, Joanna Velasco, CAS Program Director, Shaniqua Jeffries, Maria Lopez, CAS Community School Director at I.S. 90.

Sisters, has nurtured Shaniqua's talents. He selected "Little Shop" for this year's performance to showcase her marvelous voice, for example. "I am proud and excited that Shaniqua will attend Professional Performing Arts," McIntosh states. "It's been a pleasure to watch her grow."

McIntosh adds that Shaniqua's mother is very supportive. Both parents come to the school for her performances and also accompany the group on its trips to the theater. "They're bursting with pride," he says. According to McIntosh, the Advantage theater program gives students an opportunity to discover a new side of themselves, whether or not they're successful academically; it's another way in which the community schools program emphasizes youth development. It builds them socially and helps strengthen their identities. The performing arts provide a delightful avenue to academic enrichment as well, reinforcing language skills, expression, reasoning, memory: learning in a whole different way. Shaniqua says she will remember all the different instructors she's had in after school. "They bring something that makes it great to be here," she says. "It's like a second home." ■

## Food First:

### **Instilling Healthy Eating Habits at P.S.50**

*by Leslie Dayton*

When Rebekah Marler-Mitchell, principal of P.S. 50, a Children's Aid Society community school in East Harlem, read the New York Times series this January about the disproportionately high rate of diabetes in East Harlem, she knew she had to do something. She was concerned

about the large percentage of obese people in East Harlem and about the number of overweight children in the school.

Ms. Mitchell convened a "Food Partnership" meeting with partners throughout the school: Children's Aid, teachers, Food



Community School Director Jeanette Then serves healthful fruit salad at P.S. 50's Friendship Celebration.

Services, City Year, a UFT representative, parents, and, very importantly, students. Seven students were selected to serve as representatives and as liaisons to Food Services, conveying the likes and dislikes of food served in the cafeteria.

Together, members of the group resolved to tackle the problem from all angles with an initiative called *Food First*. Within weeks, Food Services brought a salad bar into the cafeteria, providing children with a healthy lunch option. Math teachers have their children counting steps, combining calculations with movement. The "Friendship Celebration" organized by Children's Aid on St. Valentine's Day featured vegetable and fruit platters, not cupcakes. And, during winter break, when Children's Aid took the children on trips, Community School Director Jeanette Then incorporated exercise into the day from beginning to end.

Children's Aid began its partnership with P.S. 50 in 1999 with a health focus at the core of the initiative. In addition to running a full school-based health center, CAS has implemented numerous programmatic efforts that fit naturally with Food First. For example, Children's Aid's health educator, Jessica Weinfeld, runs a program for 33 children at the school who have been identified as overweight or obese. She works with these students weekly, both in groups and individually, to talk about smart food choices and monitor their weight. She also speaks with their parents or guardians to discuss the risks associated with obesity and steps they can take to encourage healthy eating. The parents have been grateful for this support. ■

## Parental Involvement at P.S. 8 Sets the Standard

by Hersilia Mendez

# Partnership Puts Priority on Parents

During a visit to P.S.8 in Washington Heights earlier this year, a group from the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) was amazed at the number of parents filling the cafeteria for a Parents Association (PA) morning meeting. They even took pictures and commented that they had never seen a regular PA meeting so packed. This is not at all uncommon at the school, where all parent activities – from Parent-Teacher Conferences to celebrations, to PA meetings or advocacy events – always have high levels of attendance. The secret to this success may lie in the partnership between the Department of Education (DoE) and The Children's Aid Society (CAS), and the partnership's emphasis on parental involvement. There has been a recent change in leadership at the school, and the new principal, AnaRosa Bonifacio, has enthusiastically endorsed efforts to engage parents.

From its start in 1995, the partnership made parent involvement one of its priorities. CAS hired a Parent Coordinator, supervised by experienced social workers, who helped create a truly welcoming atmosphere for parents and helped facilitate their participation in their children's education. Two years ago, when the DoE began to place a Parent Coordinator in every school, the Department asked Children's Aid to be part of a pilot program: DoE would pay for the position and CAS would provide guidance and supervision. The experienced CAS Parent Coordinator, Carmen Natera, was offered the position and the school is now part of this pilot.

According to Ms. Natera and to Martha Rodriguez, the school's PA President, the success of the program is due to the institutional support provided by the partnership and to the close working relationship among the Parent Coordinator, school administration and the PA.

Ms. Natera and the principal develop an annual Parent Compact, which includes all the parent involvement activities. "We like to plan carefully and we document every-



Gladys Gomez, PA Treasurer, Carmen Natera, Parent Coordinator and Martha Rodriguez, PA President, all spur parental involvement at P.S. 8.

thing...but the key here is that the PA, the school administration and CAS work as team," says Ms. Natera. They also agree that having a dedicated Family Resource Room with an open-door policy and a homey atmosphere has been an excellent tool to get parents involved.

Three years ago at P.S. 8, Ms. Natera helped create the After-School Parent Council, which has been very active ever since and has helped further parent participation school-wide. The parents volunteer to create an enriching, educational and fun after school for their children. They say that by participating on the council they are showing their children how much they care and that the children are doing better in school. The parents feel that the communication with the school administration and with CAS is much better than it was before. They are happy to contribute by holding fundraisers and feel very proud that last year council members, under Ms. Natera's leadership, took a busload of parents to Albany to advocate for after-school funding.

"When I attend DoE Parent Coordinators meetings, there is a lot of complaining about a lack of strategies to involve parents. I feel proud that we don't have that problem here!" concludes Ms. Natera. ■

# The Children's Aid Society Community Schools At-A-Glance

The Children's Aid Society partners with the New York City Department of Education in 15 public schools called community schools. These public school partnerships combine the best quality educational practices with a wide range of vital in-house extended day, health and social services to ensure that students are physically, emotionally and socially prepared to learn. The Children's Aid Society also has a large number of important public and private partners to ensure that all children have access to high quality services in these schools. We gratefully acknowledge the support of New York City's Department of Youth and Community Development and its Out-of-School Time Initiative.

## MANHATTAN

### Manhattan Center for Science and Mathematics (Community High School)

280 Pleasant Avenue  
New York, NY 10029  
(212) 423-9630  
Fax (212) 423-1101  
CAS Director: Yalenis Cruz  
Principal: Corrine Vinal

### Mirabal Sisters Campus (Community Middle Schools)

21 Jumel Place at 168th Street  
New York, NY 10032  
(212) 923-1563  
Fax (212) 923-1859  
CAS Director: Maria Lopez  
Principal: Ysidro Abreu (M.S. 319)  
Principal: Janet Heller (M.S. 324)  
Principal: Pamela Russell-Glover  
(M.S. 321)  
Principal: Sharon Weissbrot (I.S. 90)

### P.S. 5 Community School

3703 Tenth Avenue at Dyckman Street  
New York, NY 10034  
(212) 567-5787  
Fax (212) 567-5966  
CAS Director: Carolyn Chin-Bow  
Principal: Wanda Soto

## THE CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY

**PARTNERSHIP  
PRESS**

The Children's Aid Society  
105 East 22nd Street, New York, New York 10010

**C. Warren Moses**, Chief Executive Officer  
**William Weisberg**, Associate Executive Director  
**Jane Quinn**, Assistant Executive Director for  
Community Schools  
**Richard Negron**, Director, Community Schools  
**Maria Acevedo**, Assistant Director,  
Community Schools  
**Alma Whitford**, Assistant Director,  
Community Schools

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### P.S. 8 Community School

465 West 167th Street  
New York, NY 10032  
(212) 740-8655  
Fax (212) 740-7420  
CAS Director: Arnery Reyes  
Principal: AnaRosa Bonifacio

### P.S. 50 Community School

433 East 100th Street  
New York, NY 10029  
Phone (212) 860-0299  
Fax (212) 860-2845  
CAS Director: Jeanette Then  
Principal: Rebekah Marler-Mitchell

### P.S. 152 Community School

93 Nagle Avenue, RM 121  
New York, NY 10040  
(212) 544-0221  
Fax (212) 544-0244  
CAS Director: Claudia Castillo  
Principal: Julia Pietri

### Salome Ureña

#### Middle Academies Campus

4600 Broadway at 196th Street  
New York, NY 10040  
(212) 569-2880  
Fax (212) 304-3427  
CAS Director: Rosa Bautista  
Principal: June Barnett (IS 218)  
Principal: Bernadette Drysdale (IS 293)  
Principal: Erica Zigelman (MS 322)  
**Community Schools National Technical  
Assistance Center**  
(212) 569-2866 Fax (212) 544-7609

## THE BRONX

### Arturo Toscanini Campus (Community Middle Schools)

1000 Teller Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10456  
(718) 293-2728  
Fax (718) 718-293-2797  
CAS Director: Denise Santana Montes  
Principal: Robert Hannibal (J.H.S. 145)  
Principal: Patrick Kelly (M.S. 325)  
Principal: Melody Morgan (M.S. 328)

### C.S 61 Community School

#### I.S. 190 Community School

1550 Crotona Park East  
Bronx, NY 10460  
(718) 991-2719/8023  
Fax (718) 991-7555  
CAS Director: Robin Fleshman  
Principal: Patricia A. Quigley (C.S. 61)  
Principal: Diana J. Santiago (I.S. 190)

### I.S. 98 Community School

1619 Boston Road  
Bronx, NY 10460  
(718) 842-2760  
Fax (718) 842-2793  
CAS Director: Jacquy Joachim  
Principal: Claralee Irobunda

### I.S. 166 Community School

250 East 164th Street  
Bronx, NY 10456  
(718) 293-3144  
Fax (718) 293-2870  
CAS Director: Jessica Rodriguez  
Principal: Lauren Reiss

### Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School

#### Fannie Lou Hamer Middle School

1001 Jennings Street  
Bronx, NY 10460  
(718) 861-0521  
Fax (718) 861-0619  
CAS Director: TBA  
Principal: Nancy Mann (High)  
Principal: Lorraine Chanon (Middle)

## STATEN ISLAND

### Community School I.S. 61

445 Castleton Avenue  
Staten Island, NY 10301  
(718) 727-8481  
Fax (718) 447-2112  
CAS Director: Lester Feuerstein  
Principal: Richard J. Gallo