

SPRING 2000

NEWS

Families Pay High Price Waiting for Child Care Subsidies



Low-income working families in New York City and those making the transition from welfare to work cannot afford good quality child care and are left with untenable and unstable child care options while they wait for subsidies, according to a new report by The Children's Aid Society, *The Human Cost of Waiting for Child Care: A Study*.

At a time of unprecedented prosperity, 40,000 children are on the waiting lists for subsidized child care in New York City, and the number of eligible children could be much higher, because many parents do not know they can get help or do not try because of the long wait, according to the report.

Families, who often wait over a year for the child care subsidies they need, pay a high price — in many ways — for the child care services they use while they wait. The care is most often provided by a friend, neighbor or relative, and often fails to meet the educational and devel-

opmental needs of young children and may endanger their health.

The Children's Aid Society (CAS) found the emotional, financial, and human cost of these situations to be unacceptably high. After interviews with a representative group of 150 parents on child care waiting lists, CAS found that the child care crisis for low-income families is getting worse. CAS was able to document that the lack of good quality child care options is jeopardizing parents' ability to work and buy basic goods and services, as well as their children's welfare.

Families reported stress and marital discord because of the emotional and financial strains they faced due to unstable, poor quality child care arrangements. Seventy-seven percent of parents interviewed by CAS thought their current child care arrangements were negatively impacting their children. The financial stresses felt by these families were

continued on page 2

From the Executive Director...



Enrolling Uninsured Children

Medicaid and now Child Health Plus are federal and state entitlement programs. But, we ask, why are so many millions of children still uncovered by these programs?

In response to this urgent need for coverage for children, The Children's Aid Society created the Health Care Access Program nearly two years ago and it's been a stunning success. Under the capable leadership of Rebecca Lieberman and Kate Lawler, our staff have successfully enrolled 1,320 children and adults in either Medicaid or Child Health Plus, a health insurance program that covers the children of low-income families who don't qualify for Medicaid. And thanks to new grants from the New York State Department of Health and The Starr and Ruane Foundations, the program is now set for major expansion.

The key to the program's success is "Facilitated Enrollment" based in our community schools and centers. Facilitated enrollment, as you can guess by the name, is a much more proactive enrollment method than handing a parent an insurance form. It requires a concerted effort by a team of trained outreach and enrollment workers, whose presence in our schools and centers is permanent and trusted. This trust encourages parents, who may hesitate to enroll their children because of their immigration status, for example, to take the first step. Our staff works with parents through the entire process, helping them over every bureaucratic hurdle, and stays with them even after they get the insurance, to make sure they access health services and stay insured.

In other words we have moved the enrollment process out of slow-mov-

continued on page 8



Child Care Subsidies *continued from page 1*

considerable. Fifty-eight percent of the families interviewed by CAS who reported annual incomes of \$6,000 to \$12,000 spent between 20% and 50% of their incomes on child care. Forty-one percent of the total families interviewed reported having to cut back on other essential expenses, such as food and children's clothing, because of the high cost of care. Faced with care of low quality and unacceptably high prices, 16% of the parents we surveyed went on public assistance to make ends meet and to take care of their children themselves.

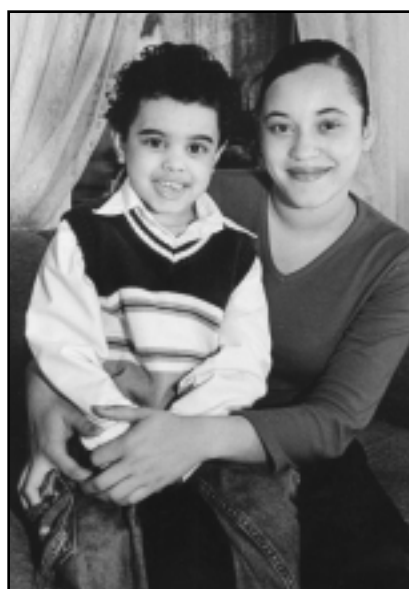
With this research, CAS had wanted to put a human face on subsidized child care statistics, and to paint a more urgent picture of the need to expand the supply of good quality subsidized child care in New York City. However, in the course of their investigation, the CAS researchers unexpectedly discovered important additional information that reveals why so many families in need of child care subsidies in New York City may not be getting them:

- Many low-income working families did not know that they were eligible for a child care subsidy, nor which was the primary city agency responsible for providing child care assistance;
- Parents were also unaware that they could put their child's name on more than one waiting list, and thus unknowingly limited their options;
- Families formerly on welfare and participating in work activities did not know about their rights to a range of subsidized child care options and the

availability of transitional child care benefits once they left welfare for work.

"This report makes clear the need to greatly expand the supply of regulated good quality child care options for families that need subsidies in New York City," states Philip Coltoff, CAS executive director. "The success of the city's welfare reform efforts could hinge on ensuring that all low-income working families can find and pay for good quality child care."

While the CAS study urges New York City to spend additional funds to expand



and improve services, *The Human Cost of Waiting for Child Care* also recommends simplifying the process for obtaining child care and educating parents who may be eligible. In addition, CAS advocates:

- creation of one point of entry for parents;
- one standard of eligibility for subsidized child care that is based on income (rather than distinguishing between working families and those making the transition from welfare to work, as the city now does);
- communicating with parents in one-on-one situations so they have a better understanding of eligibility and options.

"These shouldn't be seen as pie-in-the-sky recommendations," Coltoff states. "Thousands of children are at risk of educational and developmental delays if they remain in care that is of very poor quality. We can no longer afford to jeopardize their future, and those of their parents."

The Human Cost of Waiting for Child Care: A Study was produced with the generous support of the Edna F. Blum Founda-

tion, the Ilma F. Kern Foundation, and the Edward S. Moore Foundation. Copies are available from the Public Relations Department at CAS. Please write or call 212-949-4936.

Child Care

The words of the mothers interviewed by The Children's Aid Society for *The Human Cost of Waiting for Child Care* best express the awful strain that the lack of good quality child care inflicts on parents and children. The interviews confirmed that these parents are terribly aware of the consequences of using poor quality child care.

"I had one provider who left my child alone in her apartment when my daughter was one and a half years old."

"My son's babysitter is his 76-year-old grandmother who cares for his physical needs, but doesn't stimulate him intellectually."

"One evening as I arrived to pick up my daughter from the babysitter's home, her husband hit my daughter."

New Staff Members Join The Children's Aid Society



Jane Quinn

Jane Quinn, a nationally recognized youth development expert, has joined CAS in the new position of Assistant Executive Director for National Community School Partnerships. In this role she oversees the partnerships between public schools and other community resources, using CAS's eight community schools as both a model and a base for national adaptation. Working with the CAS Technical Assistance Center, Quinn speaks extensively to new audiences about the CAS community school model and related educational issues. She is also a critical member of the CAS team that is working with The Advertising Council to create and disseminate public service advertisements designed to broaden awareness of community schools nationally. Quinn comes to CAS from the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, where she served as Program Director from January 1993 to November 1999. The focus of this national foundation is the education and career development of young people, especially those growing up in low-income communities. Prior to her work at DeWitt Wallace, she directed a national study of youth organizations for the Carnegie Corporation of New York that resulted in the publication of *A Matter of Time: Risk and Opportunity in the Nonschool Hours*. Quinn also served as the national director of program services for Girls Clubs of America

from 1981 to 1990. She received a master's degree from the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration and a bachelor's degree in economics from the College of New Rochelle.



Ana B. Soto,
M.D., M.P.H.

Dr. Ana B. Soto, whose career is devoted to improving the health status of poor children with little or no access to health care, has joined The Children's Aid Society as Medical Director. Dr. Soto comes to us from St. Luke's/ Roosevelt Hospital Center, where she was an attending physician in the Pediatric Emergency Department. Prior to that she was an Associate Commissioner with the State of New York Department of Health. Her responsibilities included supervision of health programs administered by the Metropolitan New York Regional Office. She has also served as the Director for Medical Affairs in the Bureau of School Children and Adolescent Health within the New York City Department of Health. Dr. Soto is a graduate of Boston University's School of Medicine, and is a Board-certified pediatrician. Dr. Soto will help The Children's Aid Society to better plan and deliver our own medical services, and work effectively in the changing health service environment in New York City.

Welcome Our New Trustees

During the winter, we welcomed three new Trustees and two Advisory Board members, and we would like to introduce them to you.

Mimi Fischbein was elected to the Board last fall in recognition of her 10 years of service as a member of the Advisory Board of our Rhinelander Children's Center. In addition to her involvement with Children's Aid, she is a Board member of the Inter-School Orchestra in New York City. An urban planning specialist, Mimi has extensive expertise in private and corporate real estate. She and her husband, Richard, live in New York City with their two young daughters.

Ronald J. Kaufmann, our newest Trustee, is the President of P/Kaufmann, a major textile manufacturer, and an officer of The Kaufmann Foundation. Ron and his wife, Susan, have been very generous supporters of CAS over the years, helping fund our Carmel Hill block renewal project in Harlem, our Mobile Medical/Dental Van, our Recycle-a-Bicycle program at I.S. 218 and

other programs. Their other philanthropic interests include The Lighthouse and Theater Works. Ron and Susan live in New York with their two teenage daughters.

Virginia M. Sermier, who has also been an active member of the Rhinelander Advisory Board and served as co-chair of the Center's Gala Benefit for two years, was a member of the Advisory Council for a year before her election as a Trustee in October. Ginna is a Managing Director of Corporate Finance Risk Exposure at Deutsche Bank and has spent 30 years in international finance. She and husband Ed are the parents of two college-age daughters.

New members of the Advisory Council include **Juliann F. Cannilla** and **Spencer Scott Marsh, III**. Juliann F. Cannilla is an active member and past Vice President of the CAS Associates Council. She is an architect by trade. Spencer Scott Marsh, III is a Managing Director of E.M. Warburg, Pincus & Co., LLC, a major money management and venture capital firm.

Attention All Chocolate Lovers!

Children's Aid has affiliated with Dan's Chocolates, a new Web-based company that offers the tastiest, freshest chocolates you'll find. Go to www.dans.com to place your order, and designate CHILDREN'S AID as the charity to receive 5% of the sales price as a donation. Enjoy!

Children's Aid Forum Focuses On "Lost Teens"

With violent tragedies occurring at public schools across the nation with disturbing regularity, increased attention is finally being paid to the emotional health of children. In January, The Children's Aid Society and the Harvard Graduate School of Education joined forces to probe the root causes of youth violence and teen suicide in a Media Forum, "Lost Teens: Sad, Angry & Silent," at The Harvard Club of New York City. Our goal was to offer the media an opportunity to discuss these critical issues and solutions with top experts to better inform the public.

The panelists at this media forum — Linda Freeman, M.D., Director of School Psychiatric Services for CAS; James Garbarino, Ph.D., author of *Lost Boys: Why Our Sons Turn Violent and How We Can Save Them*, Clarice Kestenbaum, M.D., President of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry; and Cynthia Ness, Coordinator of Research, Center on Violence and Human Survival, John Jay College — were joined by Philip Coltoff, Executive Director and CEO of The Children's Aid Society and Jerome T. Murphy, Ed.D., Dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, as well as moderator John Merrow, producer and host of *The Merrow Report*. Their discussion centered on the emotional disorders,



CAS' Linda Freeman, M.D., and James Garbarino, Ph.D., before the panel discussion.

such as clinical depression, anxiety, substance abuse, that put children at risk of suicide, violent acts and learning difficulties.

The discussion was preceded by a viewing of "Strong Minds: Mental health for a new generation," a new video produced by CAS at the request of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. It delves deeply into The Children's Aid Society's school-based mental health services and our Depression Screening and Treatment Project, which was launched at CAS Community School I.S. 218 and is being expanded now to I.S. 90.

The film focuses on a number of students at I.S. 218, who have been helped by our screening and our other school-based mental health services. They speak candidly about their feelings, describing their low self-esteem and other negative emotions, and how they



were able to recover with the help of a caring and professional staff.

Directed by Linda Freeman, M.D., a child psychiatrist, CAS's program at I.S. 218 seeks to screen students for emotional disorders and provides any necessary treatment on-site. Working in partnership with Columbia University's Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, CAS's goal is to screen all of our students in CAS partnership schools over the next five years.

At the forum, John Merrow deftly moderated a discussion among panelists about the possible roots of children's emotional disorders and solutions. The panelists indicated that the incidence of identifiable emotional disorders among the children and adolescents has increased, affecting approximately 17-18 percent, but that only about 20 per-



Above, speakers (l. to r.) James Garbarino, Ph.D., Clarice Kestenbaum, M.D., and Cynthia Ness, Ed.M., share a light moment on the panel. Below, Harvard Dean Jerome T. Murphy, CAS Executive Director Philip Coltoff and moderator John Merrow at the Harvard Club.

cent of those children receive treatment. Drs. Kestenbaum and Garbarino discussed that while other societies have similar percentages of troubled youth, our socially "toxic" environment leads more troubled kids in this country to express their illnesses in more severe ways. "We are the industrialized

world leader in homicide," Dr. Freeman stated. Dr. Kestenbaum also pointed out that while there are 80,000 schools in the United States, the number of schools that offer mental health services remains tiny at 500. "The media can do much to learn about school-based systems that work and translate that to other communities," she said.

The top-level journalists who packed the room asked many questions based on their professional experiences and with future reporting of anticipated events, including the anniversary of the shootings at Littleton, Colorado, in mind. Each attendee left with a copy of CAS's "Strong Minds" video as well as a look at what could very well be the future approach to uncovering and treating emotional disorders among the young: school-based mental health services.

Town Meetings Connect With I.S. 90 Kids

I imagine a school program where students sit literally on the edge of their seats, frantically waving their hands in the air, hoping to be called to speak or ask a question. That's what you're likely to see everyday during Town Meetings at I.S. 90. These forums, specifically designed to address the needs of middle school children in an age-appropriate manner, have quickly become one of the most popular and educational elements at this Children's Aid Society Community School in Washington Heights.

The Town Meetings program, generously supported by the Henry Luce Foundation, was launched in September 1999. Held in the school auditorium, all students except those in special education classes participate in Town Meetings, with four to six meetings daily, each consisting of 60 students. For most of these middle-schoolers, this is one of their few chances to interact with peers from other classes.

Jeanette Reyes and Cynthia Pacheco, who have worked in our community schools as

a social worker and as an after-school coordinator, respectively, run each meeting with the assistance of guest speakers and a teacher from each class. The format usually includes speakers, videos, role playing and large and small group activities.

A different theme guides the activities each month, with age-appropriate activities geared toward each of the three grade levels. With an eye toward creating an environment where a variety of opinions could be openly expressed, the program started in September with the "Community Building" theme. Students took part in activities that revealed commonalities among them. They also learned Town Meeting rules, such as not shouting out, raising their hands with questions and listening carefully to all points of view.

Other themes have included parent-child relationships, concerns about grades and report cards as well as concerns evoked by the holidays. This spring, students will explore topics of sexuality and AIDS awareness, cultural diversity and career readiness.

Last October and November, when the theme revolved around violence and conflict resolution, Edgar Hayes, a violence prevention specialist, engaged students in a discussion about the different types of violence and its effects on their lives. They came to understand violence isn't always physical; it can come in many different forms, including verbal, psychological and through the media: in film, television shows, and commercials. The two months devoted to violence and conflict resolution allowed more time for students to consider this complex topic and process their feelings.

Many teachers have utilized techniques used in Town Meetings to promote appropriate behaviors in the classroom. I.S. 90 Community School Site Director Alma Whitford believes Town Meetings are making a real difference in the way these young people interact. Not only are they reaching out to students throughout I.S. 90, Town Meetings are addressing crucial topics that would otherwise be difficult to address during the regular school day.

CAS Chorus 'Choo'ses Chattanooga

They took a cruise on the *Southern Belle* riverboat, rode a vintage carousel, and flew on a 40-seat prop plane, but for 20 members of the Children's Aid Society Chorus, meeting and singing with the Chattanooga Sings Community Chorus was the highlight of their trip to Tennessee in early February.

Preparations for the tour began last summer after CAS Chorus Director Elizabeth Parker met with Rebecca Whelchel, Director of the Chattanooga Sings Community Chorus, and discovered that members of both of their diverse, inner-city choral groups shared many similarities. Parker and Whelchel soon began

Below, program director Ruthie Havazelet with choristers on riverboat cruise.



exploring ways for the two groups to sing together. The premiere of a piece by Canadian composer Stephen Hatfield, commissioned by Chattanooga Sings for a February debut, became the perfect opportunity to unite both groups.

For many of the children, who ranged in age from 10 to 14, this was the first time they had spent a night or more away from home. While some experienced bouts of homesickness on their first night, choristers that had never spent time together quickly became friends. They also befriended many of the Chattanooga Sings children while participating in the annual Chattanooga Sings Gourd Day ceremony. They stood in a circle singing Native American songs while selecting gourds that had been arranged in an inner circle. The gourds were then cleaned, dried and used at an afternoon concert.

During the gourd ceremony and lunch, the children played and talked about life in the North and South. They were surprised by all their similarities despite their geographical distance. All 125 members of the



Above, CAS Chorus members with the Chattanooga Choo Choo.

CAS Chorus and Chattanooga Sings Community Chorus then rehearsed for four hours with Hatfield. That evening they sang an inspirational concert to a packed house in St. Thaddaeus Church. The final song, the world premiere of Hatfield's "Don't bend down," received a standing ovation.

Before returning to New York City, CAS Chorus members were treated to a tour of the Chattanooga Choo Choo, where each chorister received a conductor hat and red bandana. These CAS choristers will certainly remember the southern hospitality they enjoyed during the trip for a mighty long time.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION: Expansions To Improve CAS Services

The Children's Aid Society is growing! We are adding new facilities and making improvements to existing sites to help us serve more families and children, and to ensure that our communities are served with the best programs available. Here's a round-up:

- We are adding a new site, in the **South Bronx**, opening officially with ceremonies on April 6. Our new, custom-designed offices will encompass foster care, preventive and health services at 1515 Southern Boulevard in the Crotona section. Read the Summer issue of the newsletter for details about the opening of this new facility, our 37th in the New York area.
- A grand new swimming pool is under construction now at our **Wagon Road Camp in Chappaqua**, New York to make sure every camper has a chance to swim and receive swimming instruction.

The Milbank / Mount Sinai Community Health Center, located in the Children's Aid Society's Dunlevy Milbank Center, on West 118th Street, will soon begin building new examination rooms and adding a full-time social worker and health educator to address the health care needs of local children and families.

"We are attempting to meet all the needs of our patients under one roof," said Beverly Colon, The Children's Aid Society's Director of Operations for

Health Services. In addition to serving patients from CAS foster care programs, the health center also serves patients from the surrounding community.

The health center is a partnership between Mount Sinai Medical Center and The Children's Aid Society.

The creation of the two new staff positions will mean that the clinic can begin providing children and families with a



more comprehensive approach to health care. The health educator will develop programs that teach patients about topics that may include family planning, nutrition and dealing with chronic illness. The clinical social worker will provide individuals and families with counseling on a broad range of issues and concerns.

The high incidence of teenage pregnancy

in Harlem and other adolescent-related health concerns will be another area that the health educator will be expected to address by reaching out to local schools and youth groups. A doctor at the site is board-certified in adolescent medicine.

Women's health services are new and will be available to women of child-bearing age including: routine physicals, reproductive health exams, OB-GYN, prenatal care and referrals to Mount Sinai Hospital for delivery.

Among the many services currently offered to over 1,000 patients are: pediatric care, routine physicals, sports medicine and dental services. These services are provided by a staff that includes three pediatricians, a midwife, a dentist and assistant, a registered nurse, a practice manager and a health care access counselor who helps patients obtain health insurance. In addition, a family practice doctor attends to families once a week.

The expansion will mean that the center will be able to hold over 10,000 medical records and have the capability of handling

more visits annually.

"We'll be able to expand our ability to see more patients, and with the community changing (with more affordable housing under construction and more working families moving in), we're going to help meet their needs," said Colon.

The Douglass Panthers, a girls' basketball team based at The Children's

Aid Society's Frederick Douglass Center, has won a national championship! Playing in mid-March at the Syracuse Invitational Basketball Tournament, sponsored by Nike, the team of girls aged 16 and under played a five-game series to secure the honor. According to proud coach "Hammer" Stevens, the

Joy in Hoopville!

Panthers lost their first game to the Syracuse team, won the rest, then defeated Syracuse in the final to win. Each happy player received a medal and a certificate, and the team garnered a trophy and large banner. The girls and their families were able to travel to Syracuse thanks to a grant from the Charles A. Frueauff Foundation, so a great support group was on hand for the victory. Congratulations!

Help Yourself and Help Tomorrow's Children Too!

If you are retired or thinking about retiring soon, you may be concerned about how your assets will provide enough income to sustain you through your golden years. In today's market environment, capital growth is easier to come by than good payout.

Have you considered making a gift to The Children's Aid Society that might help you solve that income problem? With a contribution of cash or low-yielding securities to our Charitable Gift Annuity fund, you would boost your income and receive a guaranteed payment for the rest of your life. How much? 7% if you're age 65. 7.5% if you're age 70. Not only that – you would avoid capital gains taxes on securities you donate.

And, you have the satisfaction of knowing that you will be helping the children of tomorrow, who will need your help as much as the ones we care for today.

Tax-Wise Giving From Your IRA

Many of us have set up IRA or 401(k) accounts in recent years. These investment accounts permit tax-deferred accumulation



of assets for retirement, and can grow to sizeable dollar amounts over time.

But did you know that any amounts left in an IRA account when you die are subject to substantial taxes that may mean only 27%, or less, of the original amount reaches your children? The same taxation applies to IRA, 401(k), 403(b), Keogh, SEP accounts and to U.S. Savings Bonds.

There's a tax-wise solution to this problem, and we'd like to share it! Make The Children's Aid Society the second beneficiary on your tax-deferred account, after your spouse or yourself, and the full amount of your investments – untaxed – will be passed along.

Help your own children with traditional assets. Help the neediest children and families in New York by making The Children's Aid Society a beneficiary of your IRA or 401(k) account. If you would like more information about tax-deferred accounts or about how to create a Charitable Gift Annuity, please call Cathy O'Rourke, our Director of Planned Giving, at 212-949-4937, who will be glad to help you.

Neediest Cases Show CAS Cares

The *New York Times* *Neediest Cases Fund* completed its 1999-2000 drive at the end of February, and Children's Aid was well represented among the articles that appeared this season. Children's Aid is one of seven charities to benefit from the Fund, which was established by Adolph S. Ochs in 1912. The articles showcased many of Children's Aid's programs, including Preventive Services, Homemaker Services, Early Head Start, SisterNet, community schools, and HCAP (Health Care Assistance Program). The daily articles also detailed how CAS assists families with badly needed clothing, furniture, rent assistance, medical costs, shelter, even scholarships to our respite camps, thanks to Neediest Cases funds. Many hundreds of children and families have been helped by Children's Aid in this way. The articles highlighted, too, the caring and support provided by The Children's Aid staff. To Arthur Gelb, the former president of the Fund, Jack Rosenthal, the new president of the Fund, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, chairman emeritus of the *Times*, and Aaron Donovan, the lead reporter, our heartfelt thanks for this essential source of help for our families.



A Miracle on Madison Avenue

On a glorious spring-like December 5th, broadcast journalist and First Lady of the City of New York, Donna Hanover, cut a big red and gold ribbon to officially kick-off the 13th annual Miracle on Madison Avenue. Joining her at the ceremony were (left to right): Liz Gardiner, event co-chair; Philip Coltoff, executive director, The Children's Aid Society; Stretch Gardiner, event co-chair; and Matthew Bauer, president, Madison Avenue Business Improvement District (not seen). The event sponsor, the Madison Avenue Fund for Children, co-founded by Martha Dupee and Noonie Marx, had earlier announced The Children's Aid Society, the Rhinelander Center, and the Mt. Sinai Adolescent Health Center as the beneficiaries. Some of the Avenue's top retailers reported record sales for the day, and celebrity shoppers turned out in force. A great time was had by all who came, shopped and celebrated.



From the Executive Director...

continued from page 1

ing government offices and into the fast-beating heart of the community. Our staff members work in offices that are open not just during the day, but also in the evenings and on Saturdays to accommodate the needs of working families.

The large new state grant will enable Children's Aid, the lead agency in a coalition comprising Asian-Americans for Equality, The Chinese-American Planning Council, Columbia University's Community Health and Education Program, The Door, Henry Street Settlement, The Hetrick-Martin Institute, and Mount Sinai's Adolescent, Pediatric, and School-Based Health Center Programs to work with the entire population of eligible youth from preschool through high school, employ diverse enrollment strategies in a variety of strong community-based settings, and pilot approaches to enrolling adolescents. They'll be helping thousands of families enroll in public health insurance – in languages including English, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Hindi and Urdu!

In the next few years we hope that a national movement to enroll every eligible child in public health insurance will emerge. In a country as powerful and wealthy as ours, it is simply inexcusable that so many children — especially our poorest children — lack access to health care.

Philip Coltoff

Philip Coltoff
Executive Director

NEWS

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Kids Love Our After School!

The After-School Corporation (TASC) recently sponsored a student comment contest for children who attend its after-school programs. Students were asked to write, in 25 words or less, what they liked about their after-school programs. Students whose comments were selected won four free tickets to a Madison Square Garden event. Winning responses were also published in TASC publications. Generously funded by a \$25 million grant from George Soros, TASC supports after-school programs in 109 schools in New York State, including five CAS schools.

Here are a few contest entries from CAS Community School P.S. 8:

"I like the program because the counselors know a lot and they help me with my homework. They are very friendly. Mr. Caruso picked the right teachers and counselors."

Jose Reyes,
5th Grade

"The thing I like about our after school program is that the teachers are very kind to me. Children's Aid is the best program there is."

Jonathan Hayes,
5th Grade

"I like it because the teacher's don't scream at you. They are friendly. If you have a problem with someone they will try to solve it."

Fenny Acosta,
5th Grade

"What I like is the dance group and other Friday activities. It is a great experience to do your homework in school and to be with your friends."

Bianca Tavarez,
5th Grade

Bravo! Among the many honors and awards bestowed upon children this year, special kudos to:

Joshua Gonzalez, a member of the I.S. 90/Children's Aid Society Youth Care program, is the champion of the Borough of Manhattan Story Telling Competition.

Nieves Vargas, a student at I.S. 90, was awarded a full scholarship to the Juilliard School of Music.

Toys Bring Joy, & Thanks

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, CAS staff and thousands of children and families, we wish to thank every toy drive donor who so generously ensured that this was a happy holiday season for all. Many thanks for your generous gifts and special thanks to all the individuals who worked hard coordinating holiday toy drives and events. You put smiles on many faces and brought tears of joy to many others.