



The newsletter of the
Buffalo Federation of
Neighborhood Centers, Inc.

Unlocking Potential ...
Enriching Lives.

BFNC News

SUMMER/FALL 2001

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 - Summer day camp participants go tech crazy! (pg. 2)
 - Teen pregnancy prevention poster contest winners announced. (pg. 4)
- Join us for the BFNC Moot Senior Center Awards Dinner, September 8 at the Golden Nugget Restaurant. Call 882-4637 today for tickets!



Receptionist
Marshell Joyner
helps student Takia
Richie with her
typing skills.

Youth Employment Program Builds More Than Work Skills

For 16-year old Ceyaira Green, her summer job meant more than a paycheck. It was also a chance to be a role model for younger girls.

Green was one of 100 teenagers who gained valuable work skills this summer at BFNC program sites. She and her cousin, Richard Hanson, age 14, worked as program aides at the agency's Masten Playground summer day camp.

"This was my third year working here, and it taught me a lot. I've learned how to have patience with the children...When you learn to work with them, you get better results."

Greenard Poles coordinated and supervised the summer youth employment programs. He said that BFNC contracted with four different organizations to make the experience possible: the Youth Opportunity Program (a project of the Erie County Workforce Investment Board), UB's Educational Opportunity Center, the Buffalo Public Schools' STEP program, and the New York State Office of Children and Family Services.

"We started providing summer youth employment back in 1981," said Poles. "It lets children experience a piece of the real world—from using a time card for the first time to learning about state and federal deductions, and how to work alongside others."

Today, BFNC operates one of the largest summer youth employment sites in Buffalo. Under Poles' direction, all the students are also asked to complete four writing assignments. This summer's topics ranged from describing problems faced by today's teens, to how they spend and save money.

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Calm on the Inside

One woman's story of
addiction, recovery and hope

Ask Bernice Rutledge how her summer went, and a thoughtful smile will span her face. That's because after nine years of drug and alcohol abuse, she celebrated a full year of sobriety this July.

On its own, her accomplishment is worthy of applause. But when you add all the challenges she still faces each day as an adult with Schizo-Affective disorder, a standing ovation seems in order.

Rutledge is a resident in the BFNC's intensive supportive community apartment building. She began her affiliation with the agency back in 1998 living in a group home. Through her own hard work she has gained the community living skills to move to a single efficiency apartment, offering more opportunities for self-sufficiency. Staff support is there when she needs it, around the clock.

During the same period, she has also struggled with the demons of addiction.

"I put myself in danger with a lot of people," says Rutledge. "The drugs make you tell all kinds of lies just to support the habit ... I never realized all the people I was hurting."

Along with the patience and support offered by BFNC staff, she credits her mother's death as the emotional jolt she needed to finally call it quits.

"In her last words, my mother pleaded with me to get myself together, so that I could be with her forever ... That day I went to Mae, Jacquie and Candace [BFNC counselors]

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While most of the workers were assigned to help out at the agency's two day camps, others gained skills working in offices, or assisting senior citizens with daily activities.

Nathaniel Draffin, director of the Senior Day Training Program, enjoyed supervising Jason VonWrycza and Brian Ray. He said that the two boys gained a maturity and insight that went beyond daily work duties.

"It's valuable when a young adult gets the chance to work with seniors with developmental disabilities," said Draffin. "I think they walked away with a greater appreciation for human differences."

Poles added that students assigned to the summer day camp learned firsthand what responsibility for others means.

"When you're suddenly responsible for the health, welfare and safety of someone other than yourself, it takes on a whole

new meaning. Even something like walking 10 children across the street becomes a learning moment... They must walk ahead of the first child and behind the slowest child... you're looking out for someone other than yourself, and no one can be excluded."

Student Jillian Toler even found a potential career from her work. Toler assisted staff at the BFNC's Wende Street group home for adults with



Jason VonWrycza walks with Jose Martin back from lunch at the Moot Senior Center.

" I think they walked away with a greater appreciation for human differences."

- Nathaniel Draffin
Director, Day Training Program

mental illness. During the school year, she's a horticulture major at McKinley High School. Now she's interested in pursuing psychology, social work

or the medical field.

"I really liked working with the residents and learning how they react to life situations," said Toler. She felt that other teens could gain new respect for the mentally ill through a similar experience.

"I think it would be eye-opening. They would have a second opinion about people with illnesses and how hard they try to help themselves." □ □

Welcome, Staff!



Benedict Maryniak joined BFNC in the newly created position, Director, Developmental Disability Services. He has 29 years of experience in the field, most recently as Director of D.D. Services for the Lutheran Service Society.



Faustenia Morrow was named to the new position of Fund Development Director. She comes to BFNC with over seven years experience in the fundraising field.



Yolanda Woods was named Director, Case Management General Services. She previously worked as the Vice President of Operations at the Bob Lanier Center of Buffalo.



Nia Tillett (left) and volunteer John McClive (right) assist day camper Stephany Easley.

Day campers share stories online

Children enrolled in the BFNC's summer day camps went technology crazy this summer. Under the instruction of Nia Tillett, a University at Buffalo student, the children did Internet research and produced their own web pages. Check out their work today through the link on www.bfnc.org!

Nia was assigned to the agency through the Citibank Community Summer Internship program. The national program offers experience in the field of community development to a select group of college students each year.

Alongside her work with the children, Tillett worked with the public relations office and spent time with both the Youth Advocacy and Client Specific Planning programs. She looks forward to attending law school after completing her undergraduate degree in Legal Studies. □



Thank You for your contributions!

Donations received March 23 – August 20.

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The Baird Foundation: Building Repairs
WNY Presbytery Society: Adopt-a-Teen Dinner
Margaret L. Wendt Foundation: Building Repairs
The WNY Foundation: Fire Alarm System Replacement, Moot Senior Center

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Kim Olsen ... clothing, household items
Adrian & Clotilde Dedecker ... washer & dryer Pentacostal Temple
... Moot Center amplifier
Six Flags Darien Lake ... admission passes for two

Spring Thank You Breakfast

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Asa Ransom House
Chef's Restaurant



Buffalo Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Services & Family Abstinence Comprehensive Educational Services

265 Students Enter Pregnancy Prevention Poster Contest

The BAPPS program received a record number of entries in its annual "First Things First" poster contest. Over 265 students in the Buffalo Public Schools took pen, pencil or mouse in hand for the chance of winning the grand prize of \$500. Congratulations to Brian Giermak, a senior at South Park High School, on his winning entry.

Brian's poster will be converted to bus advertisements this fall that will be posted throughout the City of Buffalo. His artwork will also be seen on a billboard near his school.

We would like to thank all the judges for their help, including Mary Carroll (Healthy Families Training Corp.), Kathryn Neeson (Girl Scout Council), Nancy Spector (Albright-Knox Art Gallery), Donald Siuta (Art Dialogue Gallery), David Granville (City of Buffalo Arts Commission), Joyce Stilson (Alleyway Theatre Co.), Faye Lewy, Daryl Rasuli (N.F.T.A.) and Darlene Pickering Hummert (Theatre for Change, Child and Family Services). □



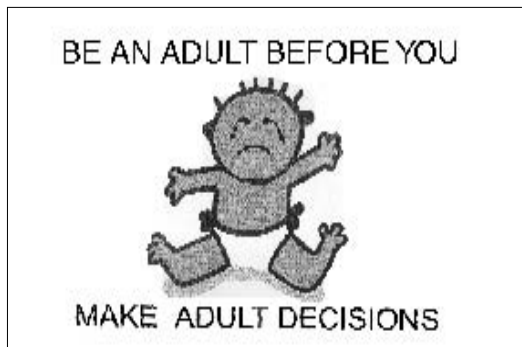
First Place: Brian Giermak, 12th Grade, South Park High School



Third Place: Catherine Edgerton, 7th Grade, Bennett Park Montessori



Second Place: Vanessa Rodriguez, 11th Grade, Hutch Tech High School



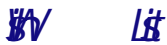
Fourth Place: Kandice Prentice, 2001 graduate, South Park High School



Fifth Place: Nicole Williams, 11th Grade, Bennett High School

College Day Offered for Summer Youth Workers

Representatives from local colleges and the armed services met with 50 teenagers at the Porter Avenue library on Wednesday, August 8, to share information and answer common questions. The program was one of six weekly workshops held for BFNC/BAPPS summer youth workers. According to LaMeyci Martin, project assistant, the series was offered to help teen workers gain life skills. Additional topics over the weeks included banking, sexual health, substance abuse prevention, and a job/resume workshop. □



BFNC and its teenage pregnancy prevention and support programs seek new and gently used baby items. Your donations will be given to young women and families in the Buffalo area. If you are able to donate any items, including cribs, strollers, car seats, clothing or baby food, please call 885-1455 today. Thank you!



BAPPS Collaborating Agencies & Services . . .

Bob Lanier Center

- Service: peer education, activities, behavioral modification
- Location: School #6, School #74, Kensington High School
- Time of Program: after-school hours
- Ages: 12 – 18
- Contact: Yolanda Sanders, 834-2052

Native American Community Services

- Service: case management, group activities
- Location: 1005 Grant Street
- Time of Program: varies
- Ages: 10–20
- Contact: Rob Stalker, Pete Hill 874-4460

Hispanics United of Buffalo

- Service: Teenagers Coming Together — emphasis on self-esteem building
- Location: 254 Virginia Street, Grover Cleveland High School
- Time of Program: after school
- Ages: 12–21
- Contact: Laurie Santiago, 856-7110

Preventionfocus

- Service: "Womenfocus" supper club for teenage Hispanic girls
- Location: school, community sites
- Time of Program: varies
- Ages: 11–18
- Contact: Kathryn Neeson, 884-3256

Reaching Out Case Management

- Services: housing, social services, health, education, tutoring, transportation
- Location: Grover Cleveland, Kensington, South Park, Buffalo Alternative and Emerson High Schools; also by appt. at 1225 Main Street.
- Office Hours: M–F 9 a.m.–5 p.m.
- Ages: 10–21
- Contact: Sandra Fenderson, 885-1455

BAPPS funding is provided by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. **FACES** is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

For more information about the services available through the BAPPS and FACES programs, call 885-1455, or stop-by their offices at 1225 Main Street.



BFNC Mission Statement

To prepare, equip and empower individuals to address life management issues, and to improve the quality of life in their communities.

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and told them I was ready to enter the 90-day rehab program."

Now a full year later, Bernice hasn't turned back. Her weekly calendar is filled with afternoon and evening recovery and support meetings, as well as individual sessions with her A.A. sponsor and her usual program activities at Buffalo General Hospital's A.D. Goodrich Continuing Day Treatment Center.

She says her recovery and confidence have also been boosted by her part-time job as a cook for the BFNC's "Do Drop In" Social Club. The club, located at 292 High Street, offers evening and weekend meals, activities and group discussions for Bernice and others living with mental health challenges.

"Some days, I still get confused, and can't wait to get in here to talk to whoever will listen, just to get it out," she explains. "Being able to talk about it gives me hope."

For the first time in years, she's also talking with her sisters—bridging relationships that were scarred from a history of fear



Bernice, on the job, in the Social Club's kitchen.

and misunderstanding about her illness, addictions and behaviors.

While savoring the quieter times, Rutledge isn't about to stop there. Her next goal? To begin classes next summer to earn her general equivalency diploma.

"Things are happening now in my life that I never thought would happen," she admits. "By being honest with myself, I found some inner peace—a calm on the inside." □