

OPENING DOORS

TO CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL HEALTHCARE NEEDS

A Shout-out for NAC Social Workers



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NAC Celebrates our Social Workers

March was National Social Work month. NAC honored our Social Workers, as well as our other front-line workers, with a reception on March 23. In this newsletter, we continue to give tribute to our Social Workers and to the triumphs of all NAC staff.

As you know, all NAC families have at least one child with a medical/mental health condition. Many of these families have a variety of social and economic challenges as well. NAC hires master's level Social Workers with experience in working with our special population. The range of problems that must be resolved in collaboration with each family can be daunting, but our Social Workers know the resources that can help our families meet challenges – frequently within this agency, including food, clothing, visits to medical and mental health professionals, vocational counseling, and assistance with housing issues. CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



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WHO WE ARE AND HOW YOU CAN HELP

Who We Are NAC's comprehensive programs ensure that children with complex medical/mental health conditions live in safe, loving and permanent birth, foster or adoptive homes.

How You Can Help The rewards of getting to know NAC children and families are extraordinary. For information on volunteer activities, please contact Jessica Lutzke, Director, Volunteers and Community Relations, at 212.696.1550 x230 or jlutzke@NacKidsCan.org.

You will find information about donations, NAC's wish list, volunteer activities and how to become a foster parent at www.NacKidsCan.org



**New Alternatives
for Children, Inc.**

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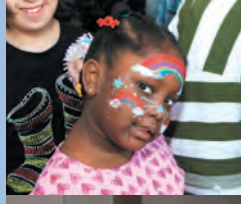
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they make it all worthwhile

Dear Friends,

Following NAC's celebration of Social Work Month in March, we look forward to National Foster Parent Month in May. We honor NAC's Social Workers for the support they provide to foster/adoptive parents and birth parents. We also honor the parents for the extraordinary care they give to NAC's children – those with special medical, developmental and mental health needs and their typically developing siblings. For NAC staff, it is the children who make it all worthwhile when we see their smiles, improved health and achievements in school and in life. The support comes full circle, and I am privileged to be a part of it.

We honor our mothers and fathers each spring by hosting luncheons for the parents who care for NAC children. It was meaningful to have four supportive elected officials join us at our luncheons this year. The most significant aspect of the day, however, is that our parents stand at the podium and speak about the challenges and joys of raising some of the most vulnerable children in our city. Thank you to our gifted Social Workers, the team that supports them, and all the special parents who perform miracles each and every day.

Please join us at the 6th Annual NAC Kids Olympics, which will once again be held at Chelsea Piers on Saturday, June 18. I promise you an inspirational and exciting day. Just imagine seeing 500 children with special needs receiving a NAC medal that they will cherish forever.

Arlene Goldsmith, LCSW, Ph.D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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NAC Celebrates our Social Workers

They do this with the help of inter-disciplinary staff. NAC Social Workers must also be diligent in making frequent home visits and completing case notes. All this must be accomplished as the Social Workers and families develop trusting, respectful relationships with one another.

It's never easy. Many of our children are truly fragile. Parents may come to us frustrated and despairing. But we are fortunate to have a staff that transforms the lives of NAC families every day. We salute them for the hope and optimism that they bring to all of us.

Celebrating Our Team!

The skills and knowledge of our Social Workers strengthen and inform almost every aspect of NAC's daily routines.

Along with MSW Social Workers in our Preventive Services, Partners In Parenting, Foster Care & Adoption, Post Legal Adoption Services, and Bridges to Health programs, we are fortunate to have masters level Social Workers as part of our Alternative Therapies program, Development Department, Recreation Department, and the Medical/Mental Health Clinics. As well, NAC's Director of Volunteers, Community Relations & Training our Resource Specialist, and Community Liaison; our Vocational Specialist, and many of our senior administrative staff – including our Executive Director – have MSW degrees. Altogether, there are more than 80 NAC staff with an MSW degree.



Why We Are Special



“NAC Social Workers are an exceptionally talented and mission-driven group of individuals. They come from diverse backgrounds and have a wide range of experience. What they all share in common is their commitment to improving the lives of children.”

CAROLA HABERLY, LCSW
Director of Preventive Services

“The Social Workers in NAC’s Foster Care & Adoption department are an incredible group of people. With the help of supervisory staff, our frontline Social Workers develop critical thinking, assessment, and engagement skills. Their passion and persistence are fantastic. They are able to support birth parents, foster parents, and children through the foster care process to timely permanency via reunification or adoption. Without this teamwork, we would not be able to do the challenging work we do.”

CARLA RICCOBONO, LSW
Assistant Director, Foster Care & Adoption

“Going the extra mile really makes a difference to our outcomes. The reason we score so well with the Administration for Children’s Services for the quality of our current programs is that our workers are consistently willing to go that extra mile to support our children and families. They really have an investment in the work they do and in doing the best job possible for their families.”

CAROL HIRSCH, LCSW
Director of the Post Legal Adoption Network

“NAC’s Bridges to Health staff provide services not only for our families, but for families at 26 other foster care agencies in the city as well. Their responsibilities extend to a lot of children, many of whom need in-home services two or three times a week. It speaks volumes about the quality of our staff that so many families and agencies want to work with us.”

KRIS CLAPHAN, LMSW
Director of Healthcare Integrators

“Our NAC Social Workers take a strengths-based and family-focused approach to working with birth, foster and adoptive families that are caring for children with special needs. Although many of our families are incredibly resilient, caring for a medically fragile or developmentally disabled child can be extremely complicated and overwhelming for the entire family. NAC’s intervention model avoids reducing families to their problems. Social Workers recognize the strengths of each individual family member and encourage meaningful staff-family engagement and participation in the difficult work of finding relevant solutions to the challenges that our families encounter in their everyday lives.”

PATRICIA BRYANT-REID, LCSW
Associate Executive Director of Clinical and Program Services



Above: David Shichman, LMSW, NAC’s Resource Specialist and Community Liaison, received a **Manhattan Outreach Partner award** from the Fresh Air Fund. NAC is a member agency of The Fresh Air Fund, which offers free summer programs for low-income NYC residents. Every spring Mr. Shichman works closely with the Fresh Air Fund and a number of other summer camp organizations to ensure that all NAC children who wish to go to camp have that opportunity.

If you would like to help a NAC child go to camp or enjoy NAC’s recreational program, please go to www.NacKidsCan.org/donate

NAC WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Michael A. Hollander became acquainted with NAC through Board Member Pascal Desroches, and has attended a number of NAC benefit events where he has been deeply inspired by NAC's mission. Mr. Hollander is a partner with Ernst & Young LLP, where he has served clients in technology and media as well as entertainment for over 20 years. He holds an MBA from Washington University in St. Louis and a BA from the University of Illinois. Michael serves on the Board of Directors at the Bronx Charter School for the Arts and has served in similar capacities for various other youth charities and non-profit organizations.

David S. Ross, Esq. has been a volunteer and mentor at NAC. He is a Senior Mediator/Arbitrator with Judicial Arbitration & Mediation Services. He has taught courses or lectured at NYU School of Law, Cornell University School of Labor/Industrial Relations, Brooklyn Law School, and Benjamin N. Cardozo Law School. He is a graduate of New York University Law School and received his LLM in Alternative Dispute Resolution from Columbia University Law School. He received a BA from the University of Virginia and was a visiting scholar at Cambridge University, England. Mr. Ross has served as a trustee on several non-profit boards, including Search for Common Ground in Washington D.C. and The Cathedral School of St. John the Divine in NYC.



SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, June 18, 2011

NAC's 6th Annual Kids Olympics will be held at Chelsea Piers from 1:30 pm – 4:30 pm. This venue offers a wide variety of activities, with a professional and helpful staff. It's a great opportunity to chat with the families and NAC staff, but it's especially wonderful to see what our young athletes can do. You can find out more about NAC's Annual Kids Olympics at www.NacKidsCan.org

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Jessica Lutzke, Director, Volunteers and Community Relations, at 212.696.1550 x230 or jlutzke@NacKidsCan.org We would welcome your participation.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

There are many ways to support NAC. We welcome financial gifts and donations of goods and services. We invite you to volunteer for NAC activities and to attend our benefit events. The rewards of getting to know NAC children and families are extraordinary.

For more information, please contact Jessica Lutzke, Director, Volunteers and Community Relations, at 212.696.1550 x230 or jlutzke@NacKidsCan.org. You will find information about volunteer activities on the web site as well as NAC's wish list at www.NacKidsCan.org

OUR NAC SONG

The Music Therapy Group created a theme song for NAC! Six children brainstormed ideas for each stanza. Kristin Yeo, NYU School of Social Work intern, and group leader Kiki Hamada, MSW and Board Certified Music Therapist, transformed the ideas into a song. Ms. Hamada set the enthusiastic song to a lively original musical composition, and several NAC staff have been the privileged audience for the first performances. We proudly present Our NAC Song:

**Chorus: We love NAC, yes we do!
We love NAC, how 'bout you?
NAC kids can! NAC kids can!
NAC kids can, it's as simple as that!**

**We love to sing, we love to play,
And make new friends to last our days.
Learning new things is always fun,**

That's why NAC groups are number one!

Chorus: We love NAC...

**Social Workers are super great,
They give us chance to celebrate!
Doctors and nurses know what to do,
They help us grow strong and take care of you.**

Chorus: We love NAC...

**At fun events like the Holiday Party,
We get to eat food that's healthy and hearty. We work together, we're proud and true, That's why we want to say thank you to...**

Chorus: We love NAC...

NAC!

Adoption News

Congratulations to these NAC children and parents on their recent adoptions!

Joseph was adopted by Debra Buxton on April 14, 2011.

Jaylin was adopted by Cleopatra Bradley on April 15, 2011.

Pharaoh was adopted by Ingrid Battle on April 21, 2011.

Kendra and Marquia were adopted by Deidre and Andre Salaman on April 27, 2011.

Raya was adopted by Helen Roman on April 28, 2011.

Natalie was adopted by Helen Roman on May 4, 2011.

If you know a family who can give a loving foster/adoptive home to a medically fragile child, please encourage them to go to Become a Foster Parent on: www.NacKidsCan.org/recruitment

or call:
NAC's Homefinding Department
212.696.1550 or 646.352.9047

NAC families and benefactors enjoyed a special private screening of Rio!

On April 23rd NAC families and benefactors enjoyed a special private screening of Rio. Over 200 children and families attended the event, which raised over \$5,000. We thank AMC for donating the screening and making this entertaining day possible.

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Above: Celebrating NAC Parents

Honoring NAC PARENTS

Every spring NAC holds luncheons to honor NAC parents and all that they do. This year the Foster Care & Adoption/PLAN luncheon was on May 5th and the Prevention/PIP luncheon was on May 12th. Families enjoyed a delicious meal at Blue Smoke/Jazz Standard and received beautiful gifts donated by Estée Lauder. The luncheons are a special opportunity for everyone to recognize and celebrate our dedicated families. We were delighted that New York State Senator Tom Duane and Assemblymembers Micah Kellner, Linda B. Rosenthal and David Weprin joined us to meet NAC parents and to celebrate their accomplishments.



Above: NYS Senator Tom Duane and Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal join Arlene Goldsmith in saluting our parents

Grants AT WORK

NAC is proud to be a recipient of a Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies grant, which enabled NAC to establish a fathers group.

NAC has a growing number of fathers, both from two-parent and single parent households, who are committed to creating a better home for their children. Out of 231 families served in Preventive Services in the past year, fathers have been involved in 150 cases. Currently there are ten single fathers who are the primary caregivers in our prevention programs. As well, of the 40 foster care cases with a goal of reunification, nine have fathers who are actively involved in the service plans. These fathers want to be the best possible parent for their children who have complex physical or emotional needs, and to brainstorm with others who share their parenting challenges.

In response to a survey of NAC fathers, the "NAC Dads Can" group has initiated informational sessions on legal rights, gaining employment and money management skills; and managing children's medical and emotional needs. These serious issues will be balanced by participation in recreational activities and trips for the dads and their children, as well as in development of supportive bonds among the fathers. NAC staff Zack Feigman, Assistant Director of Recreation and Transportation Services; Spencer Seabrook, Behavior Specialist; and David Shichman, Resource Specialist and Community Liaison, are group leaders.



Above: NYS Assemblymembers David Weprin and Micah Kellner join in honoring NAC's mission

Thank You DONORS

NAC is pleased to acknowledge the following corporations and foundations that have awarded grants to us since December, 2010:

- Louis and Anne Abrons Foundation**
- Viola W. Bernard Foundation**
- Burnwood Corporation**
- Michael and Susan Dell,**
in care of the **Austin Community Foundation**
- Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies Discretionary Grant**
- Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies/Neediest Cases Fund**
- Goldman Sachs Community TeamWorks**
- Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation**
- Google Grants (in-kind donation)**
- Marble Fund**
- Vincent Mulford Foundation**
- News Corporation**
- Tiger Foundation**



We send a warm thank you to the Investment Banking Division (IBD) of **Goldman Sachs** for donating 400 backpacks filled with school supplies. The IBD chose NAC as the beneficiary of their community service project and stuffed the backpacks at their March 2nd conference. The supplies were generously provided by NY Cares.

...a warm thank you!