



The BronxWorks August 2022 Newsletter

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BronxWorks Summer Programming Back In Full Swing

Now in our second year coming out of the pandemic, BronxWorks summer activities were back in full swing. Last year our summer programming operated on a smaller scale and maintained many virtual elements. While some of those virtual elements remain, the 2022 summer schedule returned in-person and in a big way with the Summer Rising initiative, our summer camps and Cornerstone programming, Summer Youth Employment Program, and more.

The BronxWorks Summer Rising initiative included X149 South Bronx Preparatory School, PS 42, and PS 130. The Summer Rising initiative was a free six-week program for students in elementary and middle school. Participants received academic support in the morning from DOE certified teachers followed by

enrichment activities in the afternoon facilitated by BronxWorks staff. Over 500 elementary and middle school students enrolled in BronxWorks Summer Rising this year. In addition, we held six more summer day camps for children K-5, and programming at each of our Cornerstone Community Centers for participants K-HS. In total, over 800 students joined us for BronxWorks summer programming.



Our summer participants enjoyed a menu of activities each day. They learned about architecture and engineering through the Salvatori Center and built earthquake resistant structures out of toothpicks and clay. They learned acting, improv, and self-expression skills through Playocity.

A partnership called Bigs In Blue brought officers from the NYPD 40th precinct to mentor our middle schoolers on a range of important topics and to foster positive conversations between young people and police officers. For their community service project, students and officers created a campaign called "Keeping the School Clean" and made signs and PSAs to get out their message. Another partnership with the NYC Parks Department brought students into the woods at Van Cortlandt Park to learn Orienteering and Wilderness Skills.



Through our own intergenerational project, Building Practice that Creates and Sustains Intergenerational Community Centers, we partnered across our Children & Youth and Older Adult Services Departments to bring together older and younger people to learn with each other and foster that cross-generational bond between these key groups in our communities. Over the six week program, students and seniors came together to garden, to cook, to share stories about their families and their culture, to make maps, and other arts and crafts.



BronxWorks SNAP-Ed Educators gave nutrition and fitness workshops. Students also participated in Teen Battle Chef (TBC), a hands on culinary skills program that meets our participants where they are at in the world of nutrition and cooking. The program culminates in a cook-off where participants demonstrate a recipe to a panel of judges.



Ashanti R. was offered a scholarship to continue lessons at Gotham Tennis after the summer.

Students also enjoyed a choice of outdoor and physical activities. Bike NYC brought classes to St. Mary's Park where our students learned the skills and gained experience needed to enjoy safely biking in an urban environment. Participants were able to go on bike trips to Randall's Island and through Crotona Park. Gotham Tennis also provided lessons throughout the summer to introduce the sport of tennis to our participants. They have even offered one student a scholarship to continue lessons throughout the year.

As always, STEM played a big part in our summer plans. The Salvadori Center brought even more lessons and projects to demonstrate the relevance of math, science, and the arts as it relates to buildings, bridges, and parks, and our communities. We also brought in Building Beats to teach students the science of music production and how to produce, mix, and engineer their very own beats. There were science and math lessons with HYPOTHEKids and fashion and cosmetology activities. The summer work culminated in a STEM Expo at our Classic Cornerstone Community Center where participants from all of our summer programs came together to demonstrate what they had learned. To learn more about these partnerships and activities visit our [website](#).



STEM Expo at the Classic Cornerstone Community Center

Of course, one of the highlights for summer participants are field trips. This year we packed our schedule with as many trips as we could find. We went to Coney Island, the Central Park Zoo, the New York Aquarium, Billy Beez, Bowlmor Lanes, Boundless Adventures, the Bronx Zoo, the Museum of Natural History, Sporttime USA, Sesame Place, Dave & Busters, Van Cortlandt Park, Randalls Island, and more!

Summer Youth Employment Program



Desmond, Samantha, and Brianna were SYEP interns at the BronxWorks Admin office.



Ashley, an SYEP participant, interned at the NYC Department of Sanitation, and met Mayor Adams at an end of summer event.

If you know anything about the summer at BronxWorks, you know about the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP). This year, 1,327 young people ages 12-24 signed up to gain work experience or take on summer-long project-based learning. 778 older participants ages 16-24 were placed across 225 worksites at BronxWorks or with partner organizations. The interns are paid a stipend and gain valuable work experience.

Participants ages 12-15 worked in project-based learning groups focused on a variety of topics, including environmental and social justice, food equity, nutrition, and culinary skills. The groups were conducted with both virtual and hybrid models, meeting every week to discuss topics and share their work. Groups studying environmental activism completed team-building and leadership exercises and learned to make infographics and other ways to communicate information. Groups studying nutrition learned about healthy eating, food deserts, and careers in food. They took trips to stores and learned to cook recipes together.



Summer Programming at the Family Residences



Big things also happened this summer at BronxWorks Family Residences! We partnered with NYC Children's Theater to bring theater and music literacy to our residents. Through the program, NYC Children's Theater brought volunteer artists to each site every week. The volunteers led activities and exercises to promote the arts and support the emotional-wellbeing of the children living at all three Family Residences. The activities are designed with calming rituals and include reading and acting out books, singing songs, and mindfulness and breathing exercises.



There were nature walks and picnics at Wendell Park, and trips to the library for story time and arts and crafts, a behind the scenes field trip to a restaurant to speak with the owners and meet the cooks and learn about the importance of food and culture. The New York City Football Club also invited the children to participate in their recreational soccer programs. Last but not least, we have the end of summer trip coming up, where children from all three residences will go to the American Dream Mall. The Childcare programs prepare an 8am to 6pm schedule every day for

the children living in our family residences to help them enjoy the summer, give them an opportunity to spend time outside of the shelters.

Staff Profile: Dominga Florentino

It's hard to think of a more important job than the Childcare Coordinators at our homeless family residences. It is a job predicated on caring for the well-being of children and families living presently through intense hardship. And while their work with each family is transitional by nature, our coordinators care about both the short-term and long-term success of each child. Dominga Florentino is the Childcare Coordinator at the Willow Avenue Family Residence, and it's that unending care for the children and families living at Willow that motivates her.



Dominga Florentino,
Childcare Coordinator,
Willow Avenue Family Residence

Dominga was born in the Dominican Republic and came with her family to the United States when she was eight years old. She grew up in the Bronx with her four brothers and five sisters. Dominga interned at the Nelson Avenue Family Residence while she was completing her Associate's Degree at Bronx Community College. She took a full-time position in 2007 at Willow Avenue as a Teacher's Aide, which motivated her to return to school at Boricua College earning her Bachelor's Degree in Education.

“I wanted to do more for the kids. I saw that some of them needed a lot of help, so I decided to go back to school. I wanted to do more for the program.”

Since earning her degree, Dominga became the Childcare Coordinator at Willow. As the Coordinator, she is more involved with families and the case management side of the services. Dominga helped manage early intervention programs for children with special or different needs. She works with New York Therapy Placement Services and Ability Building for Children (ABC) to connect families to professional resources.

Dominga and her colleagues at Nelson and Jackson Avenue Family Residences plan all of the recreational activities for the children, including the summer programming. They are responsible for creating a safe and nurturing space for children who have undergone challenges and traumas that many of us have not. They work with the parents and guardians to ensure the children's needs are met and they are receiving the resources they need to thrive.

“I had my kids young and I know how much I struggled having to learn everything as a single mom,” Dominga says. “And I know how these parents have to struggle even more with their housing situation, and I feel like my experiences can help them too.”

At the height of the COVID-19 Pandemic, in-person activities at the shelters were paused. Dominga did everything she could to stay connected with the families. She printed activities and slipped them under the doors for children to work on. She set up video calls. She made sure every child had a book to read at all times. She helped distribute laptops and devices so students could attend remote school. "It was extremely hard because we couldn't be in direct contact with the kids," Dominga said. Toward the end of last summer, in-person activities began to resume and now this summer they're back in full swing.

Outside of work, Dominga spends her free time with her family. She has three adult children as well as two grandchildren and they spend every Sunday at her father's house where the whole family comes together.

Did You Know? BronxWorks Is Hiring



BronxWorks is looking for dedicated talent. To see all of our opportunities and learn about our employee benefits, visit the [Work With Us](#) page at our website. BronxWorks holds regular job fairs and recruitment events as well, including our most recent job fair on Wednesday, August 24. Join us at our next recruitment event and speak with current staff and leadership about our opportunities.

BronxWorks seeks to build an inclusive organization grounded in respect for differences. BronxWorks is committed to equal employment opportunity and providing reasonable accommodations to qualified candidates and employees pursuant to applicable law. If you require reasonable accommodation as part of the application process please contact hrbenefits@bronxworks.org.



Senator Kirsten Gillibrand Town Hall at Hostos

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand hosted a Town Hall meeting at the Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture. Senator Gillibrand took questions from her Bronx constituents and spoke about a variety of topics for a little over an hour. BronxWorks staff, SYEP interns, and other program participants enthusiastically attended the event. BronxWorks CAFE Program College Advisor Elsie Hammond (bottom right) asked the Senator about the high costs of college and how this disproportionately affects low income black and brown students. BronxWorks older adult participants also had the opportunity to briefly meet with and take pictures with the Senator. To read more, click [here](#).



BronxWorks Leadership Council members and staff at Stand Up NY

BronxWorks Leadership Council Comedy Event

The BronxWorks Leadership Council hosted a Comedy Night Fundraiser at Stand Up NY in Manhattan. Seven comedians told jokes and worked the crowd of around 40 people, including Leadership Council members, BronxWorks staff, and friends and family. All funds raised went toward BronxWorks students headed to college.



BronxWorks At New York Liberty

Thank you to the New York Liberty, who rewarded BronxWorks staff with tickets to games at Barclays Center in Brooklyn. BronxWorks Workforce Development Assistant Department Director Marie Edwards (left) and Operations Coordinator

Kayla Caravello (right) were among the dozens of staff who enjoyed a close 83-80 Liberty win in late July.



Empire City Casino Chief Financial Officer Ed Domingo (left) and BronxWorks Director of Advancement and Communications Gianna Dell'Olio (right) pose with a \$10,000 check.

BronxWorks Receives Check From Empire Casino

Thank you to the MGM Resorts Foundation for donating \$10,000 to BronxWorks! A large check was presented to BronxWorks and other awardees at the Empire City Casino in Yonkers, NY. The donation will go toward supporting vital services for children and families who are unstably housed.



Open-Air Career Fair at Betances

BronxWorks Jobs-Plus and Catholic Charities New York cohosted an outdoor career fair at the Betances NYCHA complex. Organizations from across New York set up tables outside the apartment building and folks learned more about some different jobs and careers available in the City. The career fair was held outdoors to attract passers-by and was well-attended. Water and other refreshments were provided on the hot summer day.

Announcements



Save the date!

December 7, 2022

A special BronxWorks event at the Hard Rock Cafe at Yankee Stadium.

More details to come!

Help Support BronxWorks



OFFICIAL CHARITY PARTNER
TCS NEW YORK CITY MARATHON

BronxWorks is an official charity partner of the TCS New York City Marathon. Our amazing #TeamBronxWorks runners are supporting our Children & Youth programs this year! Click below to support our #TeamBronxWorks runners!

SUPPORT OUR RUNNERS

There are many other ways you can support BronxWorks.

- Make a contribution. [Donate Now!](#)
- Purchase essential items for our participants from our [Amazon Wishlist](#)
- Set up an Amazon Smile account and [choose BronxWorks](#) as your charity and Amazon will donate on your behalf every time you make purchase

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