

Volunteer Voice

A Newsletter from Volunteer Services

JBFCs Friends Program: A Personal Perspective

Our JBFCs Friends Program is one of many volunteer opportunities provided through Volunteer Services. It is geared to young adults and has an annual calendar of monthly events offering opportunities to volunteer at the various JBFCs residential programs on Sundays. From holiday parties to ice skating, the Friends enjoy interacting with JBFCs' clients.

One remarkable story about volunteerism within the Friends Program is Samantha Hirschhorn's. When Samantha graduated from college in 2005, she knew that she wanted to dedicate herself to a worthy cause. A short time later, Samantha learned about the Friends Program. With a strong background in marketing and her natural leadership skills, Sam helped revitalize the JBFCs Friends Program, first as a JBFCs Friend and later as co-chair of the Friends Program.

Samantha, her co-chair, Barbara Seigel, and a wonderful Executive Committee plan a yearly schedule of activities. The JBFCs Friends travel throughout the five boroughs, bringing good cheer to Agency clients at JBFCs Programs such as; Hawthorne Cedar Knolls, the Henry Ittleson Center, Mishkon, and Horizons. Last season 72 volunteers participated in 12 Friends' events, providing a total of almost 500 volunteer hours.

"I personally love going to Geller House," writes Samantha. Visiting this facility, a short term diagnostic center on Staten Island for adolescents ages 11 to 15 years old, gives Samantha the opportunity to mentor children who are going through difficult times. When asked why she returns to the Friends Program year after year, Samantha explains that since Friends are more focused on providing volunteer hours than on fundraising, volunteering with the program allows her to give back to the community in a very fulfilling, meaningful, and fun way.

Samantha says, "My greatest joy in leading the Friends Program comes from seeing volunteers establish a connection with both the program and the client... in just one Sunday afternoon a volunteer can participate and experience what it feels like to make a difference in a person's life."



Contact Us

JBFCs
 Volunteer Services
 120 W. 57th Street
 Suite 202
 New York, NY 10019
 t: 212.632.4687
 f: 212.632.4795
 e: volunteer@jbfc.org
 w: jbfc.org/volunteer

UPCOMING WINTER EVENTS

January 10, 2010	High School Friends – Mishkon	Brooklyn
January 27, 2010	Sanctuary Stitchers Blanket Ceremony at Temple Israel	Manhattan
January 31, 2010	Friends Art Projects at Mt. Vernon Intermediate Care Facility	Westchester
February 21, 2010	Friends Ice Skating with Domestic Violence Shelter Families	Brooklyn
March 7, 2010	High School Friends Activities at Henry Ittleson Center	Riverdale
Monthly	Sanctuary Stitchers Evening Gatherings	Manhattan

Please go to our website to view all of our upcoming events.

Volunteering to Change Lives

They are heroes to those individuals, families and communities they selflessly serve and they are heroes to JBFCs. Our volunteers participate in a variety of activities ranging from mentoring to making a blanket for a child in our care. The 2,200 individuals who volunteer annually teach us every day what it means to belong to each other.

Big Brother Big Sister Program: Q & A With “Big” Jacob Pollack

Can you give us some background information about yourself?

I am 27 years old. I graduated from NYU in 2004 with an economics major and have worked at JPMorgan for the past 5 years. I'm single and I don't have children.

Why did you decide to become a “Big?”

I decided to become a “Big” because I strongly believe that making a contribution is not only about giving money but about giving time as well. It sounds cliché to say I wanted to give back, but it really is just that. I also felt that I would be well-suited to be a mentor.

How did JBFCs match you with your “Little?”

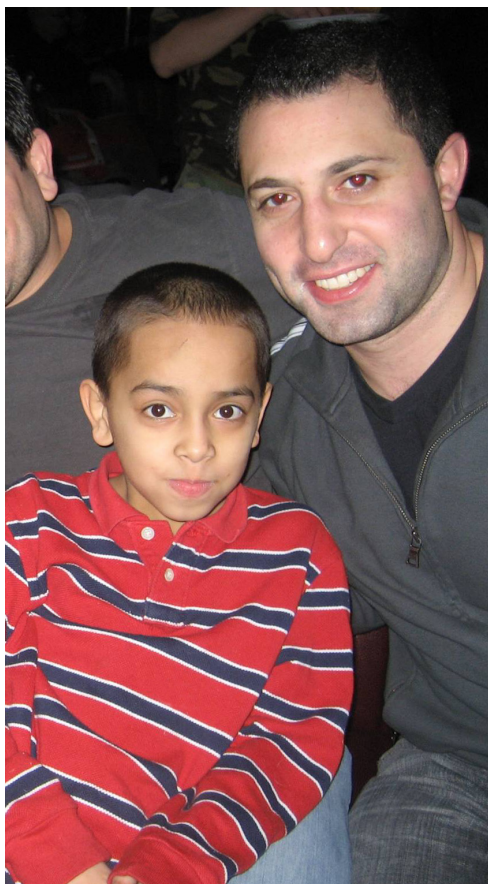
JBFCs gave me an extensive interview to understand if I would be a good fit and to understand what kind of child I would like to be matched with. My criteria for my mentee were pretty broad: basically someone who would benefit from having a mentor.

What is Eric's story?

Eric is a 9 year old child and is the second of three children. He lives with his mother and his siblings on the west side of Manhattan and attends public school.

What's he like?

Eric is very smart and funny, with a vivid imagination and a strong moral compass. He reminds me a lot of myself as a child. It is a delight to watch him grow up.



How often do the two of you plan activities and what do you do?

We typically see each other every two weeks and we spend 2-3 hours together doing a variety of activities, like going museum-hopping around Manhattan- though we're slightly biased; the planetarium at the Natural History Museum is our favorite! We play wiffle ball in Central Park, see the occasional movie, and go out to eat. We chat about what's new in his life and about current events.

Who decides what to do?

We usually take turns suggesting an activity. He often suggests going to the batting cages at Chelsea Piers or seeing a new movie. I like going to museums or Central Park when it's nice out. We're pretty good at

coming to a quick consensus on an activity that we both want to do.

What does Eric get out of the time he spends with you?

I think Eric gets an opportunity to spend time with someone who is non-judgmental and open minded. We have a great time, he can vent about things that are bothering him and he can also confide in me.

What do you get out of your time with Eric?

I get the opportunity to have a positive and meaningful impact on someone else's life, and we really do have fun together. We do things that I would likely not get to do if it weren't for my relationship with Eric. I've basically been to every museum in the city, seen a ton of movies, explored every corner of Central Park and attended a bunch of sporting events. All in all, it's a win-win for both of us.

Why does the Big Brother Big Sister program matter?

I had a terrific upbringing. I feel I have both the opportunity and obligation to share my experiences with my “Little” and to help him reach his full potential. I hope to help Eric build his self-confidence, understand the importance of succeeding in school and, hopefully, down the line, seek higher education.

What would you say to anyone thinking about joining the program?

If you want to make a difference in the world, you should strongly consider becoming a “Big.” You will find the experience to be both fun and deeply rewarding.

A CheeRing Volunteer Shares *by Patricia Cooke*

What is “CheeRing”? It is a program of JBFCS supported by volunteers. We provide a listening ear for those who are in need of someone to talk to. Volunteers receive training that teaches the art of active listening and acceptance.

I have been involved with CheeRing since the Fall of 2005 and it is a wonderful program. CheeRing provides a much needed service. Each volunteer is assigned a person, or persons, to have a phone conversation with each week.

I have been calling the same four people for

almost three years. My CheeRing recipients have become my phone buddies. I check in on them every week and ask them how they are doing. Then, I listen to their answers.

There are good weeks and bad weeks, sometimes there are complaints, sometimes there are frustrations and sometimes there's a lot of laughter. In exchange for my time, I receive the gift of gratitude and have the pleasure of giving. My phone buddies are a diverse group; most are isolated from the broader society, some are elderly. Our conversations have helped give me a small sampling of the diffi-

culties that people with mental health issues face. They have also shown me the importance of patience and the necessity of listening. It is not always helpful to give advice and it is not helpful to be judgmental, but it is always appropriate to listen with an open mind, open heart, and a kind ear.

The volunteers are not left alone, we can always call the JBFCS CheeRing Program Coordinator with questions, concerns or just to chat, and she is always available to help.

CheeRing is an amazing program and I am proud to be part of it.

A CheeRing Recipient Shares *by Alana*

New York can be a lonely town. Although there are definitely people here who are more isolated than I am, I'm pretty cut off from the outside world. But even if I wasn't, doesn't everyone need some support now and then, someone to talk to? The problem for me is that I need support very often.

I don't remember exactly when, but at some point I was invited to participate in JBFCS' CheeRing Program, which

reaches out to people like me. The CheeRing Program pairs recipients with volunteers who are trained in active listening. This provides much needed support and encouragement to the person on the receiving end of the partnership. The volunteer creates a relationship by making a weekly phone call to their CheeRing partner.

My CheeRing partner is Patricia and she is wonderful. We have been speak-

ing with each other for almost three years. Patricia is everything I could ever ask for in a CheeRing partner. She is dependable, supportive, compassionate and wise. Most of the time she just listens, but Patricia always seems to know when to insert some gems of wisdom. Patricia and CheeRing are a part of my life that I can't imagine living without. Thank you JBFCS.

Teen Volunteer: Summer 2009 *by Bashma*

This past summer, many high school students participated in Volunteer Services' Teen Programs. 14 year old Bashma, a vocal major at LaGuardia High School of Music and Arts chose JBFCS as the place to volunteer. She spent her time at JBFCS' Henry Ittleson Center in Riverdale, a Residential Treatment Facility for emotionally disturbed children ages five through thirteen. Bashma decided to volunteer as she felt that it's a great way to expand your point of view and to help others. She chose Ittleson because she loves to play with children, and play with them is exactly what she did!

Bashma's first challenge was to remember the names of all the children and to help them at mealtime. She also played cards and games with the kids and used her musical talents to play her guitar and sing songs. Every day when she would arrive, the children would get so excited to see her, they "would run up to me and scream my name." Though Bashma tried to work with different kids each day, she did form a few very special personal relationships. One of the kids, 8 year old RJ, called her "Bombi", a combination of her name and "mommy." Bashma describes RJ as a sweet, lovable, and a very daring kid. He's the kind of little boy that

would jump off the monkey bars and run up to her to show off his bumps and bruises.

Through Bashma's relationship with RJ and the other children at Ittleson, she learned that there are very special kids in New York City that don't have a shoulder to rest their heads on. "It really makes you realize how lucky we are to have a family and a support system," says Bashma. She felt appreciated at Ittleson and learned how important it is to be open minded and to listen. When asked if she had any advice for a new volunteer at Ittleson, Bashma said "Find something special about each child... and just be a kid, no matter how old you are."



At JBFCs, we believe that each of us – all of us – must take care of one another. This is our philosophy. Our compass. And, with it, we have become one of the largest and most respected mental health and social service nonprofit organizations in the country. Through a comprehensive range of community-based programs, residential facilities and day-treatment centers, we serve more than 65,000 New Yorkers annually from all religious, ethnic and economic backgrounds. At the heart of JBFCs are nearly 2,000 professionals who serve with commitment and compassion; social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, a cadre of clinical support personnel, and thousands of volunteers.

For more information on becoming a JBFCs volunteer, visit us at jbfc.org/volunteer.

e: volunteer@jbfc.org

p: 212.632.4687

f: 212.632.4795

From Jamie Bloom: Director, Volunteer Services

Welcome to our second edition of the Volunteer Voice, JBFCs' Volunteer Services Newsletter. Since we last met, we have been very busy here and much has transpired. The desire to volunteer has grown tremendously and we have seen the number of prospective volunteers increase by 35% over the past year with over 200 completed applications processed in the past 5 months alone.

Regardless of whether this is a result of President Obama's call to service or a function of the current economic downturn; what we are witnessing is a growing interest in volunteerism. Various individuals are looking to change careers and are testing out this inclination through a volunteer experience; some want to give back; others want to make productive use of their newly acquired spare time.

I want to personally thank individual donors who have generously contributed to support specific volunteer programs. Roger Goldman's funding of the CheeRing Program, through the Nina Werblow Charitable Trust; an anonymous donor who has provided funds for an expansion of our Jewish Big Brother Big Sister Program; Marjorie Ziegelman who funds the events for the High School Friends Program; The Canadian Association of New York Foundation, along with the The Freida & George Zinberg Foundation, Inc. and The Nicholas Moore Fund, have all contributed to the Camp Scholarship Program. With their philanthropic support, these volunteer programs have greater capacity to impact the New Yorkers they serve. Additionally, many individual donors have made a difference to our programs including Passover Outreach, The Friends Program, Community Friends, and Sanctuary Stitches. In fact, Community School 211, an elementary school in the Bronx, made a \$150 donation to the Sanctuary Stitches Program through their school wide Penny Harvest program.

As we look ahead, we intend to continue to provide the breadth of programming to meet the needs of our volunteers, as well as of the clients we serve. Philanthropic support enables Volunteer Services to accomplish all that we do and we know that our volunteers and the commitment of their precious time are the heart and soul of Volunteer Services.



Please contact Volunteer Services for more information.

e: volunteer@jbfc.org

t: 212.632.4687