2011 Summer Programs
This summer 176 White Plains elementary-aged youth in grades 1 through 5 were engaged in a safe, exciting, comprehensive, fun and unique learning experience called “Bits ‘n Pieces”. Every Bits ‘n Pieces camper was enthralled in an intensive six-week seamless web of instructional, academic, recreational, youth development and social/life skills enrichment classes and activities that used the theme of “Fitness, Health and Nutrition” as its hub. The goals and outcomes were to foster a climate of learning and discovery that prevented the traditional summer “gap” in a child’s developmental thinking and retention as they would go back to school in the fall; provide the remedial, support and enrichment tools (especially in math and reading); and offer opportunities that prompted healthier and safe decision-making skills development (health, personal, social). In the end, Bits ‘n Pieces proved more than an experience of a lifetime; it was an experience for a lifetime!

Bit’s ‘n Pieces provided a rich menu of classes, training and theme-based learning activities under the auspices of certified teachers, professionals, activity specialists, youth development personnel, trained young adults and volunteers. Classes and activities offered were Mathematics, English Language Arts (ELA), Life Skills, Computer Technology, Creative Arts, Nutrition, Life Skills and Recreation/ Personal Development (including fitness, swimming, arts and crafts, tennis, field/team sports, chess, and reading). These classes were coordinated in an effort to remain consistent and on par with the White Plains School District’s standards and core curriculum as well as embracing youth development principles implemented throughout the Youth Bureau.

The Youth Bureau’s Bits ‘n Pieces summer camp was an extraordinary partnership with the White Plains School District (especially with Church Street Elementary and its administrators where the camp was housed this summer), Shop Rite Supermarket’s Nutrition Program, White Plains Girls Scouts of America, White Plains Parks and Recreation (Gardella Park), and White Plains Reads. In addition to increasing academic and school performance, campers gained greater self-respect, appreciation of the diversity of the people and cultures in the community, and an
understanding of the importance and connection of proper nutrition, positive/healthy leadership, fitness and life skills choices with school/personal performance and career goals.

Of the host of achievements and accomplishments, most notable were: the creation of a healthy recipe book by all of the third, fourth and fifth graders; maintenance and exploration of the Youth Bureau’s Greening Project Garden; trips to Yonkers, NY Museum and Quassy Park (Connecticut); weekly classes offered at Shop Rite Supermarket’s Nutrition and Cooking Class; a camp-wide chess club; a group of Bits ‘n Pieces campers selected to be interviewed by Dr. Christopher Clouet, Superintendent, for his training kit to new and returning teachers; three groups of Bits ‘n Pieces campers used by the District as demo classes for teacher-candidates; a phenomenal closing ceremony that included an international feast provided by parents and guardians; and the smiles and gratitude of all of the campers who expressed Bits ‘n Pieces was the best camp they’ve ever attended!
Entrepreneur Program

Months from today you may see fliers telling you “Fat Cats are Whack” and noticing a growing trend of domestic cats on a leash being walked in the streets. That will be the scenario if the business plan of Nelson Corona and Alexander Kinaj becomes a reality following their win in the White Plains Youth Bureau Entrepreneur /Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship BizCamp competition. The 2011 Entrepreneur Program ended with Corona’s and Kinaj’s selection as the budding entrepreneurs with a business plan that was innovative and likely to succeed. The creators of Cats (and dogs) Gone Walking, a cat and dog walking service, won $200 for their efforts and the opportunity to go on to the next round of the NFTE competition next spring. The competitors in that competition will come from Fairfield, CT and the Westchester region.

Twenty youth began the six-week program and 15 of them completed it, with help from assistants Shakema Loney (NFTE ’10) and Neekita Jikaria. The participants learned the basics of completing a business plan and terms and concepts related to the business world. Their experiences included a visit from Mayor Thomas Roach and guest speakers who shared their expertise about being entrepreneurs. The speakers included Jamilah Allen of Tranquil Spirit Spa, Mike Weinstein, former CEO of Snapple, Frank Rivers, Jr. Freelance photographer and actor and Danny Bernstein, founder and owner of Backyard Sports.

The participants engaged in hands-on activities, such as making a turkey sandwich, to learn business concepts like the “economics of one unit” a necessary number for determining a selling price. By the end of the first week of the program the participants had identified their business ideas. By week two they were competing in a Pitch Contest, where they had to introduce themselves and persuasively describe a product in 30-45 seconds. Half of the group participated in the competition, where the winner, incoming University of Albany freshman, Jose Santos, seized the $50 prize with his effective pitch for “No, strings attached” a wireless headphone system.

The fun and excitement continued during week three when the participants visited the wholesale district in NYC to purchase items for a retail sale. The youth’s subsequent retail sale held Wednesday and Thursday,
August 3 & 4 netted some of the participants pretty good profits. Nine of the participants made more than their initial investment of $50 and a few of them more than doubled their returns! Their success was attributed to their having a good sense of what consumers wanted and their sales/persuasive skills.

After the retail sale, the pressure was really on to develop a business plan that would meet the muster of judges from corporate White Plains. The participants went to the library and got tips from librarian Sharon Rothman on how to research the audience market using census data and other tools.

The participants received guidance and ideas on how to strengthen their plans when the NFTE staff arranged for 17 coaches from a variety of area corporations to spend an hour working with the youth on their plans.

The Big Day finally arrived Friday, August 19, 2011. Mayor Tom Roach other guests and six judges from corporations including MasterCard and Greater Hudson Bank began their review of the presentations of the five finalists: Emma Berhhard, Corona Kinaj, Nina Feldman, Brandon Field and Joseph Prestipino.

The judges said they were most impressed with the poise and creativity of the finalists’ presentations. Following question and answer sessions after each presentation and a 15-minute judge deliberation, the judges selected Corona and Kinaj for first place and the recipients of $200. Prestipino took second place and won $100 and Bernhard won third place and $50.

The youth worked hard and had fun, and as many of the judges and NFTE representatives said, all of them are winners.
Growing White Plains

This was the second summer of the Growing White Plains program, and it was a fruitful one, producing lots of bad puns along with many exciting developments and growth in the program. For starters, we added a second garden in addition to the main garden at New York Presbyterian Hospital. This garden is located at the Church in the Highlands, and was lent to us by Reverend Melanie Miller and the Church for our use in developing a summer volunteer internship gardening program for White Plains youngsters. The garden had ten raised box planting spaces, and as soon as we knew the program was going forward we prepared the beds for planting and put in seedlings and seeds so the garden would be in process when the program started. Reverend Miller herself donated a host of heirloom tomato seedlings of her own to help us get started. We hired a wonderful young man, Ozzie Torres, through the Summer Youth Employment program, to supervise the volunteers, and 10 volunteers, middle school and high school age, spent up to 10 hours a week tending both the Church garden and the garden at NY Presbyterian Hospital, learning about organic gardening, building a compost system for the garden and generally doing all the work necessary to make the garden productive.

Another highlight was that we received notice that we were awarded a $15,000 grant from the Westchester Community Foundation for development of the Growing White Plains program. This allowed us to bring on a part-time coordinator for Growing White Plains and we found a wonderful candidate in Margaret Indelicato, who joined the program mid-summer and has added her expertise, energy and enthusiasm to the further development of Growing White Plains.

In addition to our regular volunteers and the summer interns, we had groups of children from the Bits and Pieces camp visiting and working in the garden all summer, having a great time and learning about organic gardening. Thanks go to their teacher, Caroline Carrier and to Byron Smalls and Ed Scott for making this possible.

Finally, the farmers at the White Plains Farmers Market have continued and even expanded upon their generosity begun last summer, making weekly donations of unbelievable amounts of fresh produce to us for delivery to the Ecumenical Food Pantry. Every Wednesday our interns, along with Food Pantry volunteers, went to the Market at the end of the day, picked up the produce and delivered it to the Food Pantry for packing and distribution on Friday morning, along with the produce from both Growing White Plains gardens and the Youth Bureau Greening Project Garden. Thanks go to the countless people involved in the project this summer, and all can take justifiable pride in the contributions made to the health and nutrition of our community and the deeper rooting of the idea of local, organic food growing in White Plains.
Summer Career Academy

Twenty four young people experienced a great summer training program this year. The program curriculum included employment preparation through mock interviews conducted by the Volunteer Center volunteers, and workshops with the College of Westchester.

Career Exploration encompassed a trip to Filene’s Basement/Syms Clothing to discuss the retail and fashion industry as well as dressing for success. One of the major highlights of the Academy is our trip to the Pray Achievement Center. Where Malcolm Pray mentors the youth and engages them in an extraordinary way. Another integral component of our Career Exploration is our speaker series. This year’s Academy welcomed keynote speakers from the Open Arms Shelter, Westchester County District Attorney’s Office, the Journal News, College Careers, College Wise, Key Bank, Planned Parenthood, the New York Power Authority, and a 26 year old female neuroscientist who is a Youth Bureau graduate!

A key component of the program was provided by Volunteer Ken Henderson, who conducted three presentations for us on Workplace Readiness, How to Do a Presentation, and How to Give a Speech. During our six week program our goal is to expose the participants to Colleges in our community that they may not normally make use of. Students were involved in college tours at: Purchase College, Mercy College, and Adelphi University. In preparation for our participation the National Night Program we received a behind the scenes tour of the White Plains Public Safety Building escorted by the new School Resource Officer Ditter Barron.

Another integral component is our Real World approach to readying the young people for life a contributing member of society. Students were immersed into four variations of lifestyles as an adult due to decisions made as a high school student. They started by solving problems as a high school dropout. They had to find a job, an apartment, learn how to create a budget, and pay bills that they wrote checks for. Needless to say, their jobs were bad and they were broke. By the end of the summer they were college graduates with good paying jobs and nice apartments. They were also saving money for emergencies and retirement! And that’s after we had to force them to buy a car (they still wanted to take the bus).

The Summer Career Academy helped students to realize just how difficult their future can be if they are not prepared and they also now realize and appreciate the resources available to them. There is no doubt that these young people are now fully prepared to have a successful future as employees and members of society.
Let’s Get Ready SAT & College Prep

This summer’s Let’s Get Ready SAT & College Prep Program began on Thursday, June 30th with 49 students and 13 volunteer college student coaches participating. 44 of the students attended 75% or more of the classes and 48 of the 49 students attended 60% or more. The gender distribution was 71% female and 29% male.

Students were required to take two full length diagnostic SATs. The 1st diagnostic test at the beginning of the program was used to establish a baseline score and to group students with coaches. The 2nd test at the end of the program allowed LGR and the students to measure improvement. To date, 41 of the 49 students completed both tests and the score differentials ranged from +410 to -180 with an average score improvement of 94. 35 of the 41 students had positive results.

In late September, students will be invited to a 4 hour LGR SAT refresher workshop to help them prepare for the October 8th test.

In addition to the SAT training, students were given guidance on the college preparation process that included researching and creating a list of colleges in three categories (safety, match & reach), writing a personal statement, completing the common college application and registering for the October SAT.

A “Career Day” held in New York City on July 30th provided students the opportunity to meet and discuss various careers with a group of young professionals.

This summer’s program also included college tours of Iona College and City College of New York (CCNY).

The program concluded on August 11th with a Financial Aid presentation to students, parents and guests followed by a graduation ceremony. The coaches shared positive comments about each of their students before presenting them with a gift and program completion certificate. Each coach received a thank you card from their students, a group picture with their students and two movie passes.

The LGR adult mentoring program piloted with White Plains and Greenwich/Stamford LGR students last year will be continued and expanded this year to include the Yonkers, New Rochelle and Port Chester programs. Students will be paired with an experienced adult mentor who from September to April will help guide them through the college preparation process (e.g., essay writing, college and scholarship applications preparation, college selections, etc.). The relationships will be one on one and/or in group settings.

The students commented that LGR increased their knowledge of the SAT and college preparation process and that they would recommend LGR to a friend.
Healthy and Fit for Life
The Healthy & Fit for Life program offered a 6-week fitness boot camp from July 7 - August 12th. Twenty youth ages 12 - 18 years were enrolled in this camp. The youth attended camp 5 hours each day and participated in a variety of fitness activities like walking, jogging, Pilates, aerobics, swimming, boxing, and martial arts. In addition to these activities, the youth were also provided instruction in life skills, goal setting, healthy behaviors, and nutrition education. This program was made possible by a grant from the Department of Health and Planned Parenthood of Hudson/Peconic.

The Healthy & Fit for Life Program also participated in the National Night Out event. Coach Kenny Mack presented a boxing match demonstration along with the Youth Bureau's Boxing Team participants.

Girl Scouts
The Girl Scouts offered a free program for 4 weeks at the Summer Excel and Bits N' Pieces camps. At the Summer Excel camp for middle school students, the girls worked on the Girl Scout Journey - 'It's Your World Change It: aMAZE'. They focused on the twists and turns of getting along with friends and peers, made some great crafts and even did a bit of yoga.

At Bits 'n Pieces, the Daisies and Brownies did some fun activities and had an enjoyable time. The 4th and 5th grades worked on the new Girl Scout Journey - 'It's Her Story Tell It: aMUSE'. They focused on the roles open to girls, and wrote and acted out a short skit depicting 'busting' stereotypes about various roles. Despite the heat of the summer, all participants had a wonderful Girl Scout experience.
White Plains Cares Coalition

Parent Connect
On July 14th the WPCC hosted a recruitment event called “Parent Connect” at Webster Bank’s main banking center in White Plains. The event focused on sharing the vision/mission of the Coalition to parents as well as raising awareness about the need for their involvement in the Coalition. While the turnout was beneath expectations, we still made major connections with 3 new parents. One of the parents has been involved in WPCC monthly meetings subsequently.

National Night Out
The Coalition participated in the city’s National Night Out event attracted hundreds of White Plains residents. The main goal of our participation in this event was to conduct a number of parent surveys. Our exhibit space provided visitors to complete the survey online at three kiosks with laptops and with print copies provided in both English and Spanish. The presentation was met with a great response of 62 completed surveys. Individuals who completed the survey were given Coalition cupcakes and a free movie ticket. Many people were given touchpoint cards with information about the Coalition and our involvement was a huge win for advancing the visibility of the WPCC in our community.

Youth Court Exploratory Phase
The youth court initiative began its development and exploratory phase on July 1, 2011. Fashioned after the Adult Judge Youth Court Model, the program aims to serve as a juvenile justice initiative targeting risk-factor based juvenile delinquency in an effort to promote positive youth outcomes and increase juvenile offender accountability. The program also aims to serve as an experiential learning tool to expose youth to the legal and criminal justice professions. The youth court is slated to launch early 2012. Partners engaged thus far include regional police departments, the White Plains Police Department, Westchester County Department of Probation, Westchester County DA Office, NYS Division of Criminal Justice, The Center for Court Innovation and the White Plains Youth Bureau.

Tolerance Center Trip
To foster positive community norms and environmental strategies that reduce risk factors affecting the perceptions and behavior of youth regarding alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, the Coalition was involved in facilitating a trip with White Plains youth and Police Officers visiting the Museum of Tolerance in New York City. Nine police officers and seven students participated in this trip that created an atmosphere for the youth and police officers to bond organically. These types of trips are invaluable in breaking down negative barriers, perceptions and attitudes that dissolve positive interaction between community members and the Police. The tour was described as “poignant and provocative” and served as an insightful time for all involved.
Youth Employment Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summer 2011</th>
<th>Funding Sources</th>
<th># of Youth Employed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer Jobs Program</td>
<td>City Funded</td>
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<tr>
<td>TANF (Grant)</td>
<td>Westchester/Putnam Workforce Investment Board</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Jobs Express (Grant)</td>
<td>Westchester/Putnam Workforce Investment Board</td>
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<td>Watering Project</td>
<td>White Plains Beautification Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>Salaries funded by the employers</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayors Challenge</td>
<td>Donations from private corporations and individuals</td>
<td>34</td>
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</tbody>
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The summer of 2011 began with 344 White Plains youth residents submitting summer job applications. 308 of them attended the annual Job Fair at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on Monday, June 13th where they had the opportunity to interview with their choice of 3 from the many city departments which were represented.

Simultaneously, the Private Sector summer initiative was underway. 83 youth between the ages of 18-24 applied for an opportunity to interview with and potentially work for a local business in their field of study. Some of the companies our youth received employment with were Nova Med, Burke Rehabilitation Center, Regeneron, MSM Design, Camp Group LLC, Pernod, Elmwood Day Camp, and Westchester Country Club.

The Mayors Challenge was a new initiative for the summer of 2011 which was devised by Mayor Thomas Roach to raise funds to match the $25,000 that local philanthropist Dan Och committed to the City of White Plains for summer employment. Through the Mayors initiative $57,500 was raised and an additional 34 young people were able to gain invaluable work experience.

In its 3rd summer The Watering Project, a collaboration between the White Plains Beautification Foundation and The City of White Plains, employed 4 young men to maintain the 52 gardens that Beautification plants throughout the city. The young men were charged with watering, weeding, and litter removal of the planters, gateway gardens and plots which are dispersed throughout the city. Mary Merenda, Beautification Foundations co-president and Watering Project liaison, stated that this years watering crew was “fantastic” and the project was “a huge success”.

Every year the Westchester/Putnam Workforce Investment Board contracts the White Plains Youth Bureau to serve 20 participants during the summer months. The programs objective is to empower community youth through career planning, employability training and eventually job placement. As an invaluable supplement to the existing and very successful Summer Youth Employment Program, this year TANF subsidized salaries to help youth from financially disadvantaged families work at nine worksites.
After participating in the annual Job Fair youth were hired to work at various companies, city agencies and local businesses. One of our prized White Plains Summer TANF worksites is Schnurmacher Nursing Home. Schnurmacher Nursing Home has welcomed our community youth for many years. This year there were six placements in the following positions at Schnurmacher; Clerical, Rehabilitation Assistant, Recreation Aide and Dietary Aide. Additional job sites include, Salvation Army Day Camp, Bethel Baptist Church; Passages to Excellence, White Plains Hospital, The City of White Plains Building Dept, Department of Labor ONE STOP, WestArts and White Plains Center for Nursing Home.

Summer Jobs Express, was designed by the NYS Dept. of Labor to provide Local Workforce Investment Boards with the opportunity to apply for & receive stand-alone summer youth employment opportunities for low-income, eligible youth in high-need areas of the state. The White Plains Youth Bureau was awarded funds to serve 24 youth. These young people were placed in the private and non-profit sector and will be working until September 30th.

Corporate Summer Highlights
In June our friends at Disney Publishing Worldwide continued their commitment to engage young people in our community through the joy of reading by donating over 500 Disney books for children and young adults. The books were distributed to children in White Plains through the White Plains Reads initiative.

6 Disney Publishing voluntEARS visited our 1st-3rd graders at Bits N Pieces Camp on July 26th and conducted a story time and project centered on the book Black Out. Disney generously donated 12 copies of Black Out and 4 copies of a compilation book of Disney tales to the camp.

The Youth Bureaus Greening Project was excited to welcome Bunge back this summer! Bunge is an agribusiness which buys, sells, stores and transports, oilseeds and grains to customers worldwide. Bunge, whose corporate offices are located in White Plains, hosted the 12 Greening participants at their offices on 8/9 so they could learn about who Bunge is and how they contribute to our global economy. On 8/10, 8 employee volunteers from Bunge joined the Greening Project in erecting a greenhouse, which Bunge generously purchased and donated for the use of enhancing gardening initiatives for youth throughout our city.

Back to school can be a stressful time for parents, especially when they do not have the financial means to provide their children with the supplies needed to start the school year off. Donors from the private sector in our community, The New York Agency of The Prudential Insurance Company of America; a combined effort of Reckson, A Division of SL Green Realty Corp. and their Westchester tenants; Disney Publishing Worldwide; Walmart; the Kanas Family and the Vulcan Society of Westchester have stepped up and are collecting 185 backpacks filled with school supplies such as crayons, paper, pens, pencils, folders and binders to be distributed to children in need.
Train for Success

Train for Success enjoyed a great second year. Twelve young men and women who had difficulty finding employment in the Summer Employment Program participated in a job readiness program that provided them with basic job skills and the opportunity to explore careers and colleges. Of the twelve students from across the city that started, ten (83%) completed the full six-week program. Students were treated as employees and compensated for their time in the program.

Workshops focused on skills specific to the job application process, including completing a cover letter, resume, job application, writing the follow-up thank-you note, and interviewing skills. Communication skill building was thread throughout all activities. Each session required presentations from each participant. Weekly supervision allowed the youth workers to get feedback for quick adjustments if necessary. Employees also completed weekly journal entries that reflected on the week’s work and its impact on them.

Money management and the value of education were also covered through “Real World” activities that required students to manage a household on the income of a high school dropout, high school graduate, and college graduate. Additionally, there were trips to three area businesses – New York Power Authority, Sears Department Store, and Key Bank – and the Pray Achievement Center and the White Plains Police Department. All visits focused on success in the workplace, setting goals, and understanding the skills needed for achievement. Key Bank personnel also covered money management and banking information. Additionally, college tours at Manhattanville College, St Francis College, Lehman College, Concordia College, Adelphi University, Monroe College, and Lincoln Technical School were conducted. For many of the participants, these were their first visits to a college campus.

Guest speakers provided insight on presentation skills, interviewing, social work as a profession and the field of psychology. DEAR time and regular reading assignments encouraged the ELA skills throughout the summer.

The youth workers also took a trip to New York City with member of the White Plains Police Department to visit the Tolerance Museum. After a provocative presentation on bias and prejudice, the youth and officers enjoyed lunch together and getting to know more about each other.

Each employee ended their employment with a resume, a cover letter template and a thank-you letter template for future use. As a testament to the program’s success, Rosalie, as quoted from her journal, says "All in this entire job improved my skills and has helped me take many steps towards success. This program allowed me to see other things in a different point of view."
Summer Excel

Summer Excel 2011 was a great success. We provided a meaningful camp experience for 108 middle school students from June 27th through August 12th. Over the course of four sessions, campers enjoyed old favorites like tennis, sewing, cooking, and karate, dance, visual arts, robotics, cartooning, photography, forensics, newsletter and sports. DJaying and sound recording were added this year. DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) continued to be the daily ritual of the camp, resulting in more than 19 hours of reading time. While being fun and interesting, each workshop was designed to enhance English language arts and math skills developed during the school. This academic bridge over the summer allowed the retention of skills that can be lost in the summer.

Campers were also treated to one trip per week. These included Quassy Water Park, Madame Tussauds Wax Museum, Lake Compounce, bowling and movie day, Splashdown, and Playland.

Campers produced three newsletters and CD’s from the recording sessions. In the words of Diego; “Anyone can have fun no matter what they’re doing at Summer Excel Camp!”