

imagine

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PSYCHIATRIC CENTERS, INC.

FALL 2006



A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

Dear Friends,

When we started making preparations for Brooklyn Psychiatric Centers' Centennial Year, I began reflecting on the origins of our agency and the legacy of our founder, Judge Robert J. Wilkin.

I was impressed that Judge Wilkin, who was born in the mid-19th Century, was so enlightened about the value of mental health services and the importance of emotional well-being to the lives of children and their families. Under his guidance, our agency introduced mental health examinations for children in 1915, began a formal association with the public schools in 1916, hired a clinical psychologist and began using group, individual, and family therapy for preventive care in the early 1920s, and offered art classes to children in 1926.

I also was intrigued that the problems Judge Wilkin's constituents dealt with in the early 20th Century were very similar to the problems our clients face today. He understood the devastating effect homelessness, alcohol abuse, poverty, and crime had on families, recognized the importance of a child's environment on his or her behavior, and appreciated the significant role parents play in the development of their offspring.

Like our therapists, Judge Wilkin was keenly aware of the challenges facing immigrant families in New York City. And, although the immigrants he encountered were primarily from Ireland, Italy, or Poland, while immigrants we encounter today are primarily from the Caribbean or Latin America, the challenges of adjusting to a new culture are remarkably the same.

Our programs are here to help smooth the transition, just as Judge Wilkin's were. In fact, we highlight in this issue of our newsletter two of our programs that I think would make Judge Wilkin proud—our ACT Team, which keeps families together by preventing out of home placement, and the Children's Summer Art Program at our Bushwick Mental Health Clinic, which received rave reviews from the children who participated.

Judge Wilkin also would be pleased to know that our loyal, dedicated, and compassionate staff carries out his legacy every day through their work in our five community-based mental health clinics, on-site mental health programs in the elementary, middle, and high schools, and drug and alcohol treatment, senior, and court-mandated treatment programs.

Our agency has not been without its challenges, particularly in the last several years when we introduced rigorous fiscal discipline in response to changes in government funding streams. Through improved communication between BPC's fiscal and clinical departments, the implementation of greater levels of technology, and additional staff training, however, the agency increased Medicaid and managed care revenue and, I'm happy to report, turned a deficit into a surplus. These financial measures have positioned us well and will enable us to continue to thrive and provide quality mental health programs and services to our clients during the next 100 years.

Sincerely,

Pamela D. Straker, Ph.D.

Agency Facts

Conducts more than 60,000 visits annually.

Staff consists of more than 100 highly credentialed, culturally and ethnically diverse professionals.

Serves a diverse population—48% African-American or Caribbean; 40% Latino; 10% Caucasian.

Public funding and government contracts comprise 90% of annual income. Remainder raised from the community.

84 cents of every dollar used to support programs.



Brooklyn
Psychiatric
Centers, Inc.

Founder's Mission Continues to Drive BPC 100 Years Later



Judge Robert J. Wilkin conducts a private hearing with a young offender.

By all accounts, Judge Robert J. Wilkin was ahead of his time. He established the Children's Court to prevent youthful lawbreakers from becoming hardened criminals and served as its presiding judge; created the juvenile probation system; drafted juvenile delinquency laws; and sponsored other measures for the protection of children.

And, after witnessing the misery of poverty and the challenges faced by young immigrants who appeared before him, Judge Wilkin created the Brooklyn Juvenile Probation Association in 1907. The original mission of the Association was to provide guidance for juvenile offenders after their formal probation ended.

Judge Wilkin served as president of the Brooklyn Juvenile Probation Association for 20 years and during his tenure, in 1914, the Association adopted the slogan, "It is wise and less expensive to save children than to punish criminals." That same year, the organization modified its mission to include a Big Brother and Big Sister program for children who demonstrated a potential for wayward behavior. In 1915, the Association began mental health

examinations of children, in 1916 it began collaborating with the public schools, and in 1919 began offering sex education to help children cope with issues confronting them on the streets.

The Association hired its first clinical psychologist in the early 1920s and began concentrating on preventive care by using group, individual, and family therapy. A research program also was added to determine the cause of delinquency in children and an in-school program was introduced. By 1924, the organization began accepting student psychologists from Columbia University for an in-service clinic, and in 1926, art classes were added.



New York City children use roofs as their backyard playground in the early 1900s.

The appearance of a child living in the early 1900s changes dramatically after intervention by the Brooklyn Juvenile Probation Association.



After decades working with children in the court system, Judge Wilkin understood that a positive home environment was essential for children to grow into productive citizens. "With few exceptions," Judge Wilkin told a reporter, "the cause of juvenile delinquency is that the child doesn't know right from wrong. Aside from mental deficiency cases, his lack of knowledge is due largely to the home he comes from, the environment in which he has been brought up. The basis of his crime, in other words, is a social one. The lack of training he misses at home, he makes up for training on the street; and that way lies chaos and crime."

That's not to say that he wasn't sympathetic to the challenges faced by the parents who had immigrated from Poland, Italy, Ireland, or other countries. He noticed that they remained segregated in their own "colonies" within Brooklyn where they continued to speak in their native tongues rather than learn English, and that even in homes where both parents were living, the children might be neglected because both parents were working.

"The children go to school, learn the customs and the language, and soon hold a master hand over their parents," Judge Wilkin was quoted as saying. "The parents, who had power in their own country, have none here. They are bewildered by the complicated laws. The children appoint themselves interpreters of them. They find bad companions and get into trouble. The parents do not understand until they are brought to court and told about it."

When Judge Wilkin died suddenly in 1927 at the age of 67, he was widely mourned. His legacy was summed up in the following newspaper tribute:

"To any one intelligently observing this man at work in his court, eliciting confessions, winning confidences, and establishing himself on terms of friendliness with the most sullen and resentful culprits, it was apparent that he had a rare genius for dealing with children."

"Robert J. Wilkin never advertised himself as an expert in child psychology. He was invincibly modest and personal publicity was distasteful to him. He left the limelight to those who craved it. But there was no occasion of public conference in regard to children where his counsel was not as freely offered as it was freely sought; no enterprise for the better care of children who were either homeless or not adequately cared for in their homes to which he did not liberally contribute from the wisdom of his long and profound experience."



Children playing in the rubble in the early 20th Century.

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SUNY Downstate Medical Center
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BROOKLYN PSYCHIATRIC CENTERS CELEBRATES 100 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

(Photography by Greg Mango)

With tall ships anchored at the South Street Seaport serving as a backdrop, Brooklyn Psychiatric Centers (BPC) kicked off its centennial year October 19th with a gala celebration honoring four community leaders.

“Brooklyn Psychiatric Centers is a wonderful organization that has done such tremendous work, starting with its service to the poor when many people ignored them,” said Frank Macchiarola, Ph.D., president of St. Francis College, who was presented with BPC’s Judge Robert J. Wilkin Award. “I’m very proud to have an award in the name of Judge Wilkin, who did so many great things and helped start this organization.”

“For 100 years, our agency has been at the forefront of providing innovative mental health services to children and families, and we are proud of our legacy,” said Dr. Pamela Straker, president and CEO. “We continue to work hard to ensure that BPC’s programs address the whole life of every individual and will continue to improve the lives of Brooklyn’s residents for the next 100 years.”

Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz commended Dr. Straker, the board, and supporters for carrying on BPC’s fine tradition in its anniversary year.



Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz presents Dr. Pamela Straker, president and CEO of BPC, with a proclamation honoring the agency.



BPC Centennial guests Linda Hurwitz, owner of TEC International, and Steven Mirones, president of Arimed.



BPC Centennial Gala honorees enjoy the event at Bridgewater at the South Street Seaport. L to R: Dr. Frank Macchiarola; Dr. Eugene Feigelson; Dr. Monica Sweeney; Dr. Pamela Straker, president and CEO of BPC; and Peter Vallone.

“What Brooklyn Psychiatric Centers and Brooklyn have is a love affair, a 100 year affair that’s still going strong,” he said.

An Imagine Award was presented to Eugene B. Feigelson, M.D., former dean of the College of Medicine and senior vice president for Biomedical Education & Research at SUNY Downstate Medical Center, who is now conducting special projects for the medical center. Dr. Feigelson noted that 100 years ago, psychiatry was in its infancy and only doctors in Europe were even beginning to understand mental health. “The people involved in the creation of Brooklyn Psychiatric Centers, like Judge Wilkin, were really inspirational because it was a time when the stigma about mental illness was great. Brooklyn Psychiatric Centers has played a role in seeing that changed in Brooklyn.”

Monica Sweeney, M.D., M.P.H., vice president for Medical Affairs for the Bedford Stuyvesant Family Health Center, also received an Imagine Award. Dr. Sweeney said the award will propel her to imagine what can be possible, including such dreams as peace in the world and a country where all its citizens have health insurance.

The Visionary Leadership Award was presented to New York City Council Speaker Peter F. Vallone who noted that everyone present had a vision of what the city, state, and country should be about and urged all citizens to stay involved in the democratic process.

A film montage of BPC’s therapists and the clients they serve, produced by filmmaker Ben Hadley, also had its premiere at the gala.

The montage can be accessed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=daHCJYDY4rQ>



New York State Assemblyman and BPC board member Joseph R. Lentol, left, Dr. Pamela Straker, president and CEO of BPC, and New York State Assemblyman James F. Brennan at the BPC Centennial event.



L to R: Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz; Anne Maltz, co-chair of the BPC Centennial Gala; Dr. Pamela Straker, president and CEO of BPC; and honoree Peter Vallone.

As we celebrate our centennial, BPC wishes to recognize our honorees during the last decade

Denise Arbesu

Joan Bartolomeo

Randall Bloomfield, M.D.

Karen L. Clark

Hon. Una Clarke

Tom Early

Harvey Garner, Ph.D.

Mary Gelormino

Bernell Grier

Bill Howell

Marie Kelleher

Charles Koehler

John LaRosa,
M.D., F.A.C.P.

Hon. Marty Markowitz

Dominic Mascara

Jacqueline McMickens

Peter M. Meyer

Linda Simms-Chin

Francesco Cantarella
(In Memoriam)

Sadie Feddoes
(In Memoriam)

Louis Reinhold
(In Memoriam)

Budding Artists Unveil Projects at Bushwick Clinic

While some kids spent their summer in front of the TV or attached to a video game, a group of young people from Bushwick, Brooklyn, spent several hours every week creating art at a workshop offered by Brooklyn Psychiatric Centers' (BPC's) Bushwick Mental Health Clinic.

The children who participated in the workshop unveiled their murals and sculptures for their families at a recent art opening held at the community-based clinic located at 1420 Bushwick Avenue.

"She really loved it," one mother said of her 11-year-old daughter, who created one of the colorful sculptures on display. "She rushed home from summer school to make sure that she came here on time, and she talked about it so much when she came home. Her eyes really lit up. After all, how often do you get a chance to work with a professional artist?"

The artist who presented the workshop, Emmett Wigglesworth, is part of The Children's Art Carnival, an organization that has been teaching art to children since the late 1960s when it was affiliated with the Museum of Modern Art. Mr. Wigglesworth is a muralist, painter, sculptor, fabric designer, and poet as well as an art teacher.

"I didn't want to go at first," admitted Justin, 12. "But when I went it was fun. It was one of the best summers I've ever had. Art is fun. You don't stay home all day watching TV or playing video games. I think more people should try it."

Justin described Mr. Wigglesworth, better known as Brother Emmett, as a great teacher who taught the group how to draw and make different shapes. "He said when you draw, be free," Justin explained.



Dr. Pamela Straker, president and CEO of BPC, left, with one young artist and her mother in front of the participant's completed sculpture.



The children who participated in the summer art workshop at BPC's Bushwick Mental Health Clinic proudly stand in front of the murals they created and display the certificates they earned.

Joanne Siegel, LCSW, administrator of the Bushwick clinic, said the children who participated in the art workshop are clients or relatives of clients at BPC's Bushwick Mental Health Clinic.

"A lot of our kids have difficulty expressing themselves verbally so this workshop enabled them to express themselves through art," Ms. Siegel said. "They were exposed to art mediums they've never worked with before. The workshop also gave them the opportunity to work on their cooperative skills."

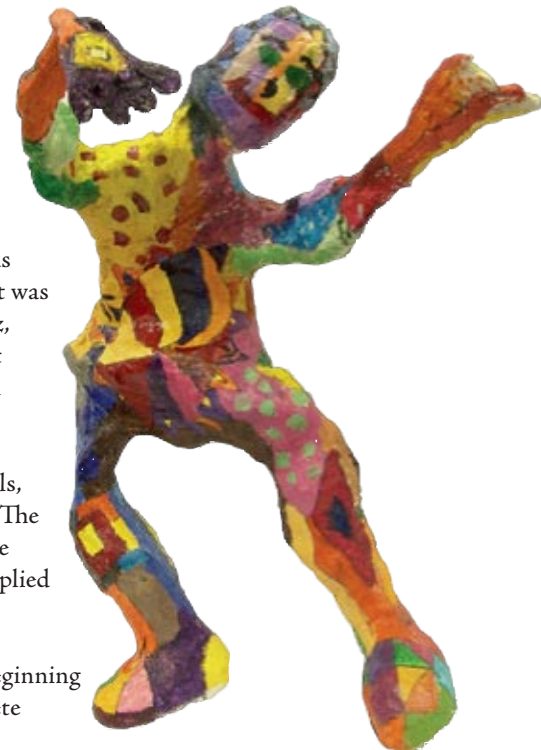
The theme for the summer workshop was "Teamwork" and every activity or project was connected to that theme, said Jose Ortiz, program director for The Children's Art Carnival, who presented each child with a certificate and a box of art supplies.

"All of the projects on the wall, the murals, were done collectively," Mr. Ortiz said. "The children used shape making to create the mural and took that information and applied it to the sculptures."

Also, to help the children focus at the beginning of every class, they created art in complete silence using materials to build blocks.

The children showed how well they cooperated with one another by demonstrating this activity for their families at the art opening.

Dr. Pamela Straker, president and CEO of BPC, was so pleased with the art projects the children created that she displayed them at the agency's gala on October 19. She also hopes to introduce the art workshops at BPC's other community clinics.



More information about
The Children's Art Carnival is available at
www.childrensartcarnival.org

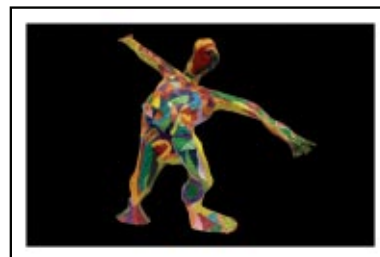
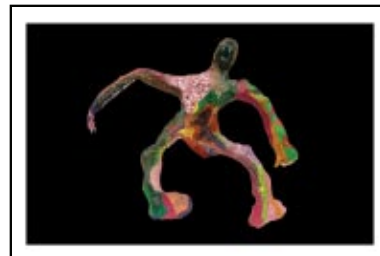
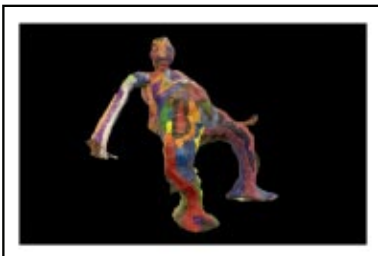
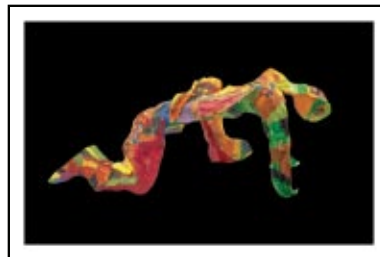
Note Cards Featuring Children's Art Are Now Available for Purchase

The colorful and creative art work produced by the children who participated in the Bushwick Clinic's art workshop has been preserved in all-occasion note cards that are now on sale.

Each package includes 10 cards featuring five separate images of the art. The cards are perfect for gifts or personal use and proceeds will be used to benefit BPC's programs.

The cost of each package of note cards is \$24, which includes shipping and handling. They can be purchased by completing the form below and returning it to:

Brooklyn Psychiatric Centers
 c/o Empire Events Group
 401 Broadway Suite 1700
 New York
 New York 10013



I WOULD LIKE TO ORDER THE CHILDREN'S ART NOTE CARDS

Number of packages _____

Enclosed is a check for \$ _____

Please charge to

Master Card # _____

Visa Card # _____

AmEx Card # _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Please ship to

Name _____

Company _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

A Children's ACT Team Grows in Brooklyn



Marcia Titus-Prescott, RN, administrator of BPC's Children's Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team.

As a nurse helping the homeless in the 1990s, Marcia Titus-Prescott had a revelation. She recognized that many of the problems her homeless clients faced stemmed from their childhoods, which inspired her to seek a position working with children in order to help them avoid dysfunctional adulthoods.

She found her niche at Brooklyn Psychiatric Centers (BPC) in 1997 when she joined the agency's newly created Children's Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team. The ACT Team was developed to provide community-based therapeutic services that support, strengthen, and promote healthy environments for children 5 to 17 who are at risk for out of home placement and their families. Since it was created, BPC's ACT Team has served as a model program for other organizations and remains the only ACT Team in the country that caters to teen adolescents.

Ms. Prescott, who is a registered nurse, serves as the program's administrator and directs four social workers and two part-time employees. The team provides intensive psychotherapy to clients and family therapy and supportive services to parents and other family members residing in Crown Heights, Flatbush, Midwood, East Flatbush, and Canarsie.

One grandmother, who is raising her daughter's children, is one of the program's biggest fans. "The first time I met Ms. Prescott was at Kings County Hospital when my grandson was released. From then on, Ms. Prescott and the ACT Team have helped me. Without them, I don't know what I would have done."

Staff members offer support by accompanying parents or guardians on school visits; help families manage their households to ensure that the rent is paid, the utilities remain turned on, and medical care is received; and interface with agencies and organizations that can provide

services to the children and families, including summer camps for children.

At a recent ACT Team conference in Chicago, Ms. Prescott discussed her program and the types of clients it serves. She said she has observed that children today have more severe diagnoses than in the past. Unfortunately because of budget constraints they are discharged from hospitals and put back into the community before they are stabilized, which causes problems for their families, schools, and neighborhoods.

Providing services to an inner city urban population poses challenges, Ms. Prescott said, for the following reasons:

- non-nuclear families are the norm—there is a prevalence of single parents, extended family, god parents, and others in the home who are not blood relatives;
- family instability is not uncommon and household composition changes;
- there are safety issues in the homes;
- families live in poverty;
- families are often chaotic and reside in violent neighborhoods;
- cultural diversity, immigration status, and cultural beliefs about mental illness often serve as barriers to treatment.

Despite these challenges, however, the families have strengths:

- the family members love their children and want them to have a better life than they experienced;
- although the ACT Team program is voluntary, the families recognize that its services can help and allow the team to continue working with them;
- the families are able, with assistance, to prioritize their own goals and work towards them; and
- the families are able to reflect on their performance and verbalize what is working or is not working for their individual family.

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Community-Based Mental Health Clinics

Bushwick
Mental Health Clinic
1420 Bushwick Avenue

Canarsie
Mental Health Clinic
1310 Rockaway Parkway

Flatbush-Sheepshead Bay
Mental Health Clinic
3043 Avenue W

Louis E. Reinhold Downtown
Mental Health Clinic
189 Montague Street

Edward S. Lentol
Williamsburg-Greenpoint
Mental Health Clinic
819 Grand Street

On-Site School Programs

Central Brooklyn
Initiative Program
2150 Beverley Road
Based in Acorn Community,
Erasmus, and Wingate
High Schools

Rose Gelormino
STAR School Program
189 Montague Street
Based in District 15 Schools

WIN School Program
819 Grand Street
Based in District 14 Schools

Prevention Services for Children and Families

Children's Assertive
Community Treatment
(ACT) Team
2150 Beverley Road
Serving Crown Heights,
Flatbush, Midwood, East
Flatbush, and Canarsie

Senior Programs

Michael Spiegelman
V.I.P. C.S.S. Day Program
1310 Rockaway Parkway

V.I.P. Mobile Geriatric
Treatment Team
1310 Rockaway Parkway

Drug and Alcohol Treatment

Clearway
44 Court Street

Court-Mandated Treatment Program

ACCESS-ACT
189 Montague Street