



Project Connect Gazette

Volume 17, Issue 7

September 2006

PC Staff:

Rhonda Lewis, M.Ed.
Operations Manager

Trish Fries
Development Manager

Shelley Werner
Site Manager

Helen O'Rourke
Site Manager

Karen Fessler, M.Ed.
Adolescent Manager

Elissa Pogue, LISW
Social Worker

Audrey Coaston-Shelton, MS
School Psychologist

Crystal Alexander
Public Ally

David Sanders
Public Ally

PCHCF Trustees:

Jeff Kellerman
President

Kim Blank
Vice President

Mary Ann Robbe
Treasurer

Bryan Foltz
Secretary

Leslie Ackerson
Nolan Behling
Tracy Eads
Rob Ford
Dara Goecke-Jenkins
Angela Grillo
Bill Hutchinson
Wanda Jones
Sandy Knight
Marsha Marcus
Allegra Nicodemus
Suzanne Osterhage
Sandra Pierce
Debbie Reinhart
Marsha Steed

Fond Farewell Debbie Reinhart



Well, Helen has reminded me several times to write my final words for the Gazette. I am now forced to focus myself for this painful task. Painful, not because I am not ready to move onto another venture, but painful because I will be leaving the friendships, the great people and most importantly the neatest children and youth that I have ever met. Audrey, Karen, Helen, Rhonda, Trish and Shelley have not only been my coworkers but have become part of my family. I love you guys!

We (meaning Paul McDole, Jr. and Loni Sander) started this program on a “wing and a prayer” in the fall of 1995. None of us, including the school district, had any idea of how many children and youth were experiencing homelessness in Cincinnati. It is hard to believe that to date we have served over 18,000 young lives and have hopefully made a difference in many.

Over the years, we have been able to develop and implement a nationally recognized program known for its drive, energy, passion, educationally focused mission and quality services. If I were to identify anything I personally contributed to the program it would be my enthusiasm and ability to motivate others to work to the best of their abilities with one goal in mind, “do whatever is in the best interest of the children.” Fortunately the strategy worked as I believe I am leaving behind one of the best programs for children and youth experiencing homelessness in the country (not too humble, am I).

Sometimes the staff would dread if I can in beaming with “I have an idea...” as they knew it meant we all were in for a big brainstorming session. However, I have never been able to think “small” and believe if you are going to think anyway it might as well be “big.” Again, fortunately, they would all humor me and comply and consequently some of the best programming resulted.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the unbelievable support and value of the Project Connect Homeless Children's Fund. This group of volunteers has been an invaluable resource for Project Connect and has enabled the staff to provide all of the necessities for our children. Thank you all; you are greatly appreciated.

In the words of Kurt Hahn, founder of Outward Bound, “there is more in us than we know. If we can be made to see it, perhaps, for the rest of our lives, we will be unwilling to settle for less.” I hope that Project Connect has been able to instill in each child experiencing homelessness this most valuable of lessons and thus given a voice and a choice back to children who without PC would have neither.

Want to send Debbie Reinhart your well wishes or find out what's she up to next? She can now be reached by email at reinhart_debbie@yahoo.com.



Postcards from Camp

For the ninth year in a row, local children experiencing homelessness had the time of their lives at the **Project Connect** summer camp. Over 150 children experiencing homelessness participated in the eight week camp. Approximately 85 children traveled to camp each day from various emergency shelters and motels located throughout Cincinnati. The children spent an hour each day in small reading groups before heading out of fun and adventure at the local pool, at community parks or at any one of Cincinnati's famous attractions. Project Connect would like to thank the many staff and volunteers who worked tirelessly with the children this summer. The program would not have been as successful as it was without the numerous community and business volunteers who went the extra mile (see the complete list of summer supporters on page 3). Thanks to everyone for making this summer quite an adventure. See you next year!

In Their Own Words

They really are listening!

"Something I was surprised by this summer was at the talent show when the kids were speaking about their artwork. One of the students, Rayonia, spoke about a drawing she kept, because I told her that she could fix it instead of throwing it away. I did not know that she was going to mention that, so standing up there and hearing that it surprised me. It is great to know that they remember even the small things that you say."

- Ms. Mimi, Summer University Student

New experiences for everyone

"Eric told me that he liked coming to camp because we took them to the movies. Later, he told me that he had never been to the movies before."

- Ms. Lisa, Summer Staff

Families benefit from camp, too

"At the end of camp I taught the kids about first aid, and we made first aid kits. At the end of the day the kids were so excited to take home their kits to share their new knowledge with their families."

- Ms. Sean, UC Medical Student Intern

Rainy weather won't keep anyone away

"On a stormy Friday morning, we were in the classroom reading when one of our students walked in soaking wet. Cameron had ridden his bike from Mt. Auburn to the camp in the West End, because he missed the bus for camp. He told me, 'I missed the bus, but I didn't wanna miss today, so I rode my mountain bike. I can ride it home this afternoon, too, if I can't get it on the bus.'"

- Mr. Hudson, Summer Staff

Heaven here on earth

"While we were at the Golden Corral Restaurant, I asked a young girl to finish her meal and prepare to leave. She looked at me and replied, 'I don't want to leave heaven.'"

- Ms. Lewis, Summer Coordinator



Here the 8 and 9 year old campers posed with the Japanese lanterns that they made during Asia Week.

Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden

Thank you to the Cincinnati Zoo Employees who made "A Walk on the Wild Side" such an amazing success. One day this summer, 14 Project Connect campers had the opportunity of a lifetime as they explored the zoo with zoo employees. The time and attention paid by the zoo staff made a "world" of difference in the campers' experience. Thanks to Karen Wilson and all of the zoo staff who made this event possible!





PC campers spent time in the community garden each week.

**Procter & Gamble's
Live, Learn & Thrive Initiative**

City of Cincinnati

P&G and the City of Cincinnati have had an undeniable impact on the Project Connect summer camp, allowing the necessary staffing, supplies and field trips to provide the best possible program. Thank you to both for their steadfast support!



2006 Summer Partners

Anthem, Avanti Group, Mary Ann Berry, Wini Bruening, City of Cincinnati, Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy, Cincinnati Reds, Civic Garden Center, Community Action Agency, CPS Central Office Employees, Crossroads Community Church, Amani Edwards, Monica Espinal, First Unitarian Church, Foster Grandparent Program, Brenda Frankenhoff, Frisch's, Laura Greenwell, Happen, Inc., Ali Hawkins, Shirley Keating, Matthew Kincaid, Krohn Conservatory, John Labmeier, Landmark Baptist, Shirley McMurry, Miami University, Julie Muething, Sandy Owen, PCHCF, Prasco, Procter & Gamble, Project Linus, Red Squirrel, Mary Ruff, Summertime Kids—Greater Cincinnati Foundation, Jeff Thomas Catering, University of Cincinnati Counselors and Interns—Shelby & Amy, Urban Health Project—University of Cincinnati, TJ Vest, West Cincinnati Presbyterian Church, Pam & Ron Wilson, Women's Missionary Society of the AME Church, Xavier University and Sharon Zealey.

Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy

- Colorful, brand new beach towels: **141**
- Swimsuits in all sizes and styles: **291**
- Fun flip-flop pairs of footwear: **333**
- From 'tighty-whities' to bikinis and briefs: **389**
- Tshirts to express individuality: **526**
- Socks, socks and more socks: **1,224 pair!**

2,904 items to make homeless kids feel like stars . .

Priceless!

Thanks to Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy for arranging such a special start to our summer program.



Two PC campers enjoy a fun filled day at East Fork Lake!

Project Connect Homeless Children's Fund
940 Poplar Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45214
Phone: 513-363-1060
Fax: 513-363-1061
Email: reinhad@cps-k12.org

NON-PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
CINCINNATI OH
PERMIT #4237

Funded by THE CITY OF CINCINNATI



PCHCF is a proud member of the **Community Shares of Greater Cincinnati**. To learn more about contributing to PCHCF at your workplace, visit www.pcfund.org or www.cintishares.org.

News You Can Use

Quarterly Shelter Tours Now Available: Ever wondered what shelter life is like for our families? Here's your opportunity to learn more about children experiencing homelessness and to see where many families spend their evenings. Cincinnati has an array of shelter accommodations and services—our tour will expose you to 2 or 3 of them. Provided quarterly, **space is limited so please reserve early**, indicating your preferred date: email friestr@cps-k12.org.



Tours begin at 9:30 am, at the Project Connect main office (940 Poplar St, Cincinnati 45214) with a viewing of the DVD "In Their Own Voices." This 15 minute video will let you hear directly from children who have experienced homelessness and lived in shelters. After a short overview of Project Connect services to homeless children and families, we will take you to two or three shelters in Cincinnati. Sign up today!



Save the Date! *The 9th Annual Children's Faces Without Places Benefit: Greater Cincinnati All Stars Going to Bat for Kids* will be held on **Friday, November 3** at the Great American Ballpark. The evening will be complete with music, dancing, raffles, live and silent auctions. For more information, please contact Kim Blank at (513) 708-0214 or kblank26@yahoo.com or Amy Maynard at (513) 252-3824 or amangione20@yahoo.com. We appreciate your support and look forward to enjoying the evening with you.

Stock up on School Supplies: Last year, Project Connect gave out school supplies to **600** children and youth experiencing homelessness. Right now, we are in need of the following: **rulers, glue sticks, children's scissors, pencil sharpeners, spiral notebooks, and student dictionaries**. Any little bit helps. Thanks!