

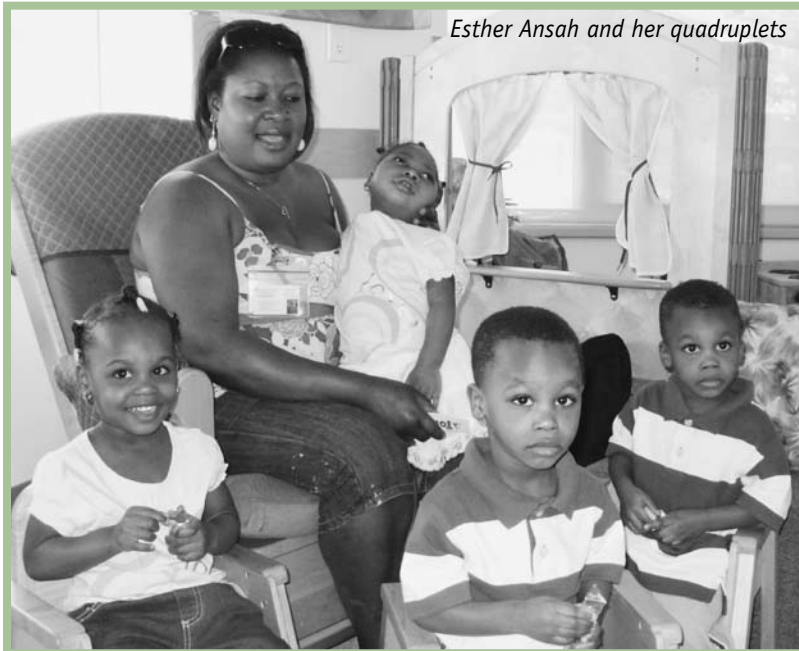


EPISCOPAL SOCIAL SERVICES

175 Years of Helping New Yorkers in Need

August 2008

EARLY HEAD START STAFF SEEING DOUBLE – TWICE



Teachers and staff in ESS' Early Head Start Program might understandably be doing a double-take – or even a triple-take – in their classrooms this year: for the first time ever, the Program has enrolled a set of quadruplets! "This has been quite a learning experience for all of us," said Helen Davis, Director of the Early Head Start Program. "We've never even had twins in the classroom before."

Simon, Naomi, Samuel, and Nora are the two-year-old children of Esther and Samuel Ansah, who emigrated to the U.S. from Ghana, West Africa thirteen years ago. Before the birth of the quads, they were living in a small apartment in Manhattan with their son, who is now 14. When the Ansahs learned that they had not one, but four more children on the way, they knew they would need a lot more room; fortunately, Habitat for Humanity came to the rescue by building them a new home in Mott Haven, in the South Bronx.

But though they now had living space, there were still problems: Esther quickly discovered what a handful four new babies would be. Moreover, the quads had been born prematurely, and while three of them were developing normally, Nora was still experiencing developmental delays. As the children grew older, she and

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ROBIN HOOD FOUNDATION MAKES \$100,000 GRANT TO EXPAND EARLY HEAD START

The Robin Hood Foundation has announced a grant of \$100,000 to fund the expansion of ESS' Early Head Start Program in the South Bronx. This generous support will enable ESS to increase enrollment by 16 new slots, for a total enrollment of 76 – reaching more children of very-low-income families to give them the best possible foundation for learning, exploration, and growth. ESS is proud to partner with the Robin Hood Foundation in this vital work and is grateful for the Foundation's endorsement and encouragement.

Early childhood experts agree that providing disadvantaged children and families with developmental services and parenting support – as early as possible in the child's life – has a significant positive impact on the child's healthy growth and learning potential. Early Head Start (which serves children from birth to age three) and Head

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A MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROBERT H. GUTHEIL



For over 175 years, ESS has served New Yorkers in need in every borough of the city; today ESS' outreach takes place in Manhattan, the Bronx, and Brooklyn. However, for some 30 years now, much of our effort has been devoted to the

South Bronx, an area where we felt we could make a significant, positive difference among families and the community. Much of our activity remains centered in the South Bronx communities of Mott Haven, Hunt's Point, and Port Morris. In fact, ESS reconfirmed its commitment to this area with the opening of Paul's House in Mott Haven.

In this issue you will read about some exciting program activities and enhancements, both in our Bronx-based programs, as well as those in other areas. These include the expansion of our Early Head Start Program at Paul's House, made possible by a generous grant from the Robin Hood Foundation. Our After-School Program has expanded into new school sites in the Bronx and Brooklyn, now serving students in ten public elementary, middle, and high schools. Our Foster Care and Adoption Program continues to receive high marks from the city's Administration for Children's Services, and our six Day Care and Early Childhood Education Centers, which serve some 750 two-to-five year-olds in Manhattan and Brooklyn, recently "graduated" a number of their students into public and parochial school careers.

The partnerships we have with public and private institutional and individual supporters help make all this possible. We recognize and deeply appreciate the support that each of you provides in maintaining our vital work among our neighbors at risk. Thank you for enabling us to continue to reach out to meet, and alleviate, the needs of our most vulnerable neighbors.

Robert H. Gutheil
Executive Director

ESS CO-CHAIRS COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE COALITION

In an effort to engage a broad spectrum of community stakeholders in the provision of child welfare services, New York City's Administration for Children's Services (ACS) is facilitating the creation of Community Partnership Initiatives (CPI) that help community-based organizations, parents, service providers, and other concerned parties work together to increase the capacity and efficiency of local services for children. ESS was instrumental in the formation of one such coalition, the Mott Haven Link CPI, for the South Bronx area served by Paul's House. Co-chaired by Deanne Channer, ESS' Director of Family Preservation, the Mott Haven Link CPI works with ACS to protect local children from abuse and neglect, and to strengthen families within the community.

The CPI project is currently made up of coalitions in 11 New York City communities and comprises, in addition to families and local area concerns, agencies that provide child welfare, Head Start, Family Preservation, or child care services. With the goal of transforming the delivery and coordination of services to families, ACS seeks to eventually extend the CPI format into all 59 of New York City's community districts.

It is common for families involved in the child welfare system to exhibit a range of needs that must be addressed, including issues of housing, medical or mental health care, substance abuse, and education, among others. The Mott Haven Link CPI is working to increase coordination and cooperation among its 50 participating member agencies to ensure that children and families in the community can receive timely and effective assistance, while reducing duplication of efforts and system gaps.

According to Ms. Channer, the CPI approach is working. "I'm pleased to say that the Mott Haven Link CPI is doing great work in the South Bronx. We've strengthened our coalition of participating agencies, and we're working very hard on strengthening local families and communicating to the community the range of services that are available. I look forward to the continued growth of the CPI as we forge new partnerships with other existing community programs." ■

ESS SPRING BENEFIT



PHOTO: RONALD L. GLASSMAN

Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrión, Jr. and Fr. Stephen J. Chinlund

ESS held its annual Spring Benefit on May 6th at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in Manhattan, honoring a number of friends and benefactors whose steadfast and generous support of ESS has been instrumental in creating lasting, positive change among disadvantaged children, families, and individuals in New York City. Honorees included Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrión, Jr.; Fr. Stephen J. Chinlund, former Executive Director of ESS; Marion and Roger Gilbert, Emeritus Directors; Diana and Edmond Nouri, long-time Board member and her husband; the Rhodebeck Charitable Trust, a generous supporter of a range of ESS programs; and William H. Wright II, Managing Director at Morgan Stanley and former Board member. Entertainment was provided by noted actor and singer Michael Nouri. Funds raised from the Spring Benefit are used to support a variety of programs and activities at ESS. ■

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM OPENS NEW SITES IN THE SOUTH BRONX, BROOKLYN

ESS' After-School Program continues its expansion, opening new public school sites in the South Bronx and Brooklyn. This raises the total number of ESS After-School sites to ten public elementary, middle, and high schools in New York City, serving nearly 1,200 students.

The After-School Program was launched in 1999 at MS 302 in the Mott Haven section of the South Bronx. The new Program site, PS 130, is an elementary "feeder school" for nearby MS 302, creating a unique bond between the two student populations. This relationship has been an asset in addressing one of the particular risks faced by the students at PS 130: namely, that students as young as fifth-graders encounter threats and violence from local gang activity. The After-School Program has recruited students from MS 302 to act as peer mentors to the younger children, incorporating training in conflict resolution and peer mediation to help the elementary students avoid falling into gang recruitment and other unhealthy relationships and activities.

In addition, the After-School Program has begun operations at PS 135, in East Flatbush, Brooklyn. This elementary school is located in a community where only 13% of individuals age 25 or older have graduated from college; for these children, the tutoring, mentoring, and personal development activities provided by the After-School Program can mean the difference between success and failure in school. ESS seeks to continue its track record of success in improving students' academic achievements and leadership skills in this new school environment. ■

QUADRUPLETS *continued from page 1*

her husband went online to find help – and came across ESS' website describing the Early Head Start Program at Paul's House, ESS' early childhood center, right in their community. Before long, all four of the Ansah toddlers were signed up. (Simon, Naomi, and Samuel attend the center-based classes, while Nora, who is still receiving early intervention services, has a full-time nurse and is enrolled in the home-based program. It's hoped that soon Nora's health will catch up with her siblings, and she, too, can join the center-based program.) Now Esther has a caring community to help with the children while Samuel is at work: "Early Head Start has made such a difference for us, and the children love it," she says.

The Early Head Start Program is designed to give the children of very-low income families the best possible start in life by providing a stimulating and nurturing environment in which they can learn socialization skills, awaken their sense of curiosity, and begin actively exploring their world. In order to encourage Simon, Naomi, and Samuel to bond with other children besides their siblings, the staff decided to place them in separate classrooms. "During the transitioning period, we usually have parents in with the new children to help them acclimate to the new environment," Ms. Davis recalled. "Here we had the mother in one classroom, the father in another, and their older son in the third – all of them happily pitching in to help the toddlers adjust. It took a little time for them to adjust to the change, but eventually the little ones settled in, and now they're just as happy and active as can be." Maybe it's because they sense that they and their family have become a welcome part of the ESS community. ■

ESS' FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTION PROGRAM RECEIVES HIGHEST MARKS

ESS' Foster Care and Adoption Program works with approximately 500 children each year who have been removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect. The overriding need is to get these children into safe, loving foster homes as soon as possible, and ultimately to either reunite them with their biological families when the presenting issues have been resolved, or move them into permanent homes through adoption by relatives or others. In recognition of ESS' success in accomplishing permanency for the children in its care, New York City's Administration for Children's Services has rated ESS' Foster Care Program "Outstanding" for the period from January to March 2008. Congratulations to the dedicated staff and the 350 foster families whose devotion made this possible. ■

GROUP HOMES GRADUATIONS



Carmen Polanco-Lugo

On June 25th, ESS celebrated the accomplishments of 20 residents of its Foster Care Group Homes who graduated from high school. The festivities included a "baccalaureate" address by Executive Director Robert H.

Gutheil, and a keynote address by Carmen Polanco-Lugo, who related how she rose from a childhood of limited financial and growth opportunities to earn a BS in chemistry, an MS in developmental psychology, and an MBA, leading to a career in the pharmaceutical industry and an entrepreneurial venture. Using her story to impress upon the graduates the importance of determination and perseverance, she urged them to use every opportunity to follow their dreams and succeed. Many of this year's graduates from the ESS Group Homes will be continuing their education at college in the fall; students will be matriculating at the Borough of Manhattan Community College, John Jay College, New York City Technical College, Syracuse University, SUNY Albany, and York College. ESS is proud of what these young people have achieved, and congratulates them on the beginning of a new stage in their lives. ■

DAY CARE CENTERS CELEBRATE "GRADUATES"

ESS' six Day Care and Early Childhood Education Centers recently celebrated the "graduation" of their students who had reached the age the age of five years, making them ready to move up into Kindergarten. Complete with caps and gowns, 66 children from centers in Manhattan and Brooklyn bid farewell to their

Cordelia McNish, Assistant Executive Director for Early Childhood Services (right) and Charlotte Striggles, Director of the Cooper Park Child Care Center (left) congratulate one of the graduates



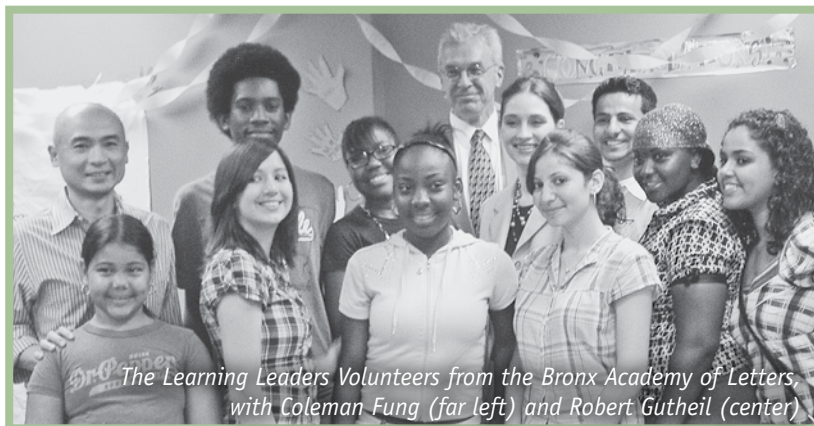
teachers and classmates as they prepared to enter the next stage of their educational careers. Parents and friends watched proudly as the graduates were fêted with songs and recitations, and received congratulations on their special days.

A number of public officials took part in the ceremonies, addressing the children and expressing their pride and best wishes. Attendees included Council Member Rosie Mendez, who spoke of her own experience in New York City's Head Start Program; Council Member Diana Reyna, who noted that, as an immigrant from the Dominican Republic, she was the first in her family to graduate from college; New York Assemblyman Brian Kavanagh, who stressed the importance of education; and William Harris, a representative from Assemblyman Vito Lopez's office, who gave the graduates certificates of merit. Best wishes to all these graduates for their continued success in school! ■

HELP US MAKE A DIFFERENCE

For over 175 years, ESS has been helping children, families, and individuals improve their lives and their communities through programs in early childhood development, after-school tutoring and mentoring, family preservation, and much more. Our commitment to making lasting positive change is only possible with the support of friends and benefactors who share our desire to help our most vulnerable neighbors make the most of their lives and opportunities. Please help us continue this vital outreach with your donations to maintain our programs and services. For information on making a gift to ESS, please call Ms. Kerry Hishta Hui, Director, Development and Communications, at 212-886-5604, or email her at huik@e-s-s.org.

VOLUNTEERS FROM THE BRONX ACADEMY OF LETTERS



The Learning Leaders Volunteers from the Bronx Academy of Letters, with Coleman Fung (far left) and Robert Gutheil (center)

ESS has partnered with the Coleman Fung Foundation and the Bronx Academy of Letters to create the Learning Leaders Program, which provides high school juniors from the Bronx Academy the opportunity to hone their leadership skills while volunteering to help at-risk children develop self-confidence by fostering their literary and artistic skills. The Bronx Academy is a rigorous, college-preparatory high school in the Mott Haven section of the South Bronx whose graduates are trained to be highly articulate, critical readers, writers, and problem-solvers. Students who successfully complete the nine-month volunteer project are eligible for a six-week summer academic college course at the University of California-Berkeley, their participation sponsored by the Coleman Fung Foundation.

The student volunteers work with children of parents in ESS' Family Preservation Program, which seeks to help troubled families resolve issues that might otherwise lead to foster care placement. Each year the Family Preservation Program offers two 15-week Parenting Skills workshops to help parents learn healthy and effective ways of raising their children; during these sessions, the Bronx Academy students meet with the parents' children and lead them in a variety of activities designed to encourage their self-expression through such activities as storytelling, puppetry, dance and movement, and roleplay. These activities help the children build a sense of community and develop a recognition of their own abilities and interests. After each session, the students evaluate the evening's accomplishments, critique their own work, and plan for the next week's session. At the end of each workshop cycle, the parents are honored at a "graduation" ceremony where their children present a performance based on their work with the student volunteers.

"These student volunteers are some of the brightest lights of their community," said Coleman Fung, founder of the software company OpenLink and the foundation that bears his name. "It's essential that we facilitate their growth and development as well-rounded and empathetic leaders. I'm very happy that this partnership between ESS and the Bronx Academy of Letters is providing such important opportunities for these students to give back to the community." ESS is deeply grateful to Mr. Fung for his vision in founding the Learning Leaders Program, and to the Foundation for its generosity in supporting this effort to raise up promising young adults from a disadvantaged community and prepare them to be highly-capable leaders for tomorrow. ■

ROBIN HOOD FOUNDATION GRANT

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Start (for children three to five years) offer a range of tailored services to make sure children of very-low-income families have the same stimulating, encouraging, and supportive environment in which to begin exploring their world as do children of better-off families. The Program also helps parents connect with other social services they may need, such as food pantries, health clinics, and other community-based programs.

Despite the documented benefits of these early childhood programs, their availability in the Bronx falls far short of the need. There are only three Early Head Start Programs in all of the Bronx, and ESS' Program in Mott Haven is the only full Early Head Start Program in the South Bronx. There is no federal funding available for the creation of any additional Early Head Start Programs at this time. Yet given the environmental and economic difficulties faced by families in communities like the South Bronx, the kind of support and assistance that Early Head Start can provide for expectant families and children up to three years old is all the more vital.

In light of this, the generosity of the Robin Hood Foundation helps to address an urgent need for families wanting to give their children the best possible start in life. ESS is pleased to join with the Foundation in offering a brighter future for young families in need and their children. ■

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ESS WELCOMES THREE NEW BOARD MEMBERS

ESS is pleased to welcome three new members to its Board of Directors:

Thomas M. Hickey is Managing Director of Castle Harlan, a leading private equity investment firm. Previously, Mr. Hickey held positions in Credit Suisse First Boston's Mergers and Acquisitions Group, the Capital Markets Division of Allianz AG, and the Investment Banking Division of Robinson-Humphrey. He was an Echols Scholar at the University of Virginia, where he received his B.A. with Distinction in Economics and English Literature, and he holds an M.B.A from the Harvard Business School.

Julia Kahr is a Principal in Corporate Private Equity for The Blackstone Group, a leading global alternative asset manager and provider of financial advisory services. Prior to joining Blackstone, she was a Project Leader at the Boston Consulting Group, working with companies in a variety of fields including health care, financial services, and media. The author of *Working Knowledge* (Simon and Schuster, 1998), Ms. Kahr holds a B.A. summa cum laude in Classical Civilization from Yale University, and earned her M.B.A from the Harvard Business School.

Jennifer Wallace has worked as a journalist for *60 Minutes*, conducting research and script development for dozens of sequences, and co-producing stories for correspondent Morley Safer. Her background in publishing includes the position of Associate Editor at Doubleday; researching and editing the book *Serious Play* by Michael Schrage (Harvard Business School Press, 2000); and assisting *New Yorker* staff writer Ved Mehta with his upcoming book about the magazine. Ms. Wallace earned her B.A. cum laude in English and American Literature from Harvard College. ■

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