

The Learning Letter

Summer 2006

Learning Leaders Celebrity Read Aloud 2006

CEOs and celebrities read to 1,000 public school children at Learning Leaders annual event!

On March 13th, Learning Leaders hosted 1,000 NYC fourth graders along with celebrity and corporate readers at a Celebrity Read Aloud and Corporate Breakfast at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall. The event was chaired by Reuben Mark, Chairman and CEO of Colgate-Palmolive and featured Schools Chancellor Joel Klein, who spoke to the corporate and individual guests about the state of public education in New York City. Learning Leaders Board Chair Iris Weinsahl Schumer also addressed the audience and UFT President Randi Weingarten presented the citywide essay winner, Julio Chevalier of PS 109 in the Bronx, with an award.



Above: Essay Contest winner Julio Chevalier and Nickelodeon's Pick Boy.
Below, left to right: Dana Tyler; The New York Goofs; students enjoy the show.

After breakfast, celebrities and corporate leaders read specially chosen books on the topic of celebrating differences. Readers included NBC *Today Show* host Al Roker, Deborah Roberts from

ABC's *20/20*, Alison Bartlett from *Sesame Street*, CBS2 News Anchor Dana Tyler and Reuben Mark. Nickelodeon's Pickboy, Jeff Sutphen, hosted the show, much to the children's delight!



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Learning Leaders is the largest volunteer organization dedicated to helping New York City's public school children. Learning Leaders recruits, trains and supports 14,933 school volunteers who provide tutoring and other support to 219,000 students in 937 schools.

A Message from Our Chairman

As we approach the 50th anniversary of the founding of Learning Leaders, we are deeply proud of – and rather amazed at – how far we've come since that day in 1956 when 20 women volunteered to help schoolchildren get their boots on and off. Today, nearly 15,000 volunteers are helping more than 200,000 students to succeed in 937 of New York City's public schools.

The 2006-2007 school year will be a year of renewal and growth at Learning Leaders.

In this issue of Learning Letter, you will read about some of the activities of the 2005-2006 school year: the Celebrity Read Aloud attended by 1,000 fourth graders at Lincoln Center; a contest among students at the Jonathan Levin High School of Media and Communications to create public service

announcements showcasing the work of our volunteers; media literacy training for parents in Brooklyn; summer tips for parents; and much more.

The 2006-2007 school year will be a year of renewal and growth at Learning Leaders, as we complete the search now underway for the successor to Digna Sanchez, who led us through unprecedented program expansion, implementation of a new strategic plan, and the move to our new offices at 80 Maiden Lane. The search for our next President/Executive Director is being conducted on our behalf by the firm of Phillips Oppenheim, a leader in nonprofit executive search. Nominations of candidates should be sent via email to learningleaders@phillipsoppenheim.com.

Our opening meeting is set for Tuesday, September 26, 2006, at the Marquis Marriott in Times Square. Come help us celebrate a half-century of service, as we rededicate ourselves to strengthening the education of New York City's public school children.

I. Weinshall Schumer

Iris Weinshall Schumer
Chairman, Board of Trustees

Learning Leaders is turning 50!

We will be celebrating from September 2006 to June 2007 – we think a school year's worth of celebrating is quite fitting.

Our 50th school year kicks off with our volunteers at our Opening Meeting. There will be many more events and celebrations throughout the year. Stay tuned!

50th Anniversary Opening Meeting

Tuesday, September 26, 2006
Marriott Marquis
45th/46th Streets and Broadway

Doors open at 9am

Look for your invitation in August!

Parent Tips

Healthy Eating Tips for Parents and Children

- Make sure your child eats breakfast. Breakfast provides children with the energy they need to listen and learn in school.
- Offer your child a wide variety of foods such as grains, vegetables and fruits, low-fat dairy products and lean meats or beans.
- Talk with your health care provider if you are concerned about your child's eating habits or weight.
- Cook with less fat – bake, roast or poach instead of frying.
- Limit the amount of added sugar in your child's diet. Serve water or low-fat milk more often than soda or fruit flavored drinks.
- Involve your child in planning and preparing meals. Children may be more willing to eat the dishes they help fix.
- Involve the whole family in activities like walking, biking, dancing, basketball or roller skating.

Summer Adventures Online

Do some experimenting this summer at www.TryScience.org. This site is a free resource for middle-school children and their parents. It contains exciting ideas for science experiments and field trips. You can also see – via live-cams – what's going on at science centers across the country!

Visit the pyramids of Egypt without leaving your home at www.eternalegypt.org. This site brings to light over five thousand years of Egyptian civilization. Eternal Egypt is a living record of a land rich in art and history, people and places, myths and religions.

Both of these sites are multilingual and brought to you by IBM and partners.

Ideas para Padres

Ideas Saludables para Padres y Niños.

- Asegurese que su hijo desayune. El desayuno le da a los niños la energía que ellos necesitan para aprender y prestar atención en la escuela.
- Of rescale a su hijo una variedad de comidas como granos, vegetales y frutas, y productos de leche y carnes bajas en grasa y frijoles.
- Hable con su doctor si usted esta preocupada por los habitos de comer o el peso de su hijo.
- Cocine con menos grasa – hornee en vez de freir.
- Limite la cantidad de azucar en la dieta de su hijo. Sirva agua o leche baja en grasa mas amenudo que soda o bebidas con sabor a frutas.
- Incluya a su hijo en la planificación y la preparación de las comidas. Los niños queran comer las comidas que ellos mismos ayudaron a preparar.
- Incluya a la familia completa en actividades como caminar, montar en bicicleta, bailar, jugar al baloncesto o a patinar.

Aventuras de Verano en el Internet

Experimente este verano con www.TryScience.org. Este programa del internet es un recurso gratis para niños de la escuela intermedia y sus padres. Contiene ideas exitantes para experimentos científicos y excursiones. ¡Tambien puede ver lo que esta pasando en vivo via camaras en centros científicos en toda la nación!

Visite las piramides del Egipto sin salir de su casa con el programa del internet www.eternalegypt.org. Este programa del internet le muestra sobre cinco mil años de civilización egipcia. Eternal Egypt es un archivo viviente de un país rico en arte y historia, sitios y personas, mitos y religiones.

Los dos programas de internet son multilingües y son proporcionados por IBM y compañeros.



Learning Leaders Theater Benefit

A Chorus Line
Tuesday, October 24, 8pm

Mary Poppins
Saturday, November 4, 2pm

Call today for ticket information: 646.827.4735

"High school kids are getting involved to help our community and youngsters. There should be more opportunities like this."

Keyana Lundy, Senior, Jonathan Levin High School for Media and Communications

Learning Leaders on the Big Screen

This spring, Learning Leaders' National Urban Fellow Christine Ho coordinated the Learning Leaders/HITN TV Public Service Announcement Competition. The goals of the project were to 1) showcase the work of outstanding volunteers, and 2) allow aspiring young media artists to create a substantial piece for their portfolios. She was inspired by the phenomenal history and accomplishments of Learning Leaders.

Learning Leaders collaborated with HITN (Hispanic Information and Telecommunications Network) to run a contest through the Jonathan Levin High School of Media and Communications' Visual Studies Program in the Bronx. Seventeen juniors and seniors were selected to produce public service announcements (PSAs) about Learning Leaders volunteers in Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan and the Bronx. The winning PSAs were featured at the High School Filmmakers Showcase and Awards Ceremony during the NYC Havana Film Festival on April 25th. HITN-TV will broadcast the PSAs through their national network.

The one-minute PSAs highlight elementary, middle school and high school tutoring, as well as special programs, including College Planning, Authors Read Aloud, Literary Leaders, and ArtWorks. The student crews filmed at seven schools and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The first prize team won summer internships at HITN TV. Second and third prize teams won memberships to the National Association for Latino and Independent Producers. All of the participating students also received \$100 gift certificates for electronic equipment.



Students from the Jonathan Levin High School for Media and Communications put their filmmaking skills to work for Learning Leaders.

"Los estudiantes de la escuela secundaria se están involucrando para ayudar a nuestra comunidad. Deben de haber más oportunidades como esta."

Keyana Lundy, Estudiante, Jonathan Levin High School for Media and Communications

Learning Leaders en la Pantalla Grande

Esta Primavera la National Urban Fellow de Learning Leaders, Christine Ho coordinó la competencia de anuncio para servicio público. Las metas del proyecto fueron 1) demostrar el trabajo de los voluntarios y 2) permitir que los jóvenes aspirantes a ser artistas de los medios de comunicación pudieran crear un comercial para sus portafolios. Ella se inspiró con la historia fenomenal y los hechos de Learning Leaders.

Learning Leaders colaboró con HITN (Hispanic Information and Telecommunications Network) para crear una competencia en el programa de estudios visuales en la escuela secundaria de los Medios de Comunicación Jonathan Levin en el Bronx. Diez y siete estudiantes fueron seleccionados para producir un anuncio para servicio público sobre Learning Leaders en Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan y el Bronx. Los anuncios ganadores serán mostrados en la ceremonia del High School Filmmakers Showcase durante el Festival de Películas de Havana de la Ciudad de Nueva York el 25 de abril. HITN-TV pondrá los anuncios al aire en su cadena nacional.

Los anuncios de un minuto se enfocan en los tutores elementales, los de la escuela intermedia, la escuela secundaria y también los programas especiales de College Planning, Authors Read Aloud, Literary Leaders, y ArtWorks. Los equipos de estudiantes filmaron en siete escuelas y el Museo Metropolitano de Arte. El equipo ganador fue premiado con un internado de verano en la estación HITN-TV. Los equipos en segundo y tercer lugar fueron premiados con una participación a la Asociación Nacional para Productores Independientes y Latinos. Todos los estudiantes que participaron también recibieron un certificado de \$100 para equipos electrónicos.



Art as a Tool for Community-Building

Learning Leader Ingrid Gribbon remembers 9/11 well. For hours, she did not know if her husband, a Deputy Fire Commissioner, was alive. He did live but he lost 100 of his friends and colleagues.

What Ingrid experienced in the wake of 9/11 was an increased gratitude for life, and, along with that, a decision to step up her ef-

“You give big, you get big. It’s about community, inclusiveness, and generosity.”

orts to pull people together around common goals and issues. She started by serving as PTA President of her children’s school, PS 347. When Ingrid moved her children to PS 77, she brought her passion for community-building with her by leading a school-wide project that fostered philanthropy and artistic development.

For the past year, Ingrid has organized a crew of 18 parent volunteers. Their mission: to help the children of each class at PS 77 create art projects to be put up for bid at the school auction. The projects included functional ceramic and wood objects, all of which were decorated by students.

With Co-Chair Elga Casino, Ingrid gave each class in the school an object to decorate –

a platter, a mirror, a cookie jar, a chest of drawers – and assigned one parent per class to help the children with the decorating. The parents worked with the children at lunch and recess time, helping each student make a contribution to the class piece.

The theme of each object often tied in with the classroom curriculum. For example, a class that studied colonial New York painted a serving platter called “Coming to New York.” Another piece showcased famous buildings of New York City.

Each child who helped decorate an item for the auction was asked to lend their signature to the piece. According to Ingrid, “They were incredibly excited about that accomplishment and about the artwork they had contributed to the project.”

Ingrid views the work leading up to the auction as a way to teach humanitarianism and philanthropy to young people. And,



according to Ingrid, the lesson learned by the adults who help in the process is “You give big, you get big. It’s about community, inclusiveness, and generosity,” relays Ingrid.

For more information, please visit www.Labauction.blogspot.com.

Above and right: ceramics from PS 77.

Remembering Michael O’Brien

His optimism and positive attitude were immediately felt.

We were saddened to learn that Michael O’Brien, a Learning Leader at Manhattan Comprehensive Night and Day High School, passed away in January 2006. Michael joined our organization as a volunteer last fall and his optimism and positive attitude were immediately felt. He volunteered his time with two students to prepare them for the U.S. History Regents. Michael’s family told us about how much he enjoyed his volunteer work and how he talked so positively with friends and colleagues about his experience.

Michael was counsel to Dow Jones Inc. in New York City and maintained an immigration practice. He earned a political science degree from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 1994 and a law degree from Washington University in 1997. Friends and family members of Michael O’Brien have generously donated more than \$4,000 in Michael’s memory to Learning Leaders.

Learning Leaders

by Lanette Murphy, Parent Coordinator
PS 15 in Manhattan

In our building we have a number of Learning Leaders

They help the teachers teach and the children to become believers

The children believe they can do what the next child can

All they need is a helping hand

A hand to guide

A hand to mold

A hand to teach

A hand to hold

Someone to sit with them and give them their time

Someone to go over the reading and math work line for line

You see, the Learning Leaders in our building help the children become more than just believers

They help them reach their potential and become high achievers

So the next time someone asks you what the Learning Leaders do in your building

Don’t say they are people who just volunteer in our school

You see they do more than just that

They show the kids that they too can rule

And that’s a FACT



Carol Mohammed

Within minutes of meeting Carol Mohammed you will realize what’s important to her: family and education. Carol is involved in every aspect of her children’s education. She has been a Learning Leader for 2 years at MS137 in Queens, assisting in the English Language Department. She also recruited her husband to tutor math and science at her school. When Learning Leaders needed volunteers to assist with our week-long recruitment/donation drive at Barnes & Noble in December, Carol was one of the first to offer her time and recruited family members to join in this effort. Let’s hear it for keeping it in the family!



Learning Leaders of the Month

January

Annette Doyle PS 58/District 24, Queens

Rochelle Hestnas PS 9/District 3, Manhattan

Donett Williams PS 244/District 18, Brooklyn

February

Jennifer M. Larrea, PS 242/District 25, Queens

Militza Laureano, PS 161/District 7, Bronx

Lydia C. Brooks, PS 244/District 18, Brooklyn

March

Alan Yoblon, Manhattan Comp. HS, Manhattan

Evelyn Gonzalez, PS 376/District 32, Brooklyn

Diana Liccese, PS 71/District 8, Bronx

April

Carlixta Mojica, PS 4/District 6, Manhattan

Tyrone Vaughan, PS 316/District 17, Brooklyn

Elena Vila, PS 69/District 8, Bronx

May

Janet Andaluz, PS 33/District 29, Queens

Wanda Mason, PS 230/District 9, Bronx

Elsie Rodriguez, PS 1/District 15, Brooklyn

June

Michael J. Minichino, PS 87/District 24, Queens

Eunice Knigin, PS 6/District 2, Manhattan

Ruth Silber, PS 273/District 19, Brooklyn



Book Corner

Celebrating Differences

This issue's recommended reading list contains books about celebrating differences. A few of these books were highlighted at the Learning Leaders Celebrity Read Aloud Event on March 13th. Please share one of these books with a young reader.



America Street: A Multicultural Anthology of Stories
Edited by Anne Mazer

Elmer
by David McKee

Esperanza Rising
by Pam Muñoz Ryan

Hooray for Diffendoofer Day
by Dr. Seuss, Jack Prelutsky and Lane Smith

Horace and Morris, but Mostly Dolores
by James Howe

I am Rosa Parks
by Rosa Parks, Jim Hasings and Wil Clay

Margaret and Margarita/Margarita y Margaret
by Lynn Reiser (bilingual)

Moses Goes to School
by Isaac Millman

The Colors of Us
by Karen Katz

*What's the Matter with Albert?:
A Story of Albert Einstein*
by Frieda Wishinsky, Jacques Lamontagne

From Hop Scotch to Hip Hop

Learning Leaders' spring 2006 FYI workshops for parents focused on the important topic of media literacy. Workshops were held in Brooklyn, the Bronx, Manhattan and Queens, and featured panel discussions about how parents can help children become wise consumers of information. Since

the media has become an integral part of young people's lives today, parents were encouraged to view television, music, magazines, advertisements, and electronic entertainment devices as opportunities for education.

Most parents spend 1,000 minutes per week watching television and only 38 minutes per week talking to their children.

- The State of Media Education

Panelists shared ideas on how parents can help their children better understand the information through communication. Conversations with children are critical because some media may contain themes such as violence, sex, materialism, gender and racial stereotypes, etc.

Parents and guardians can be involved by being aware of what children are reading, listening to, watching or playing, and engaging them in conversation about the messages.

Parents were encouraged to ask open-ended questions, such as what do you like about this song, who is your favorite character in this game and why, etc. By being aware and through disclosure, parents can provide hands-on support in helping our youth become critical thinkers and positive contributors to their generation.

Thank you to our wonderful panelists from Sesame Workshop, The Boys' Club of New York, Positive Energy and Creative Entertainment.



80 Maiden Lane, 11th Floor
New York, NY 10038-4729

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