

week with their group leaders to run errands for us in the neighborhood. They carry out assignments such as taking in the laundry. We explain why what they are doing is important for the school and the children (for example, that in the laundry are the dress-up clothing that the children need to play pretend). The explanations put smiles on their faces, as they take justifiable pride in the jobs they do for us. We are happy to give them the opportunity to feel and be really useful, and through the years they have become our friends. The children see the Young Adults frequently, and accept them fully as part of their life in school.

The school makes annual contributions to charities that children cannot really relate to, such as Amnesty International, Adopt-a-Minefield, the American Glaucoma Society, and the Christopher Reeve Foundation.

We do not limit ourselves to these charities, and if you have any suggestions, we would be happy to hear them. We want to use our school to form a deep spiritual link to any group which needs our help.



**With our love
to you and your children,
Suzette and Jeff**

Village Preschool Center Newsletter

September 2007

Welcome!

We are looking forward to an exciting, productive, fun-filled year with your children. The staff and directors are all very enthusiastic about beginning the first full school year in our new home.

*“Make this world
a better place...”*



We want our school to be not only an extension of your families, but also a window on the world that will encourage the growth of the seeds of empathy that are latent, ready to spring forth, in all young children. We ask ourselves how we can create age-appropriate activities to help them realize that they can help make the world a better place for all. It goes without saying that this must be done in a way that they can understand and relate to, and that will shelter them from the terrible tragedies and appalling

conditions that are all too common in our world. The following are ways in which we encourage them to become aware of others, and sensitive to problems on which they, however little they might be, can have a positive impact.

We start simply, by making them aware of their classmates as people, and of the possibility of doing something good and kind. Each day at snack we have them join hands and sing "Reach out and touch somebody's hand,/ Make this world a better place if you can." Teachers give lessons on the meaning of those words.

In September each class makes a charity box, painted and decorated by the children with pictures of animals. We ask you to send the children to school with a few coins for them to place in the box. (If you forget to bring in money, we give the children coins to drop in so that they can feel involved.) We add the children's contributions to our annual donation to BARK, a Brooklyn animal hospital and shelter for abandoned pets. We explain that they are helping animals that are sick, and have no homes. The children understand that they are having a positive impact, helping feed, shelter, and treat stray pets.

The children also learn about helping people. Lara Bergen is the parent of two VPC graduates. She collects gently worn clothing and like-new toys for disadvantaged children for Room to Grow. You will see boxes in the reception area for clothing and toys your children have outgrown. Lara will come by to collect the donations. If you have items to contribute, involve your child in the giving process. Have him/her drop your donations into the box. VPC families can bring a great deal of happiness to children who have very little.

Each year alumna teacher Gaelle Freymond goes to a school in the interior of Guatemala, where organized charities, which

concentrate their efforts in urban areas, do not venture. She has worked in an orphanage deep in the interior of the country, where the children are undernourished and impoverished, and the overwhelmed teachers and caregivers work to exhaustion attending to the basic needs of so many children. She carries donated toys and clothing in her suitcase, and she brings back pictures for our children of the Guatemalan children enjoying the gifts that they have contributed. We help fund her purchases of supplies in Guatemala, where a dollar will buy a pair of children's shoes, and medical supplies are cheap. Thanks to Gaelle, every penny we donate goes to help meet the children's needs.

Another organization that we support with the children's help is Hope for Haiti, a school and orphanage where Nancy Soto, assistant director Brunie Surget's sister, worked for many years. The Sheridan Square Starbuck's let us display and take bids on the children's art. Parents bought the individual art works, and Starbuck's customers purchased the group works. We made a special visit to Starbuck's with the children to see the exhibit. We donated all the proceeds from the children's art show, along with our check, to Hope for Haiti. Among the things the orphanage purchased were wading pools. You will find a photo of the children playing in the pools in one of the albums on the Memory Lane shelf behind the office.

Before the December holidays we collect toys for the US Marine Corps Toys for Tots program. Here too, you can have your child place your contributions in the collection box, and explain how much the toy means to another child.

For many years, we have had a relationship the YAI (Young Adults Institute). Their students are high functioning developmentally delayed adults who come several times a