

The AmeriCorps Times

O P E N D O O R F A M I L Y M E D I C A L C E N T E R S



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Open Door’s Community HealthCorps Navigators helping local Head Start students collect fruits and vegetables at the Ossining Organic Community Garden.

Oh, the Places You’ll Go!

In early September, thirteen new faces joined the Open Door Family Medical Centers to begin their journey as Community HealthCorps Navigators. As they embark on their year of service, they will work to improve access to health care services for the medically underserved. Though each Navigator will have a unique role in fulfilling this mission, together they will have an integral role in shaping the future of health care.

So, Navigators, in the words of the beloved Dr. Seuss:

*“Congratulations!
Today is your day.
You’re off to great places!
You’re off and away!”*

MEET THE 2012-2013 NAVIGATORS!



Daniel (Dan) Kaufman, a native of Ossining, NY, is happy to be back in his hometown helping those in need. After graduating from Case Western Reserve University in 2011 with a B.S. in Biochemistry, he continued to pursue his education at the same university and received his M.S. in Medical Physiology this past May. As a Navigator, he will work closely with the Patient Advocates and assist with the prenatal and diabetes support groups. He is excited to use his educational background to help the patients in the groups learn and communicate. After his year of service, Dan plans on attending medical school.

Until then, Dan will use his excellent story telling skills to entertain the other Navigators and keep them updated on what is happening throughout the Port Chester and Ossining sites.



Samantha (Sam) Tansey from Yonkers, NY looks forward to using her passion for literature during her role as a Reach Out and Read Coordinator. A recent graduate from SUNY New Paltz, Sam has a B.A. in English with a concentration in Creative Writing. Though her original plans of attending NYU nursing school in the fall had to be put on hold because she was rejected from a student loan, she is making the most out of her year by giving back to the community. As a Navigator, she will contact local children's authors and organize various reading activities throughout the community. Upon completion of her service, Sam hopes to attend nursing school and join a roller derby team.

Outside of Open Door, Sam enjoys concocting delicious drinks as a Starbucks Barista. Though once a baby hand model, Sam can now be found searching for images of cats and learning more about her favorite animal.



Gavin Osorio is originally from Washingtonville, NY but has lived in Ossining since he was 7 years old. His experience with the Spanish community influenced his decision to double major in Spanish and Latin American & Caribbean Studies at SUNY Albany. He is currently in school for massage therapy and hopes to become a licensed massage therapist by the time he completes his AmeriCorps terms.

During his year of service, Gavin will assist with the Wellness Program and spend much time introducing Recess Rocks to elementary school children. He will utilize his Spanish skills and knowledge about the body to teach young children the importance of exercise and nutrition.

When Gavin is not practicing massage techniques, he enjoys learning the guitar and singing.

MEET THE 2012-2013 NAVIGATORS!

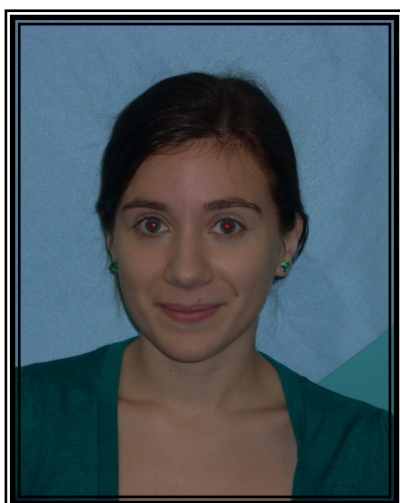
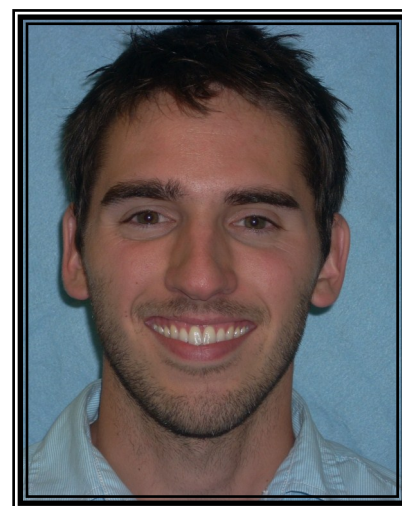


Justine Record is from Bethesda, Maryland and graduated from Carnegie Mellon University in May 2012 with a B.S. in Biological Sciences and Psychology. She chose to serve as a Navigator because of her interests in health education and working with underserved populations. This year, Justine will be working in the School Based Health Center at the JFK Elementary School in Port Chester, NY. Her time spent with the young children will be beneficial as she hopes to attend medical school and practice pediatric neurology.

Justine currently resides in White Plains with fellow Navigator, Meg. As the two settle into their new apartment, Justine is excited to find a restaurant that satisfies her vegetarian pallet!

Zachary (Zach) Fowler traveled from Minot, North Dakota to learn about community health and healthcare in an area that was quite different from what he had been exposed to in the past. A recent graduate of North Dakota State University with a B.A. in Biochemistry and Zoology and B.S. in Sociology, Zach is excited to gain valuable experience while serving the Ossining community. As a Navigator, he will be doing outreach in the Emergency Department at Phelps Hospital and helping enroll patients into eligible insurance programs. After completing his year of service, Zach hopes to attend either graduate or medical school.

Zach has moved into an apartment in the Bronx and looks forward to living the life of a busy New Yorker. When he is not enrolling patients into insurance programs, he enjoys playing his ukulele and harmonica.



Kelly Austin, a native of Somers, graduated from Chatham University in May 2012 with a BSW and minor in Psychology. Unsure about what graduate degree she would want to pursue, she welcomed the opportunity to work as a Navigator to assist her in the decision. Kelly hopes her time as a Navigator will allow her to learn more about public health and decide if it is a field she would like to be a part of in the future. During her year, she will work with Sam on planning and recruiting volunteers for Reach Out and Reach events.

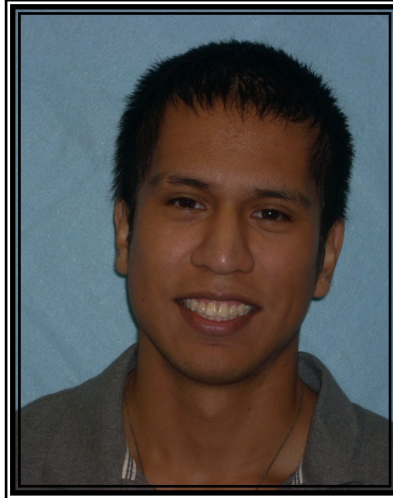
Her passion for world traveling has led Kelly to study in the countries of India and Australia. Though originally unsure which program to choose when in Australia, she is content with her choice because it gave her a heightened awareness of issues relating to race and identity. During her semester in India, she took classes on Indian religions, sociology, Indian culture, and yoga.

MEET THE 2012-2013 AMERICORPS NAVIGATORS!



Alaina Betancourt graduated from Bucknell University with a B.A. in Political Science and International Relations in May 2012. Having interned at Open Door the previous summer, she looked forward to returning as a Navigator. During her year of service, Alaina will be doing marketing and outreach, editing the AmeriCorps Times, and attending different health events. She is excited for the interaction she will have with patients, especially when enrolling and recertifying children insured by New York's CHIP program.

Originally from Briarcliff Manor, Alaina is happy to work in a community so close to her home. She hopes to pursue a career in health policy and believes her experience as a Navigator will help her better understand the perspectives of those most affected by policies,



Paul Pickmans of Falls Church, Virginia is eager to work as an AmeriCorps Navigator at the School-Based Health Center in Port Chester Middle School. As a recent graduate of the University of Virginia with a B.A. in Biology, Paul is excited to teach adolescent children about the importance of health and wellness. He looks forward to working in an underserved community and hopes he will make a positive difference in the lives of Port Chester middle school children.

After his year of service, Paul will return to Virginia where he will attend medical school at his alma mater, UVA. Having been accepted in mid-October, Paul can now enjoy the rest of his time in Westchester.



Helena Herman is working in Open Door's Behavioral Health department with the Ossining Communities that Care Coalition (OCTC) and Project Launch, in both Ossining and Port Chester. Originally from New Rochelle, NY, Helena graduated from Cornell University in 2011 with a BS in Human Development. After graduating, Helena moved to Madison, Wisconsin, where she worked in project management and EMR implementation services for a healthcare software company. Helena chose to return to Westchester as a Navigator in hopes of connecting meaningfully and directly with patients of underserved communities.

Helena enjoys travelling, art, reading the newspaper, and playing soccer; she has also bungee jumped while in Costa Rica, and hopes to go skydiving sometime soon. After her time at Open Door, Helena is interested in attending medical school to study pediatric medicine and to pursue research related to IT-linked healthcare quality improvement initiatives.

MEET THE 2012-2013 NAVIGATORS!



Kara Cicero of Irvington, NY graduated from Cornell University in May 2012 with a B.S. in Human Development. She is extremely interested in healthcare and is currently applying to medical schools throughout the country. Since she plans on spending the rest of her career on the clinical side of healthcare, she is excited to serve as a Navigator based in the School Based Health Center of Porch Chester High School. Kara believes that her year of service will provide her with an opportunity to get involved in the health field from a school related educational perspective. The unique population she will be working with during her time as a Navigator will allow Kara to continue her passion of assisting those in need.

In between filling out medical school applications and traveling to her interviews, Kara finds time to explore her adventurous side. During her semester abroad in Perugia, Italy, Kara learned to surf in Morocco!

Jillian Dalton of Mahopac, New York graduated from Towson University in May 2012 with a B.S. in Exercise Science. As a Navigator, she will work in the Wellness Program and assist with Recess Rocks. She chose to join AmeriCorps because it seemed like a wonderful opportunity to gain experience with a well deserving and appreciative population. During her time with AmeriCorps, she looks forward to incorporating her interests in community service and physical activity. While ending her year of service seems many months away, Jillian looks forward to going back to school and working towards a Master's degree. She hopes to become a Physician Assistant and work in a hospital setting.

Jillian has danced, mainly ballet, since she was three and has continued throughout college. She hopes to use her dance background, as well as her personal training certification, to work with many populations to improve their health and increase their activity in an enjoyable way!

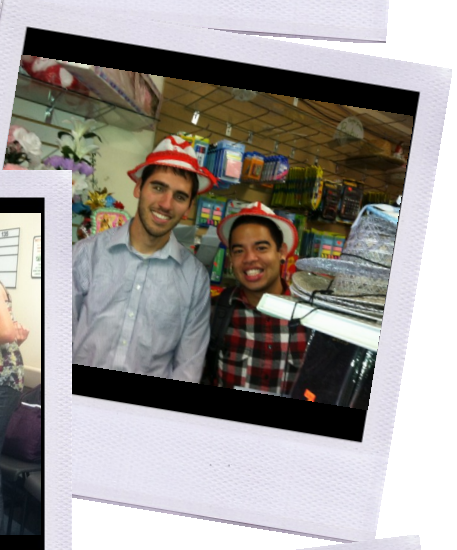
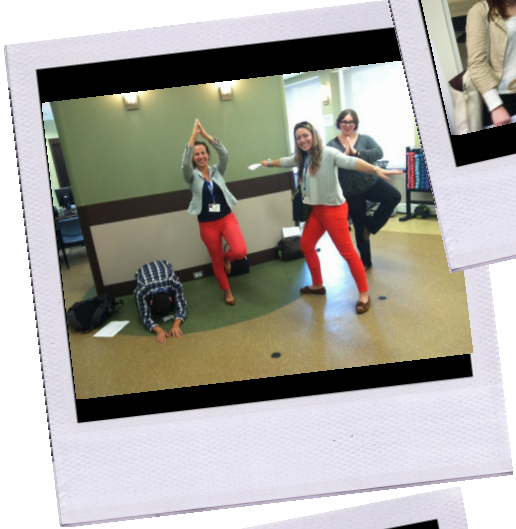


Meg (Megan) Tiso is from Syracuse, NY and recently graduated from Lehigh University with a B.A. in Anthropology. Her interest in the health care field led Meg to AmeriCorps where she will serve in the School Based Health Center at Thomas Edison Elementary. After AmeriCorps, she hopes to get a Masters degree in public health and social work to prepare her for a career in women's global health. Her interest in working with underserved populations will allow Meg to make great changes throughout the Port Chester community.

When she is not working at the elementary school or settling into her new apartment with Justine, Meg can be found in the crowds of the most popular concerts. As a fan of almost all types of music, she has attended numerous performances, including the most recent Bruce Springsteen concert where "The Boss" crowd surfed.

NAVIGATORS IN ACTION

scavenger
hunt



NAVIGATORS IN ACTION



“Be the change you wish to see in the world.”

- Gandhi



FOOD DAY™

OCTOBER 24, 2012

CHILDREN GROW UP LEARNING THAT ORANGE JUICE AND MILK ARE ESSENTIAL DRINKS TO MAKE ONE'S BODY AND MIND STRONG. YET, AS THEY BECOME ADOLESCENTS, MANY STUDENTS BEGIN TO THROW AWAY THESE HEALTHY DRINKS AND TURN TO SUGAR FILLED AND HIGHLY CAFFEINATED BEVERAGES INSTEAD. TO COMBAT THIS TREND, THE SCHOOL BASED HEALTH CENTER NAVIGATORS MOTIVATED THE STUDENTS OF PORT CHESTER SCHOOLS TO CELEBRATE FOOD DAY, A NATIONAL MOVEMENT TOWARDS AFFORDABLE, HEALTHY, AND SUSTAINABLE NUTRITION. ON OCTOBER 24, 2012, STUDENTS AND NAVIGATORS JOINED EFFORTS TO IMPROVE OUR NATION'S FOOD POLICIES THROUGH A STRENGTHENED AND UNIFIED MOVEMENT. IN ORDER TO APPEAL TO THE DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS, EACH NAVIGATOR USED THEIR CREATIVITY TO PLAN AN EVENT SPECIFIC TO THE STUDENTS OF THEIR SCHOOLS.



In preparation for Food Day at **JFK Elementary School, Edison Elementary School, and Park Avenue Elementary School**, Justine, Megan, and Janani cut out black-and-white pictures of various fruits and vegetables. The Navigators then set up workshops at their respective schools for students to pick and color a cut-out of their favorite fruit or vegetable. Student pasted their colored fruit or vegetable and signed their name on a "Pledge to Eat Healthy." Through the activity, the youngest participants of Food Day were able to learn about the importance of a healthy diet.

At **Port Chester Middle School**, Paul focused on educating students about the sugar content of the most popular drinks consumed by those in their age group. In the cafeteria, drinks such as Amp Energy Drink, Sunny D, Gatorade, and a regular size McDonald's Coca Cola were displayed alongside various labeled bottles containing different sugar amounts. During the lunch periods, Paul encouraged students to guess which sugar bottles matched the drinks. Eager to learn, many middle school students came up to the presentation and exclaimed how often they drank these beverages or which were their favorites, but were soon shocked to learn the actual amount that existed. Drinks that seemed healthy, such as a small bottle of Simply Lemonade, contained up to 12 teaspoons of sugar. Other students acknowledged that their favorite drinks were unhealthy, but physically seeing the amount of sugar in their drinks made them reconsider drinking them as much. Water and flavored seltzer water, with their zero calories and zero sugar, were demonstrated as great alternatives to the sugary drinks. In the end, students did not feel judged for their choices but rather enlightened and aware of how much sugar they are really taking in.



At **Port Chester High School**, Kara focused on the health risks due to sugary drinks by launching a national “Pour One Out” contest. During lunch periods, students had the opportunity to take part in the “Pour One Out” contest and learn the truth about sugary drinks. The instructions were quite simple: pour out a sugary beverage while stating a healthy fact, and capture this activity on film. Students were videotaped pouring out a wide variety of sugary beverages into a garbage can. Some created their healthy message on their own while others planned a skit in advance with five of their friends. Music played in the background to excite the students. After the four lunch periods, forty-six videos were produced. With parental/guardian permission, each of these videos will be entered into the national contest for a chance to win \$250, \$500, or \$1000. While students were waiting to be filmed, they furthered their nutritional knowledge with a Two Truths and a Lie Raffle. Given a cluster of three nutritional “facts,” the student had to recognize the one nutritional myth as a lie. If correct, the student entered his/her name into a raffle for a chance to win a \$10 iTunes gift card, courtesy of Whitson’s Food Service. All in all, Food Day was a lot of fun. Hopefully the health messages will stay with the students next time they go to grab a sugary drink, and maybe Port Chester High School will even have a winner of that \$1000 grand prize.



Project Spotlight: OSSINING COMMUNITIES THAT CARE COALITION & PROJECT LAUNCH

- Helena Herman



This year I have the privilege of serving as a Community Health-corps Navigator in a new role, supporting two different projects in Ossining and Port Chester. Based in Open Door's Behavioral Health department, I spend half of my time working with Ossining Communities that Care Coalition (OCTC) and the other half with Project LAUNCH.

The OCTC mission focuses on alcohol and substance abuse prevention and positive behavior norming among middle school and high school youth, while Project LAUNCH is a federal grant program (sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services, or SAMHSA), which promotes wellness and school readiness in children from birth to age eight. The scope of the two programs allows me to impact children of all ages and to work with many wonderful community partners.

With OCTC, I have worked with Alice Joselow, OCTC coordinator, to strengthen partnerships between the Ossining school system, the recreation department, and the public library. I will create youth advisories for grades 6-8 to give students a larger voice in planning safe extra-curricular programs and events at the rec center and the library. I help in the planning and execution of OCTC events, attend OCTC board meetings, and will work within Anne M. Dorner Middle School to publicize existing program opportunities at the rec and the library. Recently we gave a Parent Education workshop series on topics relevant for parents of adolescents, including: Challenging Choices, Prescription Drugs, and Social Media. Over 100 parents attended. On Wednesdays, I facilitate a Stand Up Against Bullying Club through the AMD Stars afterschool program, encouraging a student-driven anti-bullying campaign to compliment the implementation of NY's Dignity Act.

Through Project LAUNCH, I work closely with Karen Mandel, Project LAUNCH coordinator, to support early childhood programs. I have begun working with Family Ties of Westchester, an Open Door partner that specializes in advocacy and support services for families of children with social, emotional, or behavioral difficulties. As Family Ties specialists conduct Nurturing Parenting sessions for parents in Ossining and Port Chester, I will deliver a complimentary, developmentally appropriate curricula to children. I am also involved in developing waiting-room based education presentations.

I enjoy the opportunity to help families inside Open Door and within the schools and community at large.

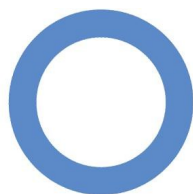


**Starting
January
2013**

A six-week program to help parents and caregivers of children aged 9-13 years find the balance for promoting healthy nutrition and physical activity for the whole family.

**For more information or to register, contact:
Gavin (914) 502-1357 or gosorio@odfmc.org**

***Space is limited and advanced registration is required. Classes are held once a week for 6 weeks; each class runs 1 hour 15 minutes.**



world diabetes day

14 November

- Dan Kaufman

On November 14th Open Door celebrated World Diabetes Day alongside thousands of other healthcare facilities across the world. This holiday, started in 1991 by the International Diabetes Federation and the World Health Organization, seeks to address the rapidly increasing rates of diabetes mellitus. The year's theme, Diabetes Education and Prevention, helped in planning for the celebration.

While educating patients afflicted with diabetes was an important aspect of the day, I wanted to also reach out to those patients who do not have the chronic disease. To do so, I set up an informational table with numerous flyers and handouts in the lobby of the medical center. There, all who stopped by could learn about a variety of topics, including the importance of exercise and maintaining a healthy diet.

That evening patients who attend the biweekly Diabetes Education group were invited to a speaker session with nutritionist Shannon Sodano from Balancing Life's Issues. Attendees learned valuable lessons on manag-

ing diet changes, simple ingredients that can be substituted into diabetes-friendly meals, and balancing food choices between the different food groups. After her presentation, Gavin Osorio, a fellow Navigator, and I spoke about the upcoming Zumba Gold sessions in January and the glycemic index. Using a poster that listed different foods and ingredients, we explained how those with diabetes digest foods differently. After the presentations, attendees were invited to ask questions of the speakers and enjoy the healthy snacks I had prepared, including chicken and avocado sandwiches on whole grain bread, a minted quinoa salad, carrots with a Greek yogurt dip, and oatmeal banana cookies (a favorite of the group).

Overall, this event was a big success in educating patients on healthy habits, building a strong case for a consistent record of follow-up with their primary care physician, and an excellent way to celebrate World Diabetes Day.

Oatmeal Banana Cookies

Ingredients

3 bananas—mashed (use medium to large ripe bananas)
2 cups uncooked quick cooking oats
1/2 cup raisins
1/3 cup almond oil
1/4 cup unsweetened almond or rice milk
1 tsp. vanilla extract

Directions

1. Mix all ingredients together in large mixing bowl.
2. Let mixture sit for 5 minutes for oats to absorb moisture.
3. Place teaspoons of mixture onto ungreased cookie sheet.
4. Bake at 350° F for 15-20 minutes.



AmeriCorps Journey to Albany

- Alaina Betancourt

On November 20th, the Navigators traveled to Albany to attend the 2012 New York State AmeriCorps Kickoff event. Together with 1,000 AmeriCorps members from the New York region, we celebrated the service that had been accomplished within the few short months since beginning our term and committed ourselves to "getting things done".

After a warm welcome and introduction from Mark Walter, Executive Director of NY Office of National & Community Service, and Donna Smith, Director of Corporation NY State Office, a series of guest speakers discussed the importance of AmeriCorps and its mission to serve others. As we listened to each speech, we continued to be inspired by the incredible work done by those who devote a year of service in AmeriCorps.



Antonio Fernandez gave a personal account of the impact AmeriCorps had on his life after returning from a tour in Iraq. Unsure about his re-assimilations into everyday life, he spoke about the struggles he encountered upon returning home. Hoping to find a purpose in life, he turned to the AmeriCorps program in the Phoenix House of New York, a national provider of alcohol and drug abuse treatment and prevention services. He credits his year of service as an experience that saved his life and provided him with the purpose he sought for so long. Today he continues to work at Phoenix House where he assists veterans in coping with the same feelings he once had.

Tim Morehouse, an AmeriCorps alumnus, used his experience as an Olympic athlete to reinforce the important lessons of hard work and perseverance. While he initially took up the sport of fencing as a way to get out of middle school gym class, he continued to fence throughout his college career and eventually participated in international tournaments. However, it was at these events where he competed against world champions that Morehouse felt discouraged about his future in the sport. Lacking proper form and years of experience, his results were often poor and many encouraged him to quit. While contemplating the decision to walk away from fencing, Morehouse reflected on the challenge he had given to his students while serving in Teach for America. "Everyday, I told them to never give up on their dreams. How could I tell them this and not follow it myself?" Eventually, as a result of his resilience, Morehouse made it to the Olympic team and won a silver medal for America in the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Morehouse took a moment to let the AmeriCorps members reflect on their service and the challenges they would face in the future. Despite the difficulties that lay ahead, he encouraged us to persevere for the greater cause of improving the lives of those we serve.

During the afternoon session of the event, AmeriCorps members took part in a service project led by the NY National Guard Family Programs. While some wrapped Christmas gifts for children whose parents were in the armed forces and others made survivor bracelets to send to deployed troops in, the Navigators of Open Door helped bring some holiday cheer to those serving our military abroad. As we wrote personal notes in Christmas cards, we thanked them for the incredible sacrifice they continue to do in order to ensure our safety.



The Kickoff Event was a great way to meet other AmeriCorps members, learn about the services done by other sites, and reinforce the importance of the work we do.

Three months into our Seventh Program Year...

As you can see in this newsletter, the **Community HealthCorps Navigators** at Open Door have been really busy in their first three months with us. During their 11-month service term, they will support Open Door's patient population by removing some of the barriers families and individuals experience in accessing health care. They have already improved many lives through patient education, wellness activities, health insurance enrollments, and early literacy promotion. As a team, we have continued to work with our community partners to create community change beyond the walls of the health center. Every month, we assist the Community Action Program's food pantry. In November, we partnered with Hudson Link to support the New Mind Jaycees' Thanksgiving Giveaway at Sing Sing Correctional Facility. During the month of December, the navigators provide invaluable support for Open Door's Santa Days. They wrap, carry and distribute hundreds of gifts to ensure that our young patients receive a new toy during the holiday season.

This fall, we had the opportunity to meet members from other AmeriCorps programs in Albany at the annual New York State Kickoff event. A month earlier, we had joined four other Community HealthCorps groups - Ryan Chelsea Network, Lutheran Family Health Centers, Institute for Family Health, and Hudson River HealthCare - for a team day at the beautiful grounds of Camp Ramapo in Rhinebeck. The high-energy Ramapo staff led us through a day of team-building activities, group games, and individual challenges. Everyone enjoyed being outside and taking in one of the last sunny and calm day of the season. We are all looking forward to great activities and projects during the winter months. Before we know it, it is springtime again and we will be sowing carrot seeds in the community garden with our young friends from St. Matthews Head Start program.



Paul holding the ladder for Jillian who is about to climb the tree in one of the high ropes challenges at Ramapo.



Five Community HealthCorps teams at Camp Ramapo in Rhinebeck on October 26, 2012