

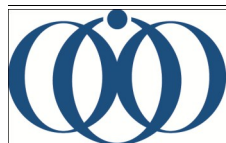
The AmeriCorps Times

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



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OPEN DOOR
FAMILY MEDICAL CENTERS



**Community
HealthCorps**

SANTA DAYS

By KELLY AUSTIN



The Santa Days have become one of the largest annual events held at Open Door. On these days, families from among our patients in the community come to Open Door to meet Santa and receive a wrapped present for their children for the holidays. This year, we gave out nearly 2,000 gifts between our four locations. Providing gifts for our patients' children allows them to have one less stress during the holidays, which we hope will help keep them healthy.

Preparations begin months before the actual Santa Days. The Volunteer Coordinator, Alicia Ward, as well as the Reach Out and Read AmeriCorps and volunteers, reach out to community organizations including preschools, colleges, local businesses, libraries, and others to hold toy drives. We collect the toys throughout November and December which then have to be sorted, wrapped, labeled, and packaged by AmeriCorps and volunteers alike.

All of the AmeriCorps become involved well before the first Santa Day to help sort and wrap the donated gifts. It is on those four days, however, that we really get to work. We each take a role at the site, whether it be grabbing presents for Santa, recording children's ages, stamping children's hands at the door, moving toys to the sites, or taking pictures of the children meeting Santa.

At the sites, the lines of eager families wrap around the buildings. It takes two hours, or even more, to get through all of the children that show up. One by one, the children get to meet our "Santa", take a picture, and receive their gift. We hope that this experience provides a positive start to the holiday season for our clients and staff.



RECESS ROCKS!

Making Children Healthy One Move at a Time

BY GAVIN OSORIO

Recess Rocks! is a movement program dedicated to helping children become healthy through physical and kinesthetic activities. Created by Kim Thibodeux of Community Health Center, Inc. in Connecticut, Recess Rocks! incorporates yoga, Zumba, and the martial arts into a single program that encourages children to move their bodies. While Recess Rocks! is traditionally offered in the classrooms of elementary schools, here at Open Door, we offer it to children ages 6 through 9 at our Wellness Center.

“Even after a long day at work, at the end of the day, if the children are benefitting from Recess Rocks!, then my job is done.”

I usually start my day off at 9am on Mondays. With Sunday being my only day off since Saturdays I have massage therapy class, I'm usually very tired on Monday mornings. At 5pm, when most of the other staff goes home for the evening, I'm even more tired. However, when I enter the Wellness Center, it is evident that the children are not at the same level of energy. While some are bursting with energy, others are timid and reserved. But once I turn on the familiar music, the timid kids start laughing and enjoying themselves and join the other kids and I can't help but join in and laugh along. After 45 minutes of dancing and moving around, the kids want to keep going and tell me they look forward to seeing me next week. Moral of the story is that if the kids are benefitting from Recess Rocks! either physically, mentally, or emotionally, then my job is complete.

AmeriCorps Works



Corporation for
NATIONAL &
COMMUNITY
SERVICE



March 10—NYC Park Restoration

Navigators from Open Door's HealthCorps team will join other HealthCorps members in New York City to kick off AmeriCorps Week with a day of volunteering with the NYC Parks Department to assist with cleaning up parks and planting.

March 11—Wellness Day

Open Door's Navigators will be in the Port Chester site to promote different programs, including the wellness program, Reach Out and Read and patient education workshops.

March 15—Habitat for Humanity

The Navigators will work with Habitat for Humanity of Westchester to build and renovate homes for veterans and their families in Yonkers.



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RESPECT

CELEBRATING ANTI-BULLYING WEEK AT JFK

BY JUSTINE RECORD

JFK Magnet School held their annual Anti-Bullying week January 7th through 11th for their third, fourth, and fifth graders. Throughout the week, students watched and discussed video clips about bullying. As a conclusion to the Anti-Bullying week, AmeriCorps Navigators Justine Record, Paul Pickmans, Megan Tiso, Jillian Dalton, and Mila Neyra held six anti-bullying assemblies for all third, fourth, and fifth graders on January 9th and January 10th. During the

assemblies, students used the knowledge they acquired throughout the week to participate in three different activity “stations.” Three classes of students rotated through the activity stations during each of the assemblies. The first activity station was a PowerPoint presentation with information about what bullying is, how it makes students feel, and what resources are available to students who are being bullied. Included in the presentation was information about the Dignity Act, which seeks to provide New

York State's public elementary and secondary school students with a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, a school bus and/or at a school function. The second activity station was a game in which students practiced positive peer interaction by exchanging cards with different positive character traits (i.e., "funny," "optimistic," "adventurous," "artistic," "determined", etc.). Finally, students created a pledge to not be a bully (see picture) by signing and decorating different colored square cut-outs. To remind them of the pledge they made, students received pledge bracelets and stickers that read "We Respect Each Other!"



ENSURING ALL ARE INSURED

BY ZACHARY FOWLER



All of the children seen by Open Door providers are eligible for a health insurance plan called Child Health Plus, a state program funded by a federal program called the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). The program was designed for children from families whose income is too high to qualify for Medicaid but who do not otherwise have insurance. Its creation was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton in 1997. An expansion of the program was then signed by President Obama as the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009. The enrollment period is one year, after which the children's parents must renew their plan. While most children maintain their insurance after the enrollment period ends, many lose their coverage. Before their plan ends, they receive a letter in the mail with instructions for recertifying to avoid a loss of coverage. However, after reading the letters and seeing how confusing the process can be, it's not too difficult to understand how so many people lose their insurance. To prevent this from happening, Alaina and I have been calling the parents of CHIP enrollees before their coverage ends. We make appointments for them with representatives from Hudson Health who can help them with the enrollment process. Recently we have begun sending electronic messages through eCW (similar to the reminders that are sent to patients before a clinical appointment). Depending on patients' preferences, they receive either a text message or an audio recording (left as a voicemail if they don't answer) reminding them about the need to renew their insurance and giving them a phone number so they can call us to help them with the process. Maintaining insurance coverage is very important for our patients for many different reasons. For example, if they need to visit the Emergency Room, they will not have to worry about being able to afford it. We are hoping that our efforts will make a difference and we can help as many of our children maintain coverage as possible!

DID YOU KNOW

THAT YOU MUST **RECEITIFY** YOUR CHILD'S HEALTH INSURANCE **EVERY YEAR?**

As a parent or guardian of a child enrolled in Children's Medicaid or Child Health Plus, it is important that you renew your child's health insurance **EVERY YEAR** in order to maintain their coverage. If your child's insurance is not recertified by the date listed on your renewal documents, their health insurance coverage will end and they will no longer receive the benefits of having insurance!

BENEFITS INCLUDE:

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Dental Care | and more...

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To receive assistance with recertification you can:

- visit www.opendoormedical.org and click on the EnrollNY link on the homepage



- call Alaina Betancourt 914.502.1337 or Zach Fowler 914.502.1437

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Ossining, NY 10562
914.941.1263

Sleepy Hollow
80 Beekman Avenue
Sleepy Hollow, NY 10581
914.651.4141

Port Chester
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Port Chester, NY 10573
914.937.8899

Mount Kisco
30 West Main Street
Mount Kisco, NY 10549
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Valentine's Day at Maple House

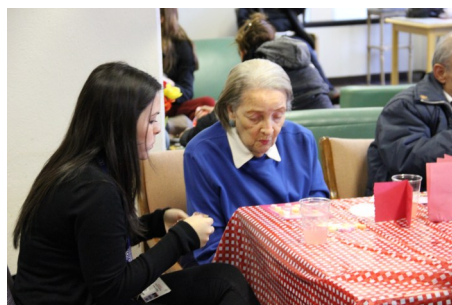
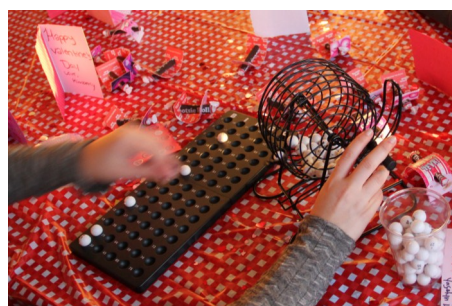
BY JILLIAN DALTON

On February 15th the Navigators celebrated Valentine's Day with the residents of Maple House, an independent living facility for seniors in Ossining. To get the seniors into the Valentine spirit, we decorated the community room of Maple House with pink, red, and white tablecloths, balloons, and streamers. Place settings were made in the shape of hearts and the tables were covered in special confetti.

In addition to the Valentine's Day celebration, February is also American Heart Health Month. Heart Health Month is an opportunity to work on ways to improve your heart health and prevent heart disease. Keeping heart health in mind, the Navigators prepared a variety of festive treats for the residents, including red velvet cupcakes, brownies, and cookies. Some desserts were prepared with dark chocolate, which has been shown to benefit the heart in lowering blood sugar levels and improving cholesterol. A diabetic friendly cake, made with lower sugar content and nutritious ingredients was made by Navigator Dan Kaufman. Each senior left with a Valentine goodie bag made by the Navigators which contained Heart Healthy Tips received from the CDC (Center for Disease Control) and AHA (American Heart Association).

As the seniors enjoyed music and desserts, the Navigators set up a Bingo game, using specially made Bingo markers and Valentines hearts as bingo chips. The game was a success and winners each received small prizes. At the end of the event there was a free raffle for gift cards to local establishments and a crochet blanket, handmade by the mother of Navigator Sam Tansey.

Overall, the event was a great success and a fun time enjoyed by all!



SERVING OTHERS IN HONOR OF MLK JR.

In honor of the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, the Open Door Community HealthCorps Navigators responded to Dr. King's question, "What are you doing for others?" by participating in various projects that served the needs of the diverse communities of Westchester County.

Reach Out and Read

Samantha Tansey

On January 19th, Reach Out and Read honored the life of MLK by welcoming the United Way of Westchester into our Ossining Open Door waiting rooms. Recruiting volunteers from the community is a task Reach Out and Read works on all year; however United Way was able to organize an impressive, enthusiastic group of volunteers for our one-day MLK reading event. Even before Open Door's actual doors technically opened, volunteers arrived ready to read to the children, and were even eager to learn more about the Reach Out and Read organization. We armed our fresh group of volunteers with everything they needed: coloring books, crayons, parent brochures, and of course a bundle of beautiful children's books that they dispensed among the many patients. Volunteers would come back to us restocking their dwindling pile of books, while also sharing how impressed they were with all the children who were smarter, kinder, and more eager than they had originally imagined. By the end of the day, almost every child left with a book in their hands, and a couple volunteers even requested the opportunity to go on to become an ongoing volunteer-reader for Open Door's Reach Out and Read program. The people who donated their books and their time are the ones that made this event so successful, and we thank them as well as the organizers at United Way.



IAHD Project

Alaina Betancourt

As some navigators commemorated the legacy of MLK by participating in the Reach Out and Read event on January 19th, Helena, Zach and I celebrated the day at the Institute of Applied Human Dynamics (IAHD), an organization that provides unique and dynamic services to individuals with development disabilities, in Tarrytown, NY. Together with volunteers from both the United Way of Westchester and Starbucks, we spent

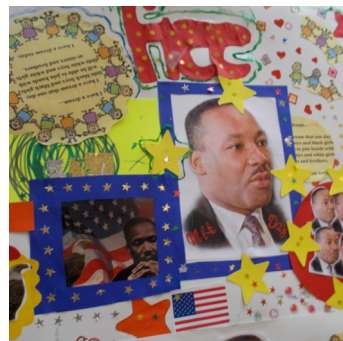
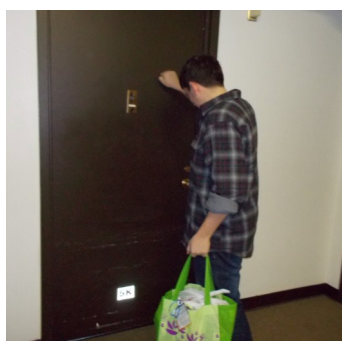
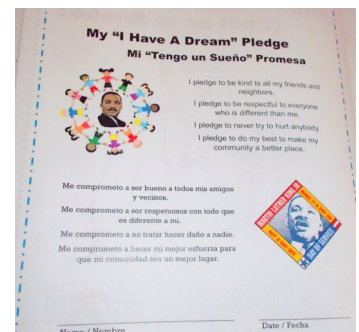
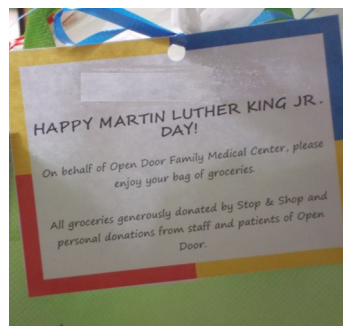


the morning and afternoon assisting residents with a MLK project that was in line with the IAHD's mission of providing creative programs for those it serves. With the use of their imagination and our assistance cutting out images and quotes of MLK, the residents created a collage that celebrated his life. As we waited for the glitter and glue to dry so we could hang the finished product in the entrance of the building, we helped the residents prepare and bake chocolate chip cookies as an afternoon snack. While this was our first time volunteering at IAHD, Helena, Zach and I enjoyed the time we spent at the organization and look forward to working with them again!

Wellness Day and Food Delivery

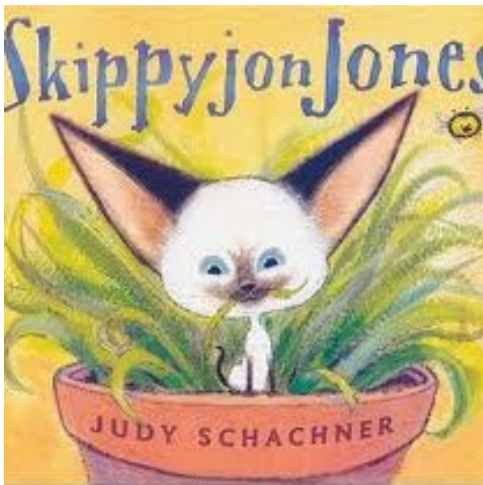
Alaina Betancourt

When the Navigators learned that the CAP Food Pantry of Ossining would no longer distribute monthly groceries to needy residents, they chose to dedicate their MLK Service Day project to its cause. Having volunteered at the Food Pantry before, we understood the necessity of its mission and wanted to help those who would be affected by its closing. After contemplating different project ideas, we decided on the concept of a Wellness Day at Open Door to benefit the senior residents of Maple House in Ossining, NY. With the assistance of our fellow Navigator, Gavin Osorio, and his fellow massage school classmate, we hosted an all day event that allowed patients and employees of Open Door to receive a fifteen minute massage for their donation of non-perishable food items. The following Monday, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, we were proud to present each of the twenty-two residents of Maple House with two bags containing the canned goods collected during our Wellness Day, as well as fresh vegetables and chickens generously donated by the Super Stop & Shop in Ossining, NY. As we delivered the food to the recipients, we were inspired by their sincere gratitude for the service we had done on their behalf.



READING IN PAJAMAS

BY SAMANTHA TANSEY



During the coldest months of the year, Reach Out and Read partnered with an organization called Pajama Program, a group that strives to give brand new pajamas and books to underserved children, and hosted Pajama Parties at all four Open Door sites. The Pajama Program provided Reach Out and Read with most of the lovely pajamas, with some last minute sizes for the older children donated by Target and Volunteer Coordinator, Alicia Ward. While we were looking for books to give out with the pajamas, Kohl's in Cortlandt Manor decided to donate an impressive 79 books about the adorably imaginative Siamese cat, *Skippyjon Jones* by author, Judy Schachner, including hundreds of stuffed animal characters from the actual books. The donation was so helpful, Reach Out and Read wrote the author of their own appreciation of *Skippyjon Jones*, Kohl's' generosity, and all about the upcoming pajama parties. The author was so impressed, she even donated more books and toys for the events. Then at each pajama party, the turn-out was so great that extra Navigators were needed to come out to help with story-telling, translating, and giving out bags of pajamas. So with the generosity of the Pajama Program, Target, Kohl's, Children's Author, Judy Schachner, and Volunteer Coordinator: Alicia Ward, Reach Out and Read was able to read and then give out new warm pajamas, beautiful brand new books, and comfy stuffed animals to 127 young children from all over Westchester.



MEET OUR NEW NAVIGATOR!



Milagros (Mila) Neyra of Port Chester, NY graduated from New York University in May 2012 with a B.A. in Psychology. After a couple of months serving patients at a hospital in Peru, she joined the AmeriCorps team to continue her interest in helping others. Mila is excited to be back in her community to make a positive impact in the lives of children. As a Navigator, she works in the School-Based Health Center at Park Avenue Elementary School. She is also happy to use her Spanish skills in teaching classes to recent immigrant students at Port Chester High School. After her service at Open Door, Mila hopes to pursue a career in healthcare.

Mila enjoys travelling and embracing her adventurous side. While on a learning service trip to Nicaragua, she walked to the top of a live volcano. In Peru, she took a rafting river trip and zip lined through the mountains.

OUR LAST SERVICE DAY WITH COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM'S FOOD PANTRY



Over the last four years, Open Door's AmeriCorps Team has participated in a monthly service project by helping the Ossining Community Action Program (CAP) with distribution of bulk food items to low income individuals and families to supplement their food allowance. We were very saddened to hear that the Ossining CAP office recently had to close their doors due to funding cuts. Here are some pictures from the last food pantry day. We thanked Doris Goodman from CAP for giving us the opportunity to help Ossining residents by providing this service. Ms. Goodman told us she could not have done it without the help of Open Door's AmeriCorps.



Rachelle Richards, our Program Officer from NACHC, lent a hand during a site visit.



Join Community HealthCorps at Open Door

Community HealthCorps Navigator Positions available at Open Door Family Medical Centers. Provide health education, community outreach, and volunteer generation at either our Ossining or Port Chester health centers, or in one of Open Door's five school-based health centers in Port Chester.

Community HealthCorps Navigators at Open Door Family Medical Centers are members is the largest health-focused, national AmeriCorps program that promotes health care for America's underserved, while developing tomorrow's health care workforce.

Annual Stipend \$12,100 • Education Award \$5,550 • Health Insurance • Student Loan Forebearance



What do Navigators say about their experience at Open Door?

"I initially wanted to join AmeriCorps because I believe that people constantly forget that United States has its own problems that need solutions."
- Heaven-Lee

"AmeriCorps provided me with an opportunity to see a new side of medicine that I did not experience during extensive shadowing and volunteering in hospitals and private practices."
- Mike

"It's all about gaining as much experience and doing as much as you can to give yourself and others the opportunity to make for a better community, to make for a better world."
- Lori

More Information: communityhealthcorps.org & opendoormedical.org

Contact: Martina Persson at mpersson@odfmc.org

To Apply: Create an account on www.americorps.gov and apply to:
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