



news from **SCAN NEW YORK** fall 2014

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SCAN's Super Summer



SCAN campers celebrating summer at our Wagner Cornerstone in East Harlem

By Lew Zuchman, Executive Director

As the summer of 2014 emerged, SCAN received last minute notice that we were to be awarded significant new DYCD (Department of Youth and Community Development) funding to keep our five East Harlem-based Cornerstone centers open Monday through Sunday until 11:00pm! We were instantly confronted with the challenge of hiring buttressed staffing, while also creating meaningful teen-focused programming with only days to prepare. SCAN met Mayor DeBlasio's Summer Gear-Up challenge with commitment, passion and energy.

We reached out to senior staff in all of our programs to help supervise the extended evening and weekend hours at our NYCHA sites. We recruited East Harlem hip hop artists, basketball coaches, Salsa and African dance instructors, as well as partnering with Urban Arts Beat to sponsor a week-long Hip Hop Social Justice Camp at our Johnson Cornerstone. We launched a brand new comprehensive Fashion Art and Design program in which youth design and produce t-shirts and related youth fashion (hoodies, sneakers, etc.) primarily based at our Martin Luther King (MLK) Cornerstone. And... in our spare time, then we sponsored Saturday Summer Hip Hop/R&B concerts at our Johnson Cornerstone.

All of these activities operated in complementary fashion with our Summer Camp programs, based at our seven East Harlem sites. And as always, SCAN worked hard to ensure that our campers enjoyed some wonderful summer outings, including trips to Rye Playland, Build-A-Bear, The Bronx Zoo, Sony Wonder Technology Lab, The American Museum of Natural History, Yankee Stadium, Dorney Park (Pennsylvania), Lake Compounce (Connecticut) and Great Adventure (New Jersey).

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SCAN's Super Summer

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As summer came to a close in late August, our SCAN MLK sixteen-and-over hoopsters emerged victorious in our first SCAN/Kingdome Basketball Tourney, sponsored with our DYCD Summer Gear-Up funds. As I left the joyous MLK celebration (the Kingdome basketball courts are located in the middle of the MLK Houses), I heard someone call out "Mr. Lew!" I then saw a MLK Tenant Association Officer approaching me. "Mr. Lew, I just got to give you a hug. You guys brought life back to MLK! This was our bestest summer in many, many years!".

Aside from hoops victories... a new fashion design program... and enhanced music and dance programming... we were able to connect with our NYCHA communities in special ways. We positively engaged youthful gang members, and made new and meaningful connections with seniors and young children alike. And most importantly, we played a critical role in the dramatic reduction of violence at NYCHA sites over the summer -- a 14% reduction in one year!

Yes, the "Summer Gear-Up" challenged our SCAN family. We met this challenge with commitment, energy and caring.



Teen and Young Adult Job Summit Fosters Access to Employment

As part of our efforts to create economic opportunities for East Harlem residents, SCAN hosted a Youth Job Summit this past October 8th at our Johnson Houses site, which drew over 100 community members between the ages of 16 and 24.

Thanks to the sponsorship and hard work of the Office of New York State Assemblymember Robert J. Rodriguez, the event featured an exciting range of employers, including Metropolitan Hospital, Mt. Sinai Hospital, the Office of Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance, Burlington Coat Factory, the New York

Police Department, Artimus, Rite Aid, New Generation Internet Radio, Lettire Construction Corporation, TMA Security Training, Harvest Home Farmer's Market, Sabor Borinqueno, the Office of the Comptroller of the City of New York, Scott M. Stringer, and non-profits organizations including, Fedcap, YouthBuild, Year Up and Positive Workforce.

Attendees were also provided with inspiration and advice from some local Hip Hop performers who have worked with SCAN for years, including the Voice of Harlem and Petawane.



photo: Bill Fink

Five SCAN Students Receive 2014 Woods Scholarship Awards

Since 2001, the Sylvia and Herbert Woods Scholarship Endowment Foundation has been giving back to young scholars in our community by providing financial support to attend college. Created by Sylvia Woods, the “Queen of Soulfood,” (founder of the world famous Sylvia’s Restaurant), and her family, the foundation celebrated the awarding of its 100th scholarship this year, and five of the ten recipients for 2014 were participants in SCAN’s Reach For The Stars program.

Since its inception in 1991, Reach for the Stars (RFTS) has launched the scholastic and professional careers of hundreds of African American and Latino inner-city youth. The program serves approximately sixty 8th to 12th graders in East Harlem and the South Bronx each year, providing an array of educational and community-building activities that improve students’ academic performance and social development, while engendering hope and the perception of opportunity.

Our program does not limit participation to college-ready students (as many others do), but rather encourages every SCAN young person wishing to achieve their full personal and academic potential to enroll in the program. A critical part of our program is the participation of RFTS alumni: individuals who grew up the same neighborhoods as current participants who went on to attend college, and so have a unique capacity to demonstrate to younger students what is possible.

SCAN’s 2014 Woods Scholarship winners are (pictured left to right): Shaquary Deanna Ford, Tynaija Ford, Selena Hinojosa, Clarisse Riley and Aly Camara. Each student will receive \$3,500.



photos: Randolph Waterman, Atsede Alegbra

SCAN Board Member Profile: Jamel Oeser-Sweat, Esq.



This summer, when SCAN Board Member Jamel Oeser-Sweat, Esq. was named a “Rising Star” by the New York Law Journal -- part of a group of young attorneys who have “established a record of accomplishments and demonstrated that they are top contributors to the practice of law and their

communities” -- his many friends were pleased that, once again, Jamel was being recognized for his truly amazing transformation.

Coming from an upbringing filled with homeless shelters, poverty and foster care, Jamel was introduced to SCAN in the early ‘90s. Jamel’s family received counseling, extensive casework and programming designed to strengthen the family unit in the face of their overwhelming obstacles. Jamel joined SCAN’s first Manhattan afterschool group – an early venue for the agency’s youth empowerment experiences – and was soon a peer mentor in SCAN’s PS121 partnership, the predecessor of our Reach For The Stars upward bound program.

In Jamel’s senior year of high school he became a Westinghouse Science Scholarship finalist and received a certificate in recombinant DNA techniques from the Mt. Sinai School of Medicine (which included his work being published in the *Journal of Clinical Microbiology*). After graduating from high school, the true extent of Jamel’s talents and drive were soon evident, as he earned a full scholarship to NYU, and then went on to St. John’s Law School. Today he runs his own law firm: Law Offices of Oeser-Sweat, P.C.

In just one example of Jamel’s unique mix of skills, he is the co-author of a text on the role of DNA in criminal litigation. *DNA: Forensic and Legal Applications* is a first of its kind book, filling a void in the legal world by serving as a comprehensive reference for judges, lawyers, scientists and laypersons interested in DNA and its role in the litigation process.

A SCAN Board Member since 2002, Jamel not only provides his own distinctive viewpoint in building the agency’s future, he is a constant reminder to the youth we serve that, no matter where they are, positive change and transformation are truly within their grasp.



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or contact the Director of Development
at (212) 289-8030 or bfink@scanny.org.

New East Harlem Middle School Initiative Launches

Thanks to a brand new three-year award from the City, SCAN began a new afterschool program this fall in partnership with the Harbor Science and Arts Charter School, located on East 111th Street. The new funding provides \$270,000 a year, enabling the agency to serve 90 middle school students (grades 6-8) with a broad range of programs.

Academic supports for students include tutoring and homework help; enrichment activities include literacy, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), leadership development and journalism; and healthy living/physical activities featuring dance, stepping, basketball and soccer. Students will also be provided with college and career awareness activities through our ongoing effort to engage middle school students in SCAN's Reach For The Stars program.

Part of SONYC (School's Out NYC) – the City's largest ever expansion of afterschool programming for middle school students – this new effort by SCAN draws on the agency's decades of experience in supporting teens during their critical transition from elementary to high school. Accordingly, the activities being delivered at the Harbor School have all been proven at SCAN's other school sites (we are currently running seven afterschool programs in the South Bronx, as well as seven in East Harlem).

Perhaps most importantly, the students will benefit from one of the most effective reforms available for enhancing the school experience: reduced class size. As Shakiema Dixon, SCAN's program director at the school puts it, "Every activity we're providing has a maximum of 15 students per class. There's no better way to ensure that participants will get the attention and encouragement they need to learn, develop and mature."



photo: Alexandra Fink