

a waterways project publication

Volunteers in the Community



**My Community:
expressive writings
by
Student Volunteers
at Brooklyn VA
Medical Center**

A WATERWAYS PROJECT PUBLICATION

Barbara Fisher &
Richard Spiegel
co-directors
Thomas Perry
Assistant

**Mary Tisi
Teacher**

**Loretta White
Assistant Principal, NYC VTC**

**Alan Werner
Principal, NYC VTC**

**Stephen E. Phillips
Superintendent, Alternative HS & Programs**

with funding support from
the Governor's Office for Volunteerism.

LOSING A LOVED ONE TO AIDS

Anita Ramos

It is really hard when you lose someone you love to AIDS. I know. I lost my father to that deadly disease. I lost my dad in March of 1985. My father was the closest person in my life. I loved him more than anything in the world. He contracted AIDS through a blood transfusion. Back in 1985 medical research did not know what caused people to get AIDS. I wasn't able to hug him, hold his hand or really be around him. That feeling really hurt me. I wanted to be there for him. I watched him suffer through so many changes of his body. I was in pain just seeing him suffer. It took me a long time to accept his death, and even now that I'm older there's not a day that goes by that I don't think about him. I know his spirit will always be with me and I will always love him.

WHY I LIKE VOLUNTARY SERVICES

Delamii Barrimond

The word volunteer means doing a service to society of your own free will. I believe volunteering is a good deed and help. When a person volunteers that means the person enjoys the service that they are volunteering for. When you volunteer in a hospital the majority of the patients are grateful for the help. Sometimes the volunteers play games with the patient or the volunteer will assist the patient in whatever he/she want to do. Volunteering is rewarding when you know you've done something to help someone who needed that help.

RACISM

Anita Ramos

I feel that people who are racist are real ignorant. The reason why I say that racists are ignorant is no matter if you are black, white, yellow, red, you still are a human being. Racist people think because you are different from them that makes you a bad person, but it doesn't. We still all breathe the same and bleed the same way. In my eyes I see no color. I see people, their insides and attitude. I feel we are all the same person but we look different and our ways of living and religion are different.

RECYCLING

Carmelo Santiago

Should we have a say about whether or not using recycling centers should be voluntary or mandatory?

Recycling centers should be voluntary. If the recycling centers are voluntary people have a choice as to whether they should do something good for their loved ones and the beautiful planet we call earth. If the state makes it a law to recycle most people will not follow it. I say let people have a choice. That is the only proper way things can be done.

Betty Bennett

In my twenty years of life a lot has happened to me. I have been in a situation where I had to help protect the welfare of another person. I remember the day like it was yesterday even though I don't remember the date. It was a hot day in July and my friends and I were playing double dutch in front of a school. While we were playing we saw these boys across the street, but we didn't pay attention to them until we heard someone yelling "help".

They were mugging this man at the curb of the street almost under the back of this car. That's why we didn't know what was going on because they had the man under a car. It was four black boys beating up on this little white man. My friends and I were so shocked that we stood there and watched. When they finally got the man's money they ran and this other man went chasing after them. One of the boys turned around and shot the man.

Someone had called the police and the ambulance. The man who had gotten mugged told the police that my friends had witnessed the mugging. But because we were minors we didn't have to help identify the muggers if we didn't want to.

There were four of us and when the police asked us if we knew what the muggers looked like two of my friends said they didn't see anything. My friend Umeka and I did go to the police station to try to help identify the boys who mugged the man because we felt sorry for him. This man's life was in danger because after they took his money they could have killed him, but they didn't. Even though they did shoot the man that was chasing after them he didn't die.

My grandmother told me that it was a dangerous thing that I was doing when I said I would identify the muggers. I really wanted to help this man in any way that I could. Detectives came to my house

almost every week asking me questions and showing me pictures of criminals. A year passed and a lawyer called me to come identify the muggers because they thought they had caught them. But because a year had passed I couldn't help any more because a person can change a lot in a year. I didn't want to take a chance and identify the wrong persons as the muggers.

Even though I didn't know this man I had to try and help him in some way. This could have been my mother, grandmother or someone else I really cared about and I would want someone to help them just as I tried to help this man who had gotten mugged.

Now I really don't have the same feelings as I did before, because things are just too dangerous to be helping others as I tried to in the past. Because now if a person is doing something against the law and it looks like you might have seen them do it they will harm you in some way or

kill you so that you won't talk. I try to be a concerned person who cares about the welfare of others, but I can't afford to jeopardize my family or my life for someone else.

Michele Lutchman

Last week a man shot four Jews on the Brooklyn Bridge. I feel that the way they are handling this problem is wrong. They are overdoing it. The police. Mayor Guilliani wouldn't handle the problem in this manner if the man who was shot was a black man. The Jews just want some attention. The person who shot the Jews is wrong. So is the way in which they are handling it.

Anita Ramos

Some people think that being the oldest child, a middle child, or the youngest child affects them for their entire life. I feel that there is a difference being the oldest child, middle child or the youngest child. Throughout my essay I will express my opinion as to how it feels growing up as the oldest child when as the oldest child you receive all the attention from both your parents. You get all their love and you don't have to worry about sharing any of your belongings with anyone. Sometimes it is hard to cope with having another child around because some children may feel less loved or not loved enough. They will have to get accustomed to sharing with their other siblings.

When you are a middle child, some children would feel they might have to compete with the oldest child. The middle

child might feel pushed around from the oldest sibling and jealousy develops. They are too young to do what the oldest sibling can do and therefore resentment sets in. The youngest child can be fun because they are their parent's baby. Regardless of how old they get and sometimes spoiled. From being with your older siblings, you as the youngest child can learn fast and much more.

Miguel Morales

Sometimes being the oldest, middle, or the youngest child is not bad, but when the youngest one gets more attention and love than the oldest or the middle child it causes the oldest to leave the house fast and get married quick. And then parents give more attention to the youngest because the parent doesn't want the youngest to get in trouble outside in the street. The youngest could learn a lot from the oldest or middle child. For example, the youngest could learn educational things and the youngest could learn also the bad things the oldest was doing.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: Connie Jenkins

By the time you read this letter, I may be dead. Due to the fact that I am a young black teenager as each day goes by I am a growing statistic.

Because of the area I live in, the odds are against me making it to my 25th birthday alive. As each day passes I can only wish that my strongest concern as a teenager would be the neighborhood bully and how much my boyfriend loves me. Unfortunately, to a person in my situation, these concerns are merely fairytales. Instead, I have to look out for the neighborhood drug dealers and if me and/or my boyfriend make it home o.k.

I am not a problem child, nor do I have a criminal record. I have hard working parents that raised me with good morals, so I am left with some puzzling questions. How do I survive? What happens

when I'm on my own? And, how am I going to explain to my kids about the way things are? Why are there so many problems? With this thought I beg and plead with you to help me by building more homes instead of projects; by building more homes that will create more jobs.

To me each neighborhood is a country. Jewish, Black, White, Chinese, Asian, and Hispanic neighborhoods are not evenly integrated, as well as the rich, middle class and poor. If we breakdown these neighborhoods or these countries, we would then be the melting pot we are known for (united we stand, divided we fall). I know I can't help all the problems in one letter, but, I just wanted you to be aware that teenagers are concerned too. I hope you don't forget me and what I've written before I do become a statistic.

Roger Lutchman

Glass, aluminum and paper recycling facilities have been built in many communities all across the country. They have been built there in order to accept many of the communities' recyclable products and to prepare them to be processed so they can be reused.

Recycling is very beneficial. It is not only beneficial to the communities that are fortunate to have these centers in existence, but to the entire environment as well. Every day tons of garbage is collected and piled up in huge land fills and even on garbage barges. The height of the garbage dumps are threatening to become part of our city's skyline.

With the garbage problem so ridiculous you would think that when proposed to the individuals the idea of recycling would become environmentally correct and citizens would do their part to

maintain a cleaner environment. This is not the case. Many people ignore the call to action and just 'don't care.' This is why fines have been imposed on people who don't follow recycling procedures.

The idea of recycling shouldn't be mandatory. Those who do not follow the requirement should get fines imposed upon them as often as possible.

The burden of a cleaner environment shouldn't be placed upon a few people, but upon all people as a whole.

Roger Lutchman

I feel that the shooting attack on the van transporting the Hasidic Jews across the Brooklyn Bridge was a despicable act of possible terrorism. This gross display of violent behavior towards people the victims never knew personally, brought out the barbaric personality exhibited in the attackers.

More often, scenes like this in the middle east and countries in those areas are accepted. Places where people are oppressed or revolting, not in New York City. The perpetrators should be caught and removed from society permanently.

Angie Quinones

Some apartment complexes today advertise their apartments for adults only. Should landlords have the right to discriminate against families with small children?

Apartment complexes should not discriminate against small children. If no children are allowed to live in apartment complexes then where are they to live. Children are our future. They are the future for the world. If people discriminate against children, then who and what will be next. Since everyone has been a child in their lifetime, they should be more understanding towards children.

Anita Quinones

Why is it sometimes hard being a teenage mother?

Speaking from experience, in my opinion, it can be very hard being a teenage parent. Some teenage girls miss out on their teenage years. They might not be able to do some of the other events that their peers can do, such as going to the movies, hanging out on the streets all night with their friends.

Most of all, what most teenage parents miss out on is their education. Without their education it is very hard to get a job. Another reason why it is also hard being a teen parent is that some teenage girls have to raise their children without their father. What usually happens to teen parents is that they turn into a parent of themselves.

More and more mothers of preschoolers are entering the work force. As a result, their children spend large parts of the day in day care centers or with baby sitters. How do you think this child care arrangement affects small children as compared to children whose mothers stay at home?

Madelyn Rivera

If the father asked for them let him take care of them. If the father is not there for the baby then let the mother stay home so that the kid can learn from the mom everything they need to know, because if the kid is without the mother for the first 5 years they are not going to respect her.

Karmaia Martinez

I think that you as a parent should take care of your child at least 'til he's one year old. After he's one you can leave him with a responsible relative til you can come home, but make sure you feed your child enough love and attention when you come home to it so that it doesn't

forget you are his parent and will always love him. You should play with him and teach him things. You should feed him as much love as possible so that he can give it in return with no problem in the future.

Many people feel that being a parent is very important. So important that it should require classes and a license. What do you think?

Carlyle Hall

I feel that being a parent is a very big responsibility. You have to be very careful in making decisions. You have to provide for your kid in a lot of ways.

You have to take your kid to the hospital, buy your kid food, clothes, etc. I feel that there should be classes to help parents make up their minds. There are too many young parents out in the world. To slow down kids from making babies they should have safe sex.

Karmaia Martinez

I don't think you should have to get a license to be able to bring a precious life into this world. I do think that we should take classes on it so that we can be a fit parent not only in our own way, but also in many other ways you can be taught.

Why students drop out of or not successful in regular high school--what do you think schools should do to help these students?

Joseph James

I think students drop out of high school because some just don't feel school is for them and they probably want to hang out with their friends. Or maybe they have a lot of things going on in their lives and they think no one can help them. They probably feel that they're better off by themselves. I don't think schools should get involved in students' problems if it is a personal matter.

David Sanatro

In my opinion a lot of students drop out because of peer pressure and they don't feel comfortable in the school. A lot of students are sent to schools they don't want to be in and that's one main reason for drop outs. Some students work at a certain level and teachers tell them you need this and you need that without knowing the students' level of ability. I think students should be given a test each year to check their ability to put them in one class or another depending on their ability.

LIFE ON THE STREETS

Edgar Montalban

Life on the streets is not easy. You have plenty of teenagers out on streets with guns. Half of these kids on the street are from the age of 9 to 14 and are drug dealers. The majority of the kids carry guns to school and most of the parents don't even bother to find out if their kids are the ones who are taking the guns to school.

If there were better cops and if they would have more cops on duty instead of sitting around in the Dunkin Donuts drinking coffee and eating donuts maybe there wouldn't be so many crimes in the streets and maybe there wouldn't be so many people dying every day.

TROUBLE IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS

Miguel A. Morales

The new mayor should take care of violence in most neighborhoods like Brownsville, Crown Heights and Bedford Stuy. If the mayor comes to this violent neighborhood he would know how the people feel. Then Mayor Rudy would know what to do to help these neighborhoods. If the mayor could clean the streets of violence then everybody living in all neighborhoods would feel safe. People also should limit all weapons and face the hate in the violent neighborhoods. It would be a big help to the police and the mayor and he could take care of other things while the police are out there taking care of things.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT

I want to tell you some things that I feel need to be changed in my neighborhood. The police are very aggressive around my neighborhood. I know they're just doing their job, but I was harrassed by a cop.

I was just standing on the corner on my block and some kid I know was rolling dice. Cops really don't pay attention when people roll dice. But there was this kid I saw selling drugs, but he wasn't selling when the cop was watching the corner. Then he just came out and they stopped rolling dice and people started to leave the corner. The cop told me to come here. I was walking away and he just grabbed me and arrested me.

He put the cuffs on mad tight and he said - I am going to get you and your punk friends off the street. I was like- what are you talking about. I was just standing there. He said, shut up, and took me to 27

the 83rd precinct and all the cops were laughing and one of the cops said - see Mayor Dinkins isn't in office anymore. Giuliani is in office now, and he started to laugh. They were holding me for two hours and gave me a summons for disorderly conduct. Well I am going to come to an end and close this letter. Hope you read it.

Bye, Yours truly,

Carlyle Hall