THE NEWSLETTER OF THE 52ND STREET PROJECT FULL-COLOR WEB EDITION - VOLUME 65, MARCH, 2012 - GEORGE BABIAK, EDITOR

▶ Robert Stanton was a 4 -year-old boy in a love/hate relationship with 4-year-old ballerina Wrenn Schmidt in 11-year-old Imani Lewis's Ballerina Trouble, directed by John Sheehy.

▼ In Jasmine Nicole Correa's Best Friends, Megan Ketch and Jo Mei were BFF's who had a falling-out but found their way out of the woods (both literally and figuratively). Tamara Fisch ably steered the show.

PLAYMAKING PHOTOGRAPHY BY WINSTON RODNEY



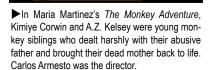
▶ Lucy and Madison, written by Ashley Thomas and directed by Patricia McGregor, cast Jessica Hecht as a deranged and devoted fan stalking quirky Broadway star Mia Barron.



▲ Carson Elrod and Bill Camp were *The Mad Scientist and The Weirdo* (not in that order) in Bamba Thiam's play of the same name. Lucas Caleb Rooney directed this darkly farcical play.



▼ In Chayse Peña's *The Zoo*, directed by Don Nguyen, Joe Paulik was a zookeeper who learned that the animals he kept had the power of speech. He sang about it in the show-stopping number depicted below. Felix Solis (inset) was Mr. Grumpy, Joe's predictably grumpy employer.



BOUNCING BACK: THE RESILIENT PLAYS THE FALL 2011 PLAYMAKING SHOW

In September, we started a Playmaking class for 10 brand new Project kids. Their final shows were performed Dec. 9-11, 2011 at the Five Angels Theater.

THE DESIGN AND TECH TEAM

Greg MacPherson	Lights
Patrick Barnes	
Lara DeBruijn,	•
Crystal Thompson, and Corie Wallace	Costumes
Vanessa Valdes	Goddess of Sound
Laura Kim	Stage Manager

STONE RIDGE, NEW YORK HOSTS

Steve Gorn & Barbara Bash, Joe White & Iris Brown, Charlie Miles & Naomi Freundlich, Sean Cullen & Tess Hartman, Jeff Madalena & Jason Gnewikow, David Curtis & Ann Morris, Amy Weiss & Michael McClatchy, and Nicole & Paul Quinn



Fall 2011 Playmaking, continued:



▲ Kate Mendoza gave us The Crow and the Robber, in which Maria-Christina Oliveras played a predatory larcenist and Francis Benhamou was her avian quarry. Spoiler: The bird got away. Maureen Towey directed.



▲ The Wimpy Player, by Alex Bonnet, told the story of a local bully (Brandon Dirden) who was bested in basketball by a self-taught nerd (Alex Draper). Interestingly, both characters had dumbwaiters in their rooms. Davis McCallum coached the show.



▲ Edward O'Blenis was a lounge singer and Shirley Rumierk his American Girl Doll-collecting sister in Joseph Cruz's Me and Sis. Their conflict was so intense that Sis wound up in the hospital. Awoye Timpo directed.

WIDE OPEN SPACES: THE OUTDOOR PLAYS

THE 2012 TWO-ON-TWOS

In this annual format, we line up 6 pairs of kids and match each team with an adult playwright and an adult director. The plays were rehearsed in Nyack, NY over the Martin Luther King Day weekend and performed Jan. 27-29, 2012 at the Five Angels Theater.

THE DESIGN AND TECH TEAM

Greg MacPherson	Lights
Eric March	Composer/Music Director
Sarah Swafford	Costumes
Maileen Cancel	Sound Designer
Winnie Lok	Stage Manager

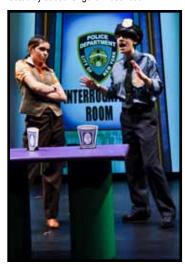
NYACK HOSTS

Susanna Styron, Wendy vanden Heuvel & Brad Coley, and Barbara Rosenthal.





- ▲In Melisa Tien's SWAMP!, Lauren Robinson was a half-baked magician who helped archaeologist Gabriella DeJesus battle piranhas and find some artifacts and treasure. Molly Coogan directed them.
- ◆ Chamel Rodney and Hashem Ahmed were a wild man and a ranger engaging in wacky woodcraft competitions in Dustin Chinn's Better Living Through Forestry, directed by Jacob Grigolia-Rosenbaum.





- Edison Sibri and Elizabeth Vazquez played the title characters in Christopher O. Peña's Nic and Lucy in the Woods. They discovered their inner warriors with the help of director Michael Walkup.
- Michael Mitnick's The Interrogation Room was a series of mind games played by a mysterious master of disguise on cops Jasmine Hernandez and Mari Ulloa. Katie Flahive used her mind to direct.
- ► Fugitive singing elves Devin Gonzalez and Wendell Joseph suffered icy conditions and a bear attack as they followed their bliss to Los Angeles. Larkin Clark's Polar Ambition was directed by master of elven lore Lee Aaron Rosen.











PLAYBACK OCT. 2011 KIDS WRITE AND ACT WITH ADULTS

▲ Nathaniel Butler (right), in The Switch, portrayed a garbageman who was lured into the clutches of an evil scientist (Michael Propster) who plotted to transplant his ancient brain into Nathaniel's young body.



▲ Get That Raise, by Ashley Melon, was a tale of corporate rivalry set in an ad agency. Ashley, (R), was rising young executive Elizabeth Trunkinbottom and Donya Washington was Melissa Petalfoot, her "frenemy."

NO STRINGS ATTACHED! THE INDEPENDENT PLAYS

THE 2011 PLAYBACK SHOWS

Once a year in Playback, the kids write for THEM-SELVES (and an adult partner who also directs). This year's Playback was rehearsed in Bridgehampton and staged at the Five Angels on Oct. 21-23, 2011.

THE DESIGN AND TECH TEAM

Greg MacPherson	Lights
Cynthia Wong	Composer/Music Director
Sarah Swafford	Costumes
Chris Steele-Nicholson	Sound
Liz Bell	Stage Manager

THE HOST FAMILIES

John Vassilaros, Alex Gersten-Vassilaros, and Tonio, Luka, and Stefano Vassilaros, Laurie Becker, the Rubin family, and the Friedman family

■ Joseph Vasquez (R), seen here with co-star Jeremy Beck in his play Hot Dogs and Baseball, was a budding baseball phenom whose career was stalled by a broken arm. Jeremy, as aging scout Remy Epson, helped him get back on track



▲ Are You Jealous of Me Now?, by Tiara Varela, featured Tiara as a naturally gifted young fashion designer. Her director. Brielle Silvestri, played the best friend whose envy and resentment almost ruined everything.

▼Venecia Escamilla's Zombies Attack gave us a glimpse into the artistic sensibilities of those wacky flesh-eating corpses. Venecia was a painterly zombie and Charise Castro Smith was her bloodthirsty buddy. Surprisingly, both revenants (look that up, kids) were partial to ice cream cones.





▲ Nicholas Carrero was a detective determined to solve the crime of the murder of his own parents in Partners No Matter What. Raul Castillo was his partner, friend, and for a time, suspect.

▼In Somebody, by Lucas Ruedel, a young rocker (Lucas, at right) split up with his partner (Matt Citron) to find fame, fortune, and Grammy awards as a solo artist. He found them all, and devil take the hindmost.







▲ Things Don't Always Turn Out Picture Perfect, by Alizette Zapata, was a very mature study of a pair of friends who find they are not cut out to be roommates. Emily Dorsch was the friend who was left behind when Alizette's character embraced her independence.

MEET THE NEW TEEN ENSEMBLE... AND THEIR ALTER EGOS!



Our brand-new 2011–2013 Teen Ensemble has been hard at work this year. They started in October with Danyon Davis' movement workshop, plunged into the wacky world of improvisation with George Babiak and Doug Nervik, and then combined those skills by learning the fine art of MASK! In December our 17 teens created intricate, beautiful, and even grotesque plaster masks for their faces.

Then in January, Sarah Petersiel, Master Mask Teacher (photo at left), led us through an intensive character workshop. On February 16th, the original characters introduced themselves to an audience. We met strange and other-worldly figures: a haughty king, a dancing cop, a hawk-like forager,

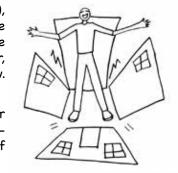
a two-stepping cowgirl, a femme fatale druglord, and a vegan vampire, just to name a few.

But the Teen Ensemble is just getting warmed up...

This June, come see 6 original ten-minute plays by adult playwrights custom-made for our fearless and fiesty teenagers. They're ready to bust through beliefs, break down barriers, and bring you a one-of-a-kind theatrical experience. All this clever jargon is, of course, designed to segue into the theme of their show.

BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE: The 2012 52nd Street Teen Ensemble One-Act Play Festival will feature brand-new plays by Alex Gersten-Vassillaros, Jerome Hairston, Cynthia Kaplan, David Lindsay-Abaire, Matthew Paul Olmos, and Erin Quinn Purcell.

Showtimes: Friday June 1st @ 7:30pm & Saturday June 2nd @ 3:00pm.



Bringing Down THE HOUSE!

-MC



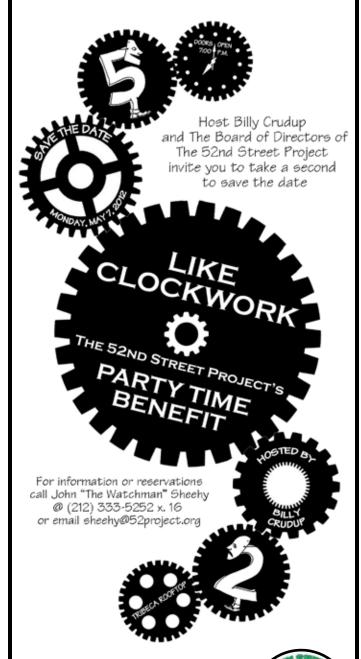
On Feb. 3rd, 12 High School freshmen hung out, ate delicious pizza, and chatted about the Project's new College Readiness Program with Proj staffers Lisa Kerner and Liz Bell at the first-ever College Prep Pizza Party. Freshmen learned about all the resources the Project has to help them prepare for college: academic and SAT/ACT tutoring, workshops on the application process and college essay, one-on-one guidance, and more! —LK

The Project's Sixth
Annual Open Mic Night,
which happened on
Friday, Dec. 16 at the
Five Angels, gave our
Smart Partner pairs a
chance to showcase their
shared talents. It was
a free-spirited event
filled with comedy, song,
dance, readings, scientific studies, and fresh-

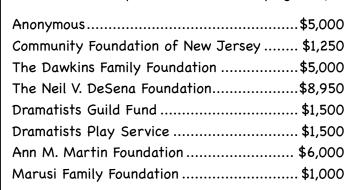


baked cookies. George and Liz put on their holiday finest to trim a tree and host the show, which was capped by the premiere performance of the Fifty-Tunes, the Project's fledgling glee club.

Seen above are Lucas Ruedel and Patrick Clair as the Project's resident Brainologists. You hadda be there to appreciate it.



The following foundations, corporations, and government agencies recently made generous grants to the Project. We are grateful to them for their support as well as to the many individuals who help sustain the Project's programs year-round.



The Monteforte Foundation	\$2,500
Morgan Stanley	\$2,000
NEA	\$8,750
NYSCA	\$8,060
TCG	. \$13,000
Vervane Foundation	\$5,000
WME Foundation	. \$15,000

THE 12TH ANNUAL PING-PONG TOURNAMENT

Since the turn of the century 52nd Street Projectiles have been waging a vicious but bloodless war on a small green and white table bisected by a ribbon of mesh. Their weapons: small white spherical missiles propelled by cheap plastic institutional paddles.

Here are this year's final results.



THE CHAMPIONS: The Fast and the Furious - Maximo Jimenez and John Sheehy were 4th in 2011, but returned in full strength this year.



2ND PLACE: *J* & *S-Man-* Sean Kenealy and teen Jason Gil (who was a Nok-Hockey champ in 2007 and 2008) tried harder and became #2.



3RD PLACE: Gangsta People - Eric Carrero and Lisa Kerner, a first-time match-up, did extraordinarily well in spite of Eric's tightly closed eyes.



4TH PLACE: The Wimpy Zookeepers
- Alex Bonnet and Joe Paulik. With a
team name inspired by their past Project
plays, they were anything but wimpy!



5TH PLACE: West Side A.D. - Adnan Ahmed and Diana Rojas. They played so well together that Adnan asked Diana to be his partner next year.



HONORABLE MENTION: The Pink Panthers - Elena Caballero and J McLoughlin, 2-time Best Dressed winners, no longer relied on flashy fashion.



WACKIEST TEAM: The Filmmakers -Enrique Caballero and Dylan Dawson played as Oscar the Groucho Marx and Furry Gump. Wacky, indeed.



MOST IMPROVED: *The Giants* - Richard Brea and Shane West shot hoops in Clinton Park relentlessly until they improved in Ping Pong.



BEST NEW PLAYERS: Fair Unfair- Michael Propster and Brandon Draude. Contrary to this photo, Brandon did not employ Michael's head as the ball.



BEST TEAMWORK: The Terminators-Lee Aaron Rosen and Chamel Rodney played like a well-oiled killer robot from the far future.



BEST DRESSED: *The Funny Bunnies* - Nathaly Trinidad and Julie Sharbutt designed t-shirts and got the medal even though Nathaly left her tee at home.



GOOD SPORTS: WINNERS - Look at those smiles! Any questions as to why Leah Macuilt and Tasha Gordon-Solmon took home this medal?

... AND FIRST ANNUAL FOOSBALL MINI-TOURNAMENT

Last year, Rick and Gwen Harris, our good buddies from Calgary, surprised us with the gift of a brand-new Foosball table. Since then, the pastime has been such a hit that we were forced to create a second tournament. To maximize efficiency and chaos, we held them both on the same afternoon.

-GRB



CHAMPIONS: Josh Moody and Jorge Zapata apparently got tired of beating everyone at Ping Pong.



2ND PLACE: Justin Bannister and Ray Harold. Justin, according to reports, sports his medal at home and calls out "I'm #2!"



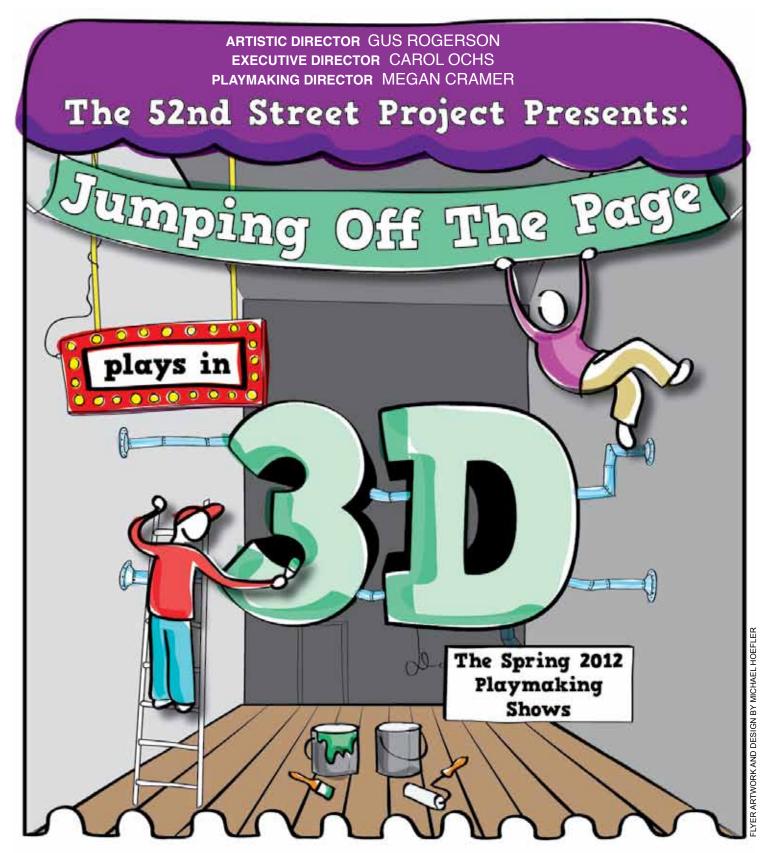
3RD PLACE: Lee and Chamel won so many prizes that they asked for shopping bags to carry home their plunder.



4TH PLACE: Tatiana Goode stole Lisa Kerner from Eric Carrero (see above) long enough to capture this position.



GOOD SPORTS: Jed Clarke and Francis Willams. Just look at those smiles! Any questions... oh, never mind.

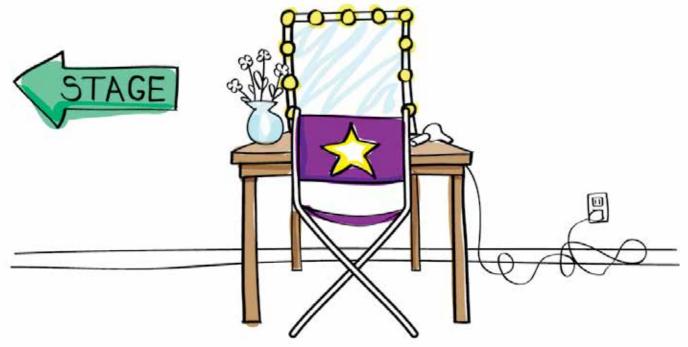


10 new plays written by kids and performed by adult actors.

Friday, March 30 at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, March 31 at 3:00 and 7:30 p.m. Sunday, April 1 at 3:00 p.m. at The 52nd Street Project's **FIVE ANGELS THEATER**

789 10th Avenue (between 52nd and 53rd St.)

Jumping Off The Page: Plays in 3D



THE KID PLAYWRIGHTS:

Kwaku Abangan ♦ Steven Anthony Baez-Padilla ♦ Sabrina Caldona Ricardo Currin ♦ Allyssia Feliciano ♦ Bryan Lopez Makice Love Pacheco ♦ Tiniah Renee Powell ♦ Tyleek Powell ♦ Fallyn Vega

THE ADULT ACTORS AND DIRECTORS:

Cecilia Arana-Grant & George Babiak & Pun Bandhu & Todd Bartels & Reed Birney Erin Cherry & John Ellison Conlee & Snehal Desai & Tim Hopper & Marin Ireland Korey Jackson & Sue Jean Kim & Maggie Lacey & January LaVoy & Irene Sofia Lucio Nick Mills & Martin Moran & Howard Overshown & Flor De Liz Perez & Armando Riesco Christina Roussos & Rachel Rusch & Juan Villa & Nicole A. Watson











The 52nd Street Project is a non-profit organization that brings children from the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood together with professional theater artists to create original shows. "JUMPING OFF THE PAGE! PLAYS IN 3-D" is a production of our Playmaking program, in which children are taught how to write plays. After nine weeks of classes, each child is given two adult actors, a theme, and a dramaturge/director who helps him or her through the writing of a play during a weekend in the country. The Playmaking classes were adapted for the Project by Daniel Judah Sklar from his book *Playmaking: Children Writing and Performing Their Own Plays*.



#52ND STREET PROJECT

The Playmaking Program program is made possible by funds from corporations; foundations; individuals; the National Endowment for the Arts, and the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency. This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. The 52nd Street Project is supported by the Open Society Foundations and the Fund for the City of New York. The Project is a member of ART/NY.

BE A DESIGNER 2012

Many kids spend their mid-winter recess sleeping late and watching TV. Not here at The 52nd Street Project! During the week of February 20-24, eight young Projectiles learned the varied arts involved in theater design, including prop-making, drafting plans and elevations, creating characters and costumes, and finally, building set models. Each kid was assigned a Project play from the past (written by kids of yore) and had to create their own "World of the Play" to match it. They were led by George Babiak and Liz Bell and assisted by Rachel Cora, Kate Cusack, Jordana De La Cruz, Scott Dougan, David Henry Gerson, Joshua Hernandez, Michael Hoefler, Brennan Lowery, Julie Sharbutt, and Elizabeth Woodbury. Below are photos of the kids and their scale models.

—GRB



Amanda Rosa created a brightly colored supermarket complete with shopping carts for Shakeema Green's *The Biggest Lie.*





For Lordan Ulloa's The Big Chase, Davon Joseph designed a set that was half city street and half slime cave... slime made of vomit!





For his play Derek Tineo drew Stephanie Marion's *The Friendship* of *Life*, in which two candies tumble out of a handbag and onto a bedspread.





For Terrence Mack's The Lost Kingdom, Edelys Guerrero envisioned a landscape of broken columns, ghosts, and withered blossoms.





Joseph Cruz's challenge in *Pro Skateboarders* by Jason Peterson Ridge: a skateboard park that was "cool" to one character and "junky" to the other





There was no dog-run mentioned in Samantha Toro's *Trees and Snow*, but Maria Martinez felt that it was an integral part of her design.





Miguel Vazquez heightened the isolation of the characters in *Matikamta*: *The Loneliest Island* by Kiana Hernandez by ringing them with water.





Venecia Escamilla added modern elements into the Greco-Roman world of *The Brotherhood of the Traveling Togas* by Hera Andre-Bergmann.



PUTT-ING OUR BEST FOOT FORE-WARD

In September of 2011, the Project held its third Annual Charity Golf Outing at the Bayonne Golf Club. This year, the sun was shining and the golf balls were soaring. Spirits were soaring too, right alongside the funds we raised. The Project grossed over \$130,000 to go toward our theatrical and academic programming, \$8,050 of which goes directly into our college scholarship fund.

Project pal Billy Crudup hosted the event following a mildly competitive and intensely enjoyable 18 holes of golf on Bayonne's gorgeous Scottish links-style course, as well as an incredible long drive presentation by Long Drive Champion Art Sellinger (who also, for a small donation to the Project, offered to put the ball on the green for any player on the 316 yard par four 15th hole... and did... every single time).

Our honorary co-chairs were Justin Brownhill and Greg Tusar. The event itself was conceived, executed and co-chaired by Project board members Carolyn Cushman De-Sena and Cathy Dantchik. **Breaking Bad** and **The Wire** actor David Costabile was the official auctioneer that evening, netting a whopping \$26,800 for the Project with his fast talking and comedic coercing. The multi-talented David also performed the song "The Unstoppable Project" which was written by ProjKid Malik Velazquez and accompanied by Patrick Barnes and Matthew Jellison. Malik himself came along to introduce his catchy and clever tune. The golfers agreed that the performance was above par.

Every one of the players who showed up to golf that day was better and funnier than Happy Gilmore. If you come to the next Golf Outing in August we'll say that about you, too. Especially if you're Adam Sandler. Get on the 2012 roster by e-mailing Carol Ochs at cochs@52project.org. - JAM









Poetry in Performance

This past fall eight Project kids participated in our poetry program. Enrique Caballero (at right), Jade Cuevas, Tatiana Goode, Kamil Kuzminski (below, right), Jocelyn Ochoa (left), Valeria Oliva, Edwin Rodriguez, and Martin Sanchez were inspired by objects, photographs, family, friends, and the sights and sounds of Hell's Kitchen and filled many pages with verse in their official Project Notebooks.

During the 6 weeks, they were visited by published poet Taylor Mali and spoken-word artist Mega and were supported by adults Erin Cherry, Anthony J. Fuller, Steven Hajar, and Christina Roussos.

The poetry was performed in our Five Angels Theater on Nov. 21, 2011. Watch for their poems in the next issue of Fivey Magazine, which will be published in print and web form in June.







EGABITS



▲ Several alumni have recently become proud new fathers of little girls! Here's Mark Gamero visiting us with Athena Hope, who was born in November. Mark (Romeo in our 2007 production of R & J) understands every gurgle she utters.



▲ Just this month we received this card from Jayme Rosado heralding the birth of his daughter Sophia. She arrived on Feb. 3, 2012 at 12:39 p.m. and weighed 6 lbs., 14.1 oz.

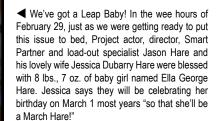


▲ Finally, Mr. Justin Aponte (who journeyed to China with a rap group a couple of years ago) welcomed Emily Grace Aponte into his world in February. We hope that these three little ladies will someday be best pals as well as Project kids.



▲ Last April, Bill Heck made the New York Times by proposing to ProjVol Maggie Lacey from the stage as he made his final curtain call on the closing night of Angels in America at the Signature Theater. She said "Yes" and then he climbed over several rows of the audience to kiss her. Romantic, eh? Anyway, these two lovebirds got married on Sept. 4, 2011.

► Okay, how cool is parenting? Pretty damn cool when you're longtime Project volunteers Peter Dinklage and Erica Schmidt, and this photo is the proof. Last issue we revealed to the world that Peter won an Emmy for portraving Tyrion Lannister on HBO's Game of Thrones, and now we're able to show you Peter and Erica's new daughter Usti Willa Dinklage, who is, at this writing, three months old.





ROBIN RANDOLPH

MAY 26, 1964 - DECEMBER 10, 2011

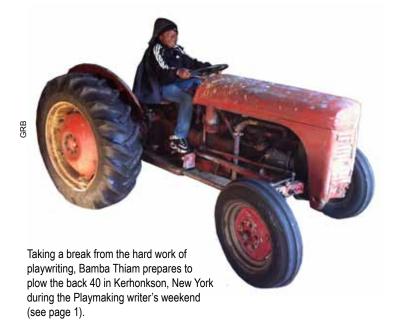
For over two decades, the Randolph family has been hosting the Project in their beautiful home in Wareham, Mass. We join them in mourning the passing of Peter and Helen's daughter and Christopher's sister Robin. She had a deep and abiding love for nature; found great joy in children, art, and learning; and had a fierce commitment to making the world a better place: all qualities central to the spirit and philosophy of The Project. As a child, the house and grounds in Wareham were a very special place for her, as they have become for so many Project children, volunteers and staff; and though we are deeply saddened by her loss, her spirit will live on for all of us in the rocks, trees, beach, and ocean waves of Buzzard's Bay.





THE 52ND STREET PROJECT 789 10th Ave. NEW YORK, NY 10019

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What he does for us: Has been a member of the Board of Directors since the late 1980's and the Board Chair since 2001.

Occupation: College Teacher.

Why you do what you do: "It's fun, and not too hard."

Hobbies: "Reading, watching LOST, walking my dog . . . um, that's about it."

Last book read: "Brighton Rock by Graham Greene."

Most recent accomplishment: "Gave up Martinis until my 60th birthday."

Best Proj. Memory: "Interviewing a biologist who specialized in sea slugs with my Smart

Partner Osage Lewis-Ashley."

Credo: "It don't mean a thing, if it ain't got that swing."

Advice to kids: "At least once a day, think about something you're good at."

Place of birth: Baltimore, Maryland. Habitat: East 78th St. in Manhattan.

Favorite thing about the Project: "Aww... the people. Gus, Carol, John, and the rest of the

gang."

On Flyer Bars:"I eat, therefore I am."



Stephen Graham, wielding the ceremonial gavel that he uses to open every meeting of the Board of Directors.

