



THE 52ND STREET PROJECT

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## 52ND STREET PROJECT UPDATE

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**WELCOME** Project supporters, old and new, to the first issue of "Project Update". We will try to keep you informed of what we are doing and hope that you will respond with ideas, suggestions - whatever.

After the success of the musical, "Quark Victory", and what was the most active season in the Project's history, we decided that we needed some time to re-group. Willie is on a four-month hiatus, and Marsue and Mina (our new administrative and production assistant) are busy re-organizing and taking stock. Time has also been spent learning about our new Macintosh IIcx, which is making this all possible.

### CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Annie Trush, our intern, and Mina have been teaching daily creative dramatics classes to all of the kids who attend the P.A.L. Duncan Center. On Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, they work with all of the kids, between the ages of six and twelve, who regularly attend this after-school community center. Thursdays are reserved for the Drama Club, which counts as members all of the kids who are the most interested and motivated. It is from the Drama Club that we hope to find Project potentials. One Saturday, Annie and a couple of the P.A.L. counselors took the Drama Club to see "Sidewalk Stories". This was made possible through the generosity of Project supporters, Ben Barenholtz and Cynthia Allen, who approached Bill Thompson from Quad Cinema who then provided free tickets.

Throughout the summer and fall, The Triple Play Club (10 kids who have each written three plays) continued to work on their "family plays" which the Project plans to produce in February at the Ensemble Studio Theatre. Daniel Judah Sklar has continued working with them and has had help from volunteers, Susan Willerman, Gayle Hanrahan and Raquel Chung. At the suggestion of one of the kids, we asked Henry Krieger, composer of "Dreamgirls", to attend one of their class sessions

and talk to the kids about writing songs. Six of the kids are now currently working on lyrics which will be scored by Henry. Each child has also been assigned a dramaturg/mentor who will work one-on-one with them on the refining of their scripts. On December 6th, through the generosity of Project Board member, Stephen Graham, the Triple Play Club attended a performance of "Black and Blue" on Broadway.

Our "Replay" class began weekly meetings in November and will continue to meet throughout January. This class, led by Laura Maria Censabella and Susan Willerman, is made up of the kids who wrote plays from "The Spring Thing" which we presented last March at Playwrights Horizons. These classes will include a weekend away in January where the kids will work one-on-one with their assigned dramaturgs on plays about heroes and/or heroines. One performance will be given of these plays on Friday, February 2nd, on the sixth floor of E.S.T. for an audience made up of kids from the P.A.L. Actors will be adult volunteers and Drama Club members. In Willie's absence, Project volunteer, Fracaswell Hyman, has volunteered to act as "Artistic Director" for this program.

Finally, a group of kids have been meeting weekly with two members of TheatreSports New York (Dan Diggles and Martha Kearns). TheatreSports, which is competitive improvisation, is organizing a Junior Varsity tournament of four teams made up of young people from around New York City. We hope, in February, that you will all turn out to root for The 52nd Street Project's TheatreSports team!

### UPCOMING "NIGHT ON THE TOWN" EVENTS

The 92nd Street YMHA, through the help of Project supporter Susan Vitucci, has donated six tickets for each of the following concerts. Please let us know if you would like to be a part of a group of adults and kids who will attend:

Sat. February 3rd, 8 p.m. - Concertos (The Four Seasons)

Tuesday, February 27th, 8 p.m. - Violinist, Chee-Yun Kim and pianist, Akira Eguchi, playing pieces by Stravinsky, Faure, Mozart, Ives and Elgar.

## FUNDRAISING

We are happy to announce the following grants:

The Threshold Foundation: \$20,000  
The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation: \$ 5,000  
The New York Times Company Foundation: \$ 5,000  
The Judith Harris Memorial Fund in memory of Joan Howard Kersner: \$ 2,847

We have proposals pending with the following organizations. If you know of anyone connected to any of these agencies, please let us know.

Achelis Foundation, American Express, American Savings Bank, Barker Welfare Foundation, Carvel, Citibank, Con Ed, D.C.A., Fisher-Price, Kids Fund, Manhattan Decentralization Grant, New York Foundation, New York Telephone, Pilgrim Theatre Foundation, Pinkerton Fund, The Producers Circle, The Reed Foundation, Seth Sprague.

## FRIENDS OF THE PROJECT

We have been thinking long and hard about a way to utilize all of the people who have asked to volunteer. With a small staff it is sometimes difficult to organize volunteers and involve them in a meaningful way. We have recently come up with the idea of a group called "The Friends of the 52nd Street Project" who could help us with a range of things from sending out flyers to working backstage to funding to spending time with the kids. If this is something that would be of interest to you, would you please contact us at (212) 245-1350.

With this first issue of our newsletter, comes our very best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season.