

# PROJECT UPDATE

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*A welcomed lull has entered The 52nd Street Project office again. The children are back in school, the One-on-Ones had an extremely successful run and have closed, and plans towards a new year of productions are well underway. So sit back, relax and get updated.*

## ONE-ON-ONES

21 Shows in 6 weeks??? Boarding and bedding over 50 people in two weeks?! The program title may be One-on-One, but it takes a small and highly enthusiastic army to produce these one acts. On August 4th, 10 adult/child pairings: Garrett Brown & Fran-Marie Fargardo; Leigh Curran & Samona Squire; Charles Dumas & Lori Quinones; Peter Herdrich, Karen Trott & Virginia Vargas; Fracaswell Hyman & Kulondi Frier; Peter MacNicol & Kristen Bess; Willie Reale & Danny Noonan; Hugh Sinclair & Ronnie Noonan; Pam Tyson & Tina Vamvoukakis; and Bill Wise, Jeff Williams & Alex Bess arrived on Block Island to begin work on the first set of plays under the title, "The Butler Did It!". Each adult writer was working with the proviso that in his/her play there had to be a butler (or someone named butler) who had done *something*. For the Block Island plays, Bill Wise not only wrote a play, but played the butler in all of the plays. During our week away, the daily schedule consisted of three hours of work each morning, an activity in the afternoon (including such things as horse back riding, boogie boarding, zoom fluming, scavenger hunting or everyone's all-time favorite, shopping), return to the main house for another hour of work then on to dinner and after-dinner play. Meals were feasts that fueled us throughout the day, and a wiffle ball game was never far away. For the first time on Block Island this year we tried out the "host family" concept which proved to be a huge hit for all concerned (most particularly for Mr. and Mrs. Reale who used to house all 10 kids under their roof). Once back in New York, all 10 plays were presented for 4 performances at E.S.T., and in less than a week, we were back on the road with 11 more kids en-route to Tannersville. This time the adult/child pairings included Lew Black & Glen Jenkins; Richard Dresser, Kate Burton & Richard Myrie; Lee Costello & Felicia Allen; Greg Grove & Mikey Lugo; Karen Evans-Kandel & Darthula Harvey; Willie Reale, Mary Kane & Nyita Hanley; Kate Long &

Monica Jenkins; Craig Lucas & Annette Myrie; Jackie Reingold & Jill Barbosa; Kathy Rossetter & Shirley Rumierk; and Sandye Wilson & David Stevens. This time, Don Berman played the butler.



\*\*\*\*\*  
*Don Berman, as the butler,  
(trying to figure out where  
those mints came from) by  
Annette Myrie, age 7*  
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The Tannersville One-on-Ones were performed at E.S.T. on September 6th, 7th and 8th to full-houses and thunderous applause. The One-on-Ones are at the heart of the Project - where old and new kids have the opportunity to work with professionals, leave the city and shine onstage. The generous donation of time, talent and love by Project volunteers (onstage, backstage, hanging lights, picking up costumes and collecting tickets) made these summers' magnum opuses a joy for all!



*Jeff Williams and Alex Bess up on the roof on Block Island*

## Project Editorial: Fat Cats Leave Kids in Lurch

The West Bank Cafe Downstairs Theatre Bar, one of the host theatres for the Project, has been bounced out of their performance space in one of the most incredible restaurant management bonehead moves in the history of digestion. The long and short of it is that after 12 years of successful operation, the general partners of the Cafe voted to relieve Steve Olsen, the restaurant's general manager, of his duties. Along with Steve went Project friends Lewis Black, Rusty Magee, Rand Foerster, Rowan Joseph and from looking through the dining room window, most of the patrons. One of the myriad of tragedies resulting from this action is the cancellation of "An Evening With Glen Jenkins", a trilogy of plays by Glen Jenkins, one of the Project kids. Said Mr. Jenkins, "Whatever happened, it was stupid!" The Project is now scrambling to find another venue for its work to replace the West Bank. Needless to say, the Project will miss Mr. Olsen and his presence in the neighborhood. He has, through the years, shown himself to be a true friend to the children of the Project and the theatrical community at large. Keep an eye on this Newsletter for Steve Olsen's inevitable comeback. Meanwhile, here are some restaurant suggestions for the midtown area:

**The Siam Grill.** Moderately priced Thai food on Ninth Avenue at 42nd Street. Tommy and Ne Pa, your hosts.

**Marvin's Place.** Moderately priced American fare, with pastas and salads at Ninth Avenue at 43rd St. Chuck Guten, your host (Chuck once donated 100 lemon squares to a Project benefit).

**Cafe Madelaine.** Higher priced bistro cooking in charming surroundings at 43rd St. and Ninth Avenue.

**The Landmark Tavern.** One of New York's oldest restaurants. Good food in a great building. A little pricey. 11th Avenue and 46th Street.

- W.R.

## The Today Show . . .

Playmaking is the hot topic at the moment after being featured on "The Today Show" on September 18th. The piece, introduced by Deborah Norville as "longer than most, but that's because it's so special", chronicled last spring's "HumanNature" Playmaking group from their first class right through their Lincoln Center production. The kids took centerstage in the piece, as we watched them grow from tentative first-time writers, to self-confident playwrights watching their feelings and words immortalized on stage in front of an audience. The Project would like to thank Today Show writer/producer, Susan Dutcher, for bringing the Project so eloquently to life in pictures. The piece has generated a lot of varied response from parents wanting to have their kids join, to interested individuals and organizations who want to start a Project in their own community. One response we could



not have predicted was from Mr. John Paris, President of Paris Chocolates in New Jersey. He sent a couple of cases of his new "Flyer" bar, billed as the best chocolate in the world. Having tasted the bar, both Project kids and staffers would have to agree. If you should come upon this chocolate bar, give it a try!

One more happy side-effect of "The Today Show" appearance, was an invitation to five Project kids to model fall fashions - live on the show - on September 24th. We're not sure if it was the opportunity to be seen live by 55 million people, breakfast in the N.B.C. commissary, getting to keep the Bloomingdales' outfits or the ride in the stretch limousine, that made this offer so appealing, but we did notice that all five kids were up and dressed at 5:00 a.m. (without five calls to remind them) on the morning of their appearance. Now we know what it takes. Lucky Project kids included Annette, Karen and Richard Myrie, Victor Rojas and Virginia Vargas.

## Playmaking

Our newest playmakers, Eli Barbosa, Alex Bess, Icisha Blount, Wendell Borrero, Yolanda Maldonado, Ronnie Noonan, Eric Santoni, Samona Squire and Jamar Williams started class on September 18th. Project volunteers, Polly Adams, Claudine Jellison and Susan Willerman are all helping Playmaking teacher, Daniel Judah Sklar, with the class. Their weekend in the country is scheduled for November 3rd and 4th and their production at E.S.T. on November 29th, 30th and December 1st. Look for the flyer in November!

We are also happy to congratulate Daniel on the publication of his book about Playmaking. For anyone interested, we have order forms in the office!

## PlayBack

To keep better touch with our older Project kids, we have begun a new program called PlayBack. This program will match kid writer/actors with adult writer/actors and charge them with writing a play together to perform together. On a PlayBack weekend, a team will go away and having decided on two characters and a situation, the kid will write the first act of a two-act play. The adult will then take this play and write act two, "sometime later. . ." in time. When we have an evening-ful of plays, we will schedule public performances under the collective title (you guessed it!) "Sometime Later. . ." PlayBack is the natural union of the One-on-Ones and Playmaking and gives some of our veterans a new challenge.

## Replication

This past summer, Tom Carey, successfully "replicated" the Project's One-on-One program in the Bushwick section of Brooklyn by taking seven kids and seven performance artists away to Long Island where they worked on plays with the theme, "Heroic Times". It gives all of us at the Project extreme pleasure to know that our ideas, methods and experiences can be used to help start similar programs in other neighborhoods and communities. It also comes at an extremely fortuitous time as we are both raising money to better prepare ourselves for replication, as well as answering questions from people around the country (Atlanta, Macon, Sarasota, Trenton, Los Angeles, etc.) who have heard about the Project and want to start their own. You will be pleased to hear that Tom plans to continue his program next summer.



## Funding

Welcome to the following Project funders:

The Nathan Cummings Foundation.....\$5,000  
The Kids Fund.....\$1,000



## TheatreSports

Our TheatreSports J.V. team is starting up again on October 9th, with weekly training sessions until the December 15th tournament. Classes will be every Tuesday from 6:00 to 7:30 at the P.A.L. for anyone who wants to drop by and work on their improv chops.



## Creative Drama

We are very pleased that Project volunteers, Mindy Pfeiffer and Eileen Kelly have decided to take on the creative dramatics classes every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons at the P.A.L. Class sessions run from 3:45 - 4:30 and 4:45 - 5:30, and anyone who would like to volunteer to help out is more than welcome. Please give the office a call at 245-1350 if you have some free time!



## Project Wish List

1. Boom Box
2. Blank V.H.S. Video Cassettes
3. Free printing!
4. Blank Audio Cassettes
5. Sound Effects Tapes
6. Free Video Dubbing
7. Gallery Manager

## Willie Waxes:

I'm sure that on the face of it, the Artistic Directorship of The 52nd Street Project seems a glittering, glitzy, glamorous, non-stop carousel of thrills. In reality, though, it's an entry level position with no potential for advancement. Every once and awhile, however, the phone rings and a perk presents itself that makes this very worthwhile work seem, well, worthwhile. This time, it was Joann Lamneck a Project pal from the New York Giants. Joann invited us to visit the Giants training camp to watch a practice and then to have dinner at the team training table. Richard Myrie, Shamine Gibson, Fran-Marie Fargardo, Lewis Black and I went. Here are the bullet-point highlights:

-Jerry Shay, head scout for the Giants on seeing Shamine: "You're gonna be a big fella once you grow into those shoes of yours. You play ball?"

-George Young, general manager of the team upon being introduced to Lew and me: "What are you bringing me these little guys for? I need defensive linesmen."

-Fran-Marie, after getting an autograph from Phil Sims: "He smelled very nice, like he just got out of the shower".

The steaks were enormous and we all got hats that we tip to Joann, Jerry, George and all the Giants for being so swell!



*Fran-Marie, Richard, Shamine and Mikey get nutrition tips from New York Giant, Otis Anderson*



*Project kids visit Giants Training Camp.*

## Marsue and Mina Muse:

What's wrong with this picture? (besides the fact that you can't see anyone's face)? Until next time. . .