



PROJECT UPDATE

ISSUE #93 ● MAY, 2024 ● GEORGE BABIAK, EDITOR

BEHOLD THE MONOLITH!



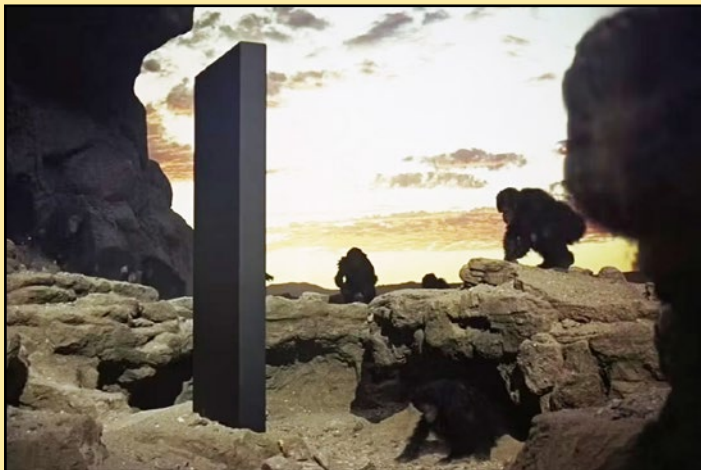
The new video wall as seen from the audience.



The backstage view: lots and lots of cables!

Those of you who have seen Stanley Kubrick's 1968 film **2001: A Space Odyssey** know the excitement that a black monolith can inspire in a bunch of primates. Well, one such slab arrived at **The Five Angels Theater** early this year and created quite a stir. We're talking about the brand-new video LED wall that has replaced our old rear projector and screen. Purchased with a generous grant from the **New York State Council for the Arts**, **The Wall**, as we call it, is nearly 20% larger than the old screen but, more importantly, many, many times brighter. Backgrounds and fancy visual effects are dramatically more visible, no matter how much stagelight washes over the stage. Further bonuses include a larger playing area, since we no longer need precious space to "throw" a projection from behind, and performers and crew can cross backstage without fear of treading on the **Trapezoid of Terror** and casting a shadow on the screen.

We've already used The Wall for the first two shows of 2024: **Skeleton in the Closet** and **A Breath of Fresh Air**. Check out the photos and links within this issue to see how our snazzy new screen works! ♦



The monolith in 2001: A Space Odyssey

IN THIS ISSUE OF P.U.:

Photos and recaps of the 8 Project shows of the last 6 months



All about One Night Only, the 2024 gala



What is the WellBeing Program?



Weddings and babies galore on the Megabits society page



Staffing updates

Click the poster to see the video on YouTube!



STAGE COMBAT!

Once a year, a few young Projectiles learn how to convince spectators that they're beating the tar out of each other. That's the gist of our **Stage Combat** program, and this year's show on April 12, 2024 was aptly named *The Thrill of the Fight*. **Alex J. Gould** was the Stage Combat Instructor and **Garrett Kim** was the Program Instructor. The shows appeared painfully violent, but were far safer than most activities you'd see in the average playground. Below are the 8 pairs who participated. ♦



◀ **Sophia Zukoski** was a micro-managing hair salon owner and **Jessica Elie-Pierre** the beleaguered worker who showed her employer who was boss.



▶ **Mateo Santoni** and **Noah Gaynor** were gamers who couldn't confine their fights to the screen.



▲ **Angel Welsh** and **Christian DeMarais**, were gamers whose fights were confined exclusively to the screen.



▲ **Jason DeVoe** and **Sam Gravitte** showed us the raging cauldron of conflict that pervades **Wendy's** restaurants.

▲ **Jai-Lyzz Rodriguez** was a car mechanic bound and determined to keep racer **Kirstin Louie** from damaging her pride and joy.



▲ We thought Math Competitions were placid, cerebral affairs. **Katty Lopez** and **Maryn Shaw** proved us totally wrong.



▲ For **Rebeca Vanterpool** and **Precious Sipin** it was all about money, pure and simple.

▲ Move over, Ice Hockey. **José Luján** and **Andy Jean-Gilles** showed us that basketball is now the most combative sport.

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR: THE BREEZY PLAYS

CLICK THEM TO SEE THEM!

This Spring, we presented 8 hilarious and moving plays written by 8 young playwrights on a weekend retreat to Roxbury, CT. It happened Mar. 31-April 2 and you can still see it. Each photo is a hyperlink to its own play! ♦

PLAYMAKING PHOTOS BY DENEKA PENISTON



In Selena Smith's *The Liar and the Girl*, evil CEO Kyle Cameron kidnapped Dela Meskienyar's mom. Caylyn Wan-Creager dramaturged and Annabelle Cousins directed.



Jennifer Ikeda was Stephen Stocking's hand-drawn imaginary friend in Lola Peterson's *Friends, Family, and a Whole Lot of Feelings*. Dalia Ashurina was the director.



Erin Neuffer was an innocent piece of sushi and Carl Hendrick Louis was a burnt chicken leg in Grace Guity-Reyes' *KFC, You Had to Be There*, directed by Olivia Gilliatt.



Major Curda was after Daiva Deupree, who was after the Hope Diamond, in Eliza Richardson's *Mission 212: The Game to get the Gem*, directed by Helen Cespedes.



In *The Hidden Scientist*, by Milo Phelps, Emma Ramos was a photographer out to reveal to Forrest Malloy that he was not really a basketball pro but a scientist who had trapped the world in the "Milofex." Michael Propster directed the eerily hilarious piece.



Makiyah Gray's *The Best Friends*, directed by Kaileela Hobby, had teddy bear Christy Escobar befriending a tall bunny (Shaunette Renée Wilson).



Armando Riesco was Mello, a basketball player/boxer who overcame failure with the help of his coach/wife Meredith Garretson in Atif Dowidar's *Mello and His Encouraging Kyan*, directed by Tim J. Lord. George Babiak was the retired NBA player Mello had to defeat.



2 Lions with Different Goals, written by Isaac Delgado and directed by Gracie Fojtik, told the tale of a leonine chef (Mitchell Winter) and a big cat rock star (Raquel Chavez) who settle a dispute in a text chain and go on to perform their skills at a concert together.

The production team for *A Breath of Fresh Air* was Fouad Dakwar as Composer/Music Director, K8 August as Lighting Designer, Carisa Kelly on Costumes, Emma Giordano on Sound, and Bri Weintraub as our stage manager. Our stage crew were Nikolai Alvarez, Helena Franco, Kaytie Gil, Marty Gleberman, and Stuart Green while our livestream team were Diego Caoili, Gilbert Rosario, and Peter Muca.



Cathy Dantchik and Louis Friedman, our board co-chairs.



Carol Ochs and Natalie Hirsch hit the stage.



Maggie Odette and Kolbi Brown share a fake drink.



Lilli Cooper and ProjTeen Melanie Correa sing *You Got Me* and *I Got You*.



Robert Joy, Founder Willie Reale, and our honoree Henry Krieger. By all accounts, Henry had a great time.



Anika Noni Rose, the evening's host.



Annette and Karen Myrie: onetime Project kids who worked with Henry.

ONE NIGHT ONLY

Henry Krieger, the man behind the music of *Dreamgirls*, was once a prolific contributor to The 52nd Street Project's vast songbook. Not only that, Henry had a gift for teaching music to children who had never sung before. In view of this history, we decided it was high time to make him the honoree of our Annual Gala called **One Night Only** after one of Henry's most famous songs.

On Feb. 26, 2024, cocktails began at 6:30 at the **Rooftop at Edison Ballroom**. From there, our guests moved down to the **South Ballroom** for dinner and the show, hosted by **Anika Noni Rose**, star of the 2006 *Dreamgirls* movie. The highlight of the performance was a selection of songs that Henry composed the music for in the 90's. The singers were one-time Project kid **Lilli Cooper**, current Project kid **Melanie Correa**, **Neil D'Astolfo**, **Jon-Michael Reese**, and **Natalie Walker**.

Many former Project members who had worked with Henry were in attendance at *One Night Only*, and some who weren't appeared virtually in a nice testimonial video. To see it on YouTube, click [THIS HYPERLINK](#). Also shown was a video of Henry himself reminiscing about his experiences with the Project. To see it, click [HERE](#).

One Night Only was a memorable walk down memory lane, but it also raised \$350,568.52. Thanks, Henry, for helping us make our goal! ♦



Neil D'Astolfo, who sang *Why Am I So... You Know?*



More Henry alums: Victor Rojas, Board Member Shirley Rumiork and Kulondi (K Foxx) Frier.



Board member Annie Hausmann (in a blue skirt) came with many family members and friends.



Jon-Michael Reese and Natalie Walker sang *Learn Every Synonym* and *Pasta Mi Amore*.



Alex Vassilaros (she's in the center), brought her whole clan to the event.



Liz Bell announces the Well-Being program at the gala..

LIZ BELL SPEAKS: "WHAT IS THE WELLBEING PROGRAM?"

At the Gala, our Clinical Consultant, **Liz Bell**, announced a new initiative. Here is her description of the **WellBeing Program**.

"The 52nd Street Project is known for helping children to discover their voices and express themselves through the theater arts; to take a bow and come up taller. But this organization impacts its young members' lives in many ways beyond the stage. The Project works holistically with children, providing them with academic support, mentoring relationships, employment opportunities, and even mental health services through my role as Clinical Consultant. These services have never been more crucial, as the Pandemic intensified a mental health crisis for children and adolescents that had already begun years earlier. In response to this need, The 52nd Street Project and its board has greenlit the **WellBeing Program**, a mental health initiative through which I'll increase and expand my therapeutic support of the Project community as a licensed clinical social worker. WellBeing includes not only individual and group therapy for its young members, but also regular clinical supervision and training for the staff and volunteers. I have worked with the 52nd Street Project for almost 25 years, and I'm thrilled to deepen my commitment to this incredible organization through WellBeing!" ♦

REPLAY REDUX

Many years ago, there once was a Project program called **Replay**, an advanced writing class for veteran Playmakers interested in taking their playwriting skills to the next level. Many of our older volunteers will remember the **Replay Picnics**, one-day excursions to **Wendy Ettinger's** country home that featured grilled burgers and outdoor play readings that everyone, but *everyone*, was cast in.

The last Picnic was in 2002. After that, we held the readings in NYC theaters. We thought Replay was finished after its last incarnation in 2011, since we were creating so many innovative formats under the **New Platforms** initiative. **WRONG!** **Garrett Kim** brought Replay back to life in a show called *Pen To Paper*, which was triumphantly staged on Friday, February 23 at our own **Five Angels Theater**. It was so much fun that we wonder why Replay was ever retired! ♦

Click the poster to see the video on YouTube!



John Maddaloni, Michael Propster, Kendal Hartse, Raquel Chavez, Betsy Hogg, and director **Andy Ingalls** engage in a war of vegetables in **Aiden Vasquez's** *Seen or Seed*.



Betsy Hogg, Mitchell Winter, Jake Pino, and director **Adaire Kamen** in **Ramsis Ramirez's** epic sports saga *Rise from the Lowest*. (That's Ramsis at right.)



Betsy Hogg, Neil Tyrone Pritchard, Nico Grelli, director **Austin Regan,** and **Giovanni Benedicto** in *The Great Chicken Nugget*, Giovanni's tale of a scientist, a chicken, and a boy named Raisin.



Evan Isabella, Meredith Garretson, director **Raquel Chavez,** and **Evelyn Myers** in *Friendship of Spies* by Evelyn. If you're wondering what it was all about, yes, it was spies!



MaYaa Boateng, Neil D'Astolfo, Betsy Hogg, director **John Maddaloni,** and **Hansel Benedicto** in Hansel's *Good Comedian*, the story of a budding stand-up and his conflict with his mom.



Taking their bow are playwrights **Aiden Vasquez, Giovanni Benedicto, Evelyn Myers, Hansel Benedicto,** and **Ramsis Ramirez**. Nice work, team! (And, yes, those two boys are twins).

PHOTOS BY KAT ALMIRANÉZ, POSTER ART BY MEMBER CHLOE TORRES

WELCOME ABOARD THE BOARD, SIR!



We're very pleased to welcome **Micah Kroeze** to the board of The 52nd Street Project. Micah is the Chief Product Officer of **Options Technology**. If you're not up on your cyber-knowledge, Options Technology is a company that focuses on providing IT infrastructure services in the global capital markets sector.

Micah's been coming to Project shows for many years. He grew up in lower Manhattan surrounded by the art and creative scenes that embody New York, and still makes sure to spend as much time as he can engaging with the city. When he's not in front of a computer or out and about you can usually find him with a book in hand, sitting somewhere with a view.

Some of Micah's fondest childhood memories are of watching unique and exciting Project plays brought to life by the incredibly talented playwrights, actors, and prop crew, and he's looking forward to being an even closer member of the 52nd Street Project's extended family. ♦

AND NOW FOR SOME STAFF CHANGES!



Ana Gonzalez-Soto, our former Office Manager, will this month take on the role of **Marketing and Events Manager**. Ana is a Mexican-born theater enthusiast and purveyor of the arts. She spent her early years studying and practicing different performing arts in Arizona and Southern Texas. She moved to New York in 2019 to attend **Pace University** and shortly after found The 52nd Street Project where she became an intern and volunteer. Ana has participated as an actor, writer, dramaturg, backstage crew member, costume designer, and in-class helper for just about all of our programming. Her interests include fashion, travel, carbohydrates, sports that are mostly stretching, and films about immigrants. She lives just a few yards away from the Project in Hell's Kitchen with her husband **Ed Pritchard** and her two cats, **Elliot** and **Lana**.

Yazzy Wilder, our new **Operations Manager** as of April, 2024, is not really new to us! Yazzy is a former Project kid and a graduate of the **University of Michigan** with a degree in Economics. At the University, Yazzy was the co-chair of the Latino Culture Show and a member of F.O.K.U.S. – an arts advocacy non-profit/student org. Yazzy worked at The 52nd Street Project from 2016-2019, but left after the birth of her second child, **Yara**. She currently sits on the executive board of the Parents Association at her children's school. Yazzy is super excited to be back at the Project, where her son **Julian** (also known as L.J., or Little Julian, because he's named after his dad, **Big Julian**) is a brand-new member (see page 9 for more about L.J.)



Want to know more about the rest of the staff? [Visit our website.](#) ♦

THIS ART WAS A SMASH HIT!

As this issue of P.U. was going to press, **Caylyn Wan-Creager** was teaching an **Artemaking** class during the spring break. One of the exercises was to take a piece of crockery (Thank you, **Salvation Army!**) and use it as a model for a drawn still life. After that, however, the students had to smash the item with a 3 lb. sledgehammer, and then reassemble it in a different, but artistic, form!

The young people in the class took particular pleasure in the smashing of the crockery. Here are three examples from the day's efforts. ♦



Wilhelmina



Hannah

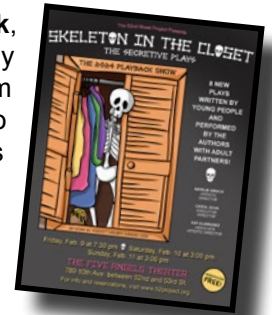


Evaluna



**SKELETON IN THE CLOSET:
THE SECRETIVE PLAYS**

**CLICK
THEM
TO
SEE
THEM!**



In the format we call **Playback**, young members in their early teens write plays that they perform with adult volunteers who also serve as directors. For this year's edition, **Skeleton in the Closet**, we took the teams on a writing trip to **Lake Lucille**, just about an hour north of the city. The shows were then rehearsed at the Clubhouse and presented at The Five Angels Feb. 9-11. To see the YouTube recordings, click on the photos of each show.

We had a wonderful production team on this show: **Lorenzo Pipino** was the Composer/Music Director, **Katie Bartz** designed the lights, **Ana Gonzalez-Soto** designed costumes, **Alicia Moeller** was the Sound Designer, and **Marty Gleberman** was the intrepid Stage Manager. The very able stage crew were **Echaka Agba, Kylee Chester, Xavier Espinal, and Sarah Lopez.** ♦

The evening was kicked off by *The Roommates*, by **Elisa Ramos**. **Elisa and Evan Isabella** were college roomies who mislaid their own possessions and then blamed each other for their loss. All was made well by an apology cake.



In his play *Magicks*, **Logan Goicuria** tried very hard to train his apprentice **Gaven Trinidad** but it was to no avail.



Anna Crivelli and Faith Mitchell were b-ball teammates in Faith's *Thunder Girls*. The play took them from teen years into middle age.



In *The Flight*, by **Loyal Jones**, Loyal showed his brother **Marchant Davis** that flying was safe. All it took was one terrifying dive.



Kerry Warren was a witch of a granny who cursed **Hannah Santos** in Hannah's *Explosive Birthday*.



Edgar Sinchi was bullied mercilessly by his brother **JJ Wilks** in Edgar's *Twinvalry*.



Jose Durán was the *Advertising Time Travel Tour Guide* of **Xavier Espinal's** play. Xavier was a doomed Pompeian.



Molly Carden and Ayah Musa played the Moon and the Sun in Ayah's *Eclipsia*.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY WINSTON RODNEY; POSTER-ART BY HANNAH LEON

Click the poster to see the video on YouTube!



A FACE IN THE CROWD

In **Character Workshop**, another one of **Garrett Kim's** numerous programs, kids create original characters, costume them, and then perform monologues as those characters. They are each assisted and directed by an adult volunteer.

This year's Workshop show was called *A Face in the Crowd*, and these faces really stood out from the crowd. It was performed on Fri., Feb. 16 at the **Five Angels**. ♦



Kyle Cameron and **"Robert"** (**Logan Centeno**), a simple crop farmer.



Omari Chancellor and **"Ronaldo"** (**Ramsis Ramirez**) an Eagle-Dragon soccer player with electric legs.



"Marisol" (**Katherine Chauca**), a colorful mummy, and **Kat Almirañez**.



Lynne Rosenberg and **"Lilee"** (**Ivy Moayed**), a maid living in Arizona.



"Paris" (**Emily Ponce**), a spy dog detective, and **Abby Dziura**.



Carina Goebelbecker and **"Bob the Mop"** (**Gloria Sanchez**), a pizza delivery dude.



Maddie Kasten and **"Jolene"** (**Caelne Arango-Ramirez**), an asthmatic comedian.



Also assisting on *A Face in the Crowd*:

Nina Braddock
Mirirai Sithole



SUBSCRIBE TO "THE PROJCAST"

Did you know that we have a podcast that features the writing and voices of our young members? Just click on the logo at right to start downloading these fascinating nuggets of info and entertainment! The most recent episode features interviews by **John Sheehy** with the young playwrights of *A Breath of Fresh Air: The Breezy Plays* (See page 3). ♦



FOOD FOR THOUGHT: THE SCRUMPTIOUS PLAYS

In the fall of 2023, we visited the home of **Carolyn DeSena** and her family in **Rumson, New Jersey** for a work-and-fun retreat with 8 brand-new playwrights (we'd been there in July for the **One-on-Ones**). The shows written in October were performed Dec. 8-10 at the **Five Angels**. **Avi A. Amon** was the composer/music director, **Greg MacPherson** lit the show, **Ally Thomas** created costumes, **Hannah Burch Carl** designed sound, and **Aaron Conover** stage managed. **Diego Caoili** led the livestream team, and the camera ops were **Katie Bartz**, **Lauren Rae Vega**, and **Nikolai Alvarez** (to see the work of the camera crew AND everyone else, just click on the images below. ♦



Michael Braun and **Grace Rex** broke out of a high-security Russian prison in *Escape*, penned by **Mamadou Diaw** and directed by **Don Nguyen**.



Edie Falco and **Stephen Wallem** were the title seasonings in *Salt and Pepper*, by **Angela Muca** and directed by **Joanna Parson** (look for her on p. 12).



Aidan Gleeman's *65 Million Years Ago on Earth* cast **Angie Toledo** and **Ben Katz** as a Triceratops and a T-Rex. The battle was followed by a hot soak. **John Sheehy** directed.



The Twist by **Shaddai Blake-Soden** had celebrity **Margaret Odette** and farmer **Jasminn Johnson** swap places. **Krystel Lucas** was the helmswoman.



Julian Wilder's *Not My Sprinkles*, directed by **Nolan Doran**, told the epic story of a doughnut who wanted to be eaten (**Omar Metwally**) and a horse who wasn't hungry (**Bill Camp**).



Sophie von Haselberg was a human, **Roma Maffia** a butterfly, and **Amanda Freedman** an ER doctor in *Cataleya Bernardo's* *Getting Closer*, which was directed by **Kaaron Briscoe**.



Naresa Bernier gave us *Judgement*, a fable about a turtle (**Raul Castillo**) and a tiger (**Leta Levy**) who have some conflict, but eventually form a band in Japan. **Ciana Proto** directed it.



Sathya Sridharan was a light bulb and **Hank Azaria** the fancy floor beneath him in *Dreams Come True*, written by **Walter Rochez** and directed by **Mat Hostetler**.

PLAYMAKING PHOTOS BY DENEKA PENISTON, FLYER ART BY CAYLYN WAN-CREAGER AND GRB

Click the poster to see the video on YouTube!



TUNE IN!

On Friday, October 27, we presented our annual **Songmaking** concert, entitled **Tune In**. **Garrett Kim** presided over the writing and composing workshops that led to the show, while **Avi Amon** was the Music Director for the production.

Five young members wrote 15 songs that were performed by 15 professional (and volunteer!) singers. The composer/musicians were **Adam LaPorte**, **Paige Menneci**, **Jonja Merck**, **Madeline Mondrala**, and **Mikey Rosenbaum** with percussion by **Ajay Raghuraman**. The lighting designer was **Aaron Conover**, the audio engineer was **Chopin Indra-Payoong**, and the livestream camera was run by our multi-talented intern **Abby Dziura**. ♦



Tatiana Wechsler



Anthony Zappa



Jared Loftin



Doron JéPaul

Anthony, top right, gave us *Life Like This* (sung by **Tatiana**), *The Fight* (**Jared**), and *Gary's Dojo* (**Doron**).



Bella Galindo



Angie Toledo



Mitchell Winter



Josiah Perez



Madeline Mondrala & Bella



Jessica Corvo



Yonathan Gebeyehu



Michael Potts

Bella wrote *My Life Song* (**Angie**), *Animal Song* (sung by **Madeline and Bella**), and *Young Again* (**Jessica**). **Josiah's** songs were *New Things* (**Mitchell**), *The Feeling Lonely to Exciting* (**Yonathan**), and *King of the Help* (**Michael**).



Jaelannie Rodriguez



Angel Desai



Natalie Walker



Angel Drew Welsh



Ali Ewaldt



Mallory Portnoy



Major Curda



Kendal Hartse

Jaelannie wrote *Hi, I'm Rosie* (**Angel**), *Is It My Time Yet?* (**Ali**), and *Jumping Frogs* (**Mallory**). **Angel** closed the show with *Bird City* (**Natalie**), *Traitors* (**Major**), and *Tape the Phone to My Face* (**Kendal**).

CONCERT PHOTOS BY DENEKA PENISTON

COMING UP ON OUR STAGE!

Here is The 52nd Street Project's show schedule for the next few months of 2024. Come see them all!

MORE THAN WORDS

The Teen Ensemble Production

Fri., May 31 - 7:30 p.m.

Sat., June 1 - 3:00 p.m.

DANCEMAKING

Friday, June 7 - 7:30 p.m.

OFF THE MAP: THE PLACE PLAYS - PART 1

Friday, July 12 - 7:30 p.m.

OFF THE MAP: THE PLACE PLAYS - PART 2

Friday, July 26 - 7:30 p.m.

LOOK WHO'S TALKING: PLAYS THAT SPEAK TO YOU

The 2024 Rumson One-on-Ones

Friday, August 16 - 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, August 17 - 3:00 p.m.

Sunday, August 18 - 3:00 p.m.



Hi, P.U. Readers! I'm Ahmed, and I am the Sultan of this Sidebar! The following foundations, corporations, and government agencies recently made generous grants to The 52nd Street Project. We are grateful to them for their support as well as to the many individuals who help sustain the Project's programs. ♦

Anonymous.....	\$50,000	Maxine and Irving Castle Foundation ...	\$20,000
Cantor Fitzgerald.....	\$75,000	National Philanthropic Trust -	
Consolidated Edison.....	\$10,000	Judy Taub Gold Fund.....	\$5,000
Corcoran Group Cares.....	\$5,000	New York State Council on the Arts.....	\$30,000
Flagstar Bank.....	\$7,500	Ruth Nelson Family Foundation.....	\$4,000
Frederick Loewe Foundation.....	\$10,000	Susquehanna Foundation.....	\$15,000
Howard Ashman		Tiger Baron Foundation.....	\$5,000
Trust for Theater Arts.....	\$5,000	West Side Community Fund.....	\$6,000
Jeffrey Seller Family Foundation.....	\$75,000		

(Gifts received October 1, 2023 to April 30, 2024)



WANT TO DONATE TO THE 52ND STREET PROJECT?

It's as easy as 5 + 2!

Just click [HERE](#) to get to our donation page.



MEGABITS • MEGABITS • MEGABITS



Elli Stovall-Brown and Jose Gamo, both volunteers at the Project for quite a few years, got hitched September 2, 2023 at beautiful Spillian in Fleischman's, New York in the Catskill Mountains. We all agree that they are a lovely couple.



ProjVols Ali Ewoltdt (see p. 10) and Mat Hostetler were married Oct. 7, 2023 on Prince Edward Island in Canada (Ali's favorite book, *Anne of Green Gables*, takes place there). A small group of family and friends attended and, they tell us, "it was amazing!"



We love Joanna Parson! A volunteer for us since 2007, she married actor Graham Stevens (most recently seen in *Spamalot*) in February 2024. We are delighted to report that the party for the couple was held on Feb. 12 at the Five Angels Theater!



We heard about this match a bit late! Writer Charly Evon Simpson married Jeff Walton in July of 2022. They wasted no time and had their son Julius James Simpson Walton in August, 2023. The inset is a recent photo of the little boy with the big name.

BASIC RODERICKS

MEGABITS • MEGABITS • MEGABITS



Vanessa Porras, a one-time intern and current vol, married **Alan Cordova Oliva** on Nov. 23 at **City Hall** in **NYC**. Alan's family came all the way from Mexico and Vanessa's came all the way from California!



Frankie Alvarez and **Leah Walsh** welcomed their second baby on Oct. 1, 2023. Her name is **Maya Bea** and she is very proud to have matching outfits with her older sis **Cece**.



Another late entry! Here's **Helen Cespedes** with young **Grae Cespedes** and dad **Peter Mark Kendall**. Grae has been on the scene since Oct. 28, 2022.



Look who else had a second child! Our Director of Education, **Johanna Vidal**! Here she is with her partner **Dallas Dowling**, first daughter **Nova**, and little **Amaya**, who was born November 25, 2023.



VIRGINIA LORETTA DARE

APRIL 21, 1946 – SEPTEMBER 10, 2023

She was a musician, a composer, a poet, a singer, and a puppeteer who lived in Paris in her twenties. She started her own recording studio and once produced **Tom Chapin**. She was a skilled carpenter who could fix almost anything. To us, of course, **Virginia Dare** was the consummate **Block Island** host. Not only did she and her partner **Joya Verde** open up and maintain **Christina Biaggi's** house for us (including daily trips to the Town Dump, er, Transfer Station), but they would move out of their lovely **Mermaid House** into a former chicken coop to help house our big groups. Virginia, we will miss you. ♦

Virginia performing at Beatlefest on Block Island in 2017.

FLYER BAR PROFILE



JENNY PEEK

What she does for us- Jenny Peek has been a volunteer stage manager for **The 52nd Street Project** since at least 1989, and just SM'ed our **One Night Only** benefit (see page 4). Even more significantly, she is the founder of the **Manton Avenue Project**, a replication of our Project in **Providence, Rhode Island**.

Occupation- Broadway Company Manager (currently working on **SUFFS**)

Why she does what she does- "Because I get to work with amazingly talented people, and be part of something that makes people laugh and think and feel and talk."

Place of birth- "Allentown, Pennsylvania."

Habitat- "Northern Washington Heights, New York City."

Hobbies- "Reading, puzzles, and exploring the neighborhood with my Golden Retriever, Riley."

Last book read- "*The Last Bookshop in London* by Madeline Martin."

Most recent accomplishment- "Getting to and through opening night of my latest show while maintaining at least a small portion of my sanity!"

Best Project Memory- "So many— but one of my favorites is one of my earliest ones: on Block Island, making a wish as the sun disappeared over the horizon—sharing that single moment with an amazing group of people. The 52nd Street Project has been a series of such moments for me."

Credo- "Dreams are completely achievable – but they take a lot of hard work."

Advice to kids- "No matter how much you may deserve wonderful things in your life, never stop feeling grateful that you have them."

Favorite thing about the Project- "The people, the people, the people. And being part of the magic."

On Flyer Bars- "They are the candy bars that make all other candy bars jealous—deservedly so." ♦

SNAPZ!

Here are a few behind-the-scenes shots from the last six months! ♦



Carol enjoys a visit from first Exec Director Marsue Cumming and Peter MacNicol.



Halloween Party: one-third of the staff came as **The Spice Girls** as senior citizens.



Tune In: Avi conducts the band.



A Breath of Fresh Air: Composer Fouad Dakwar is always happy.



Roxbury: Olivia and Grace take a break from writing.



One Night Only: Bri prepares for cocktail hour.