



Providence
Center

A Ministry of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus

Winter 2015

"No More Shootings! We Want Peace!"

Julia De Burgos, the school where we run our youth programs, has been put on lockdown five times this year because of shootings outside the classroom walls. During each lockdown, the children must get on the floor, huddle in a corner, keep silent, and wait to find out if they are safe. Sometimes, the lockdowns last longer than an hour.

Providence Center empowers children to make positive changes in their lives and community. Therefore, we were thrilled to support the school's plans to stage a Peace Walk, allowing the children to take to the streets demanding an end to the violence. In preparation, our Teen Leaders, many of whom also experienced violence in their childhoods, sat with the children and helped them create signs and posters. When we marched, with over 500 people filling the streets, everyone chanted together: "No more shootings! We want peace!"

At Providence Center, children and teens find safety and comfort with each other. And at Providence Center, children and teens stand up together to create a better future. ♦



Maura, our Youth Director, and kids from the program at the Peace Walk.



Our Teen Leaders at the walk. One of the Teens, Samantha, said, "I enjoyed hearing the kids asking for peace. And I was happy to see other people from the community join us. But I would be really happy to see the people give us peace."



Jayainie shows off her poster calling for peace in our community.

Our Mission

Providence Center engages children, youth and adults in educational opportunities within the Fairhill/West Kensington community of North Philadelphia.

The Center values respect for the dignity of each person and creates a safe, hospitable place for learning.

Our Programs

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

- "Power" After School
- Teen and Grad Leaders
- Summer Programming

ADULT EDUCATION

- English Language Classes
- Individual ESL Tutoring

FAITH AND FAMILY

- Prayer Group
- Women's Retreats

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Meet Evelín!

“In the Dominican Republic, I had a good job. As I improve my English, I’ll have more opportunities to get a good job here. Also, I’d like to help my son more with his school work.”

Evelín is one of approximately 300 adult students we serve every year in our English classes. At Providence Center, adults like Evelín are building the skills and confidence to support themselves and their families.

“By coming to class I’ve met many new people. I can go to some appointments without a translator. I can shop at the supermarket and understand better at school meetings for my son. Classes have made me more comfortable doing many everyday activities that require me to speak English!” ♦



Snapshots from the Winter



Jayainie and Adriana eagerly awaiting the start of Beauty and the Beast at the Arden Theater. We received donated tickets for all the children!



Lester and Aisha pose with master banjo player Karl, the husband of a Rosemont College alumna, at the college’s annual Epiphany Party.



Carmen receives her gifts from Aramark. The company threw us a pizza party and got Christmas gifts for all the kids!



Looking for Hope and Inspiration? Visit Us!

We love to share our work with individuals and small groups! Miriam Passarella and Jane Maloney, alumnae of St. Leonard’s and Oak Knoll respectively, recently came for a visit. “I became aware of Providence Center through SHCJ publications,” said Jane, “but I still didn’t feel I really knew what was taking place at Providence Center, so I wanted to visit and find out firsthand. And I am so glad I did.”

Miriam and Jane saw our after school program in action. Miriam really enjoyed seeing the children: “The enthusiasm of the students was contagious. Everyone was so engaged and happy to be in the after school program, and very proud of their work!” Jane was reminded of her own time in a Holy Child school. “What stood out from my visit,” she said, “was feeling the same sense of joy and concern for the growth and development of each unique child that was so much a part of my education as a student at Oak Knoll.”

Contact us today to schedule a visit! ♦



Top Left: The kids show Miriam and Jane the posters they are making for the Peace Walk.

Bottom Left: Jane and Miriam pose with David Chiles, Providence Center’s Executive Director, and Nathan and Kevin from the program.

Modeling Change: Ben's Reflection on Selma

This Winter, our Teen Leaders attended a showing of *Selma*, a movie depicting a critical moment in the civil rights movement. The Teens used messages from the movie to create lessons for the children they mentor, helping the children think about how they can be part of making a better world. Ben, one of our Teen Leaders who loves to write, entered an essay contest. We hope you are as inspired as we are by this excerpt from his reflection:

In order to accomplish my dreams and claim the rights that I deserve peacefully, I need to demonstrate not in a brutal way but in a way that my neighbors will come and join me, such as a Peace Walk, mural painting, or cleaning up the community. I have marched for peace in the neighborhood where I work. By march-

If you or I want to make a change, we cannot sit down waiting for it to happen; young Americans need to be out there modeling the change we want to see.

ing around the neighborhood of Julia de Burgos we have changed our gun violence a little; the kids don't experience lockdowns at school after a peaceful protest. The thing that matters in the end is that our voices are heard for change, no matter the race- Black, Asian, Hispanic or White. There have been points in history in which we all have been discriminated against. I am sure that all races have wanted to make a change to better their lives during their most insufferable moments. But if you or I want to make a change, we cannot sit down waiting for it to happen; young Americans need to be out there modeling the change we want to see. Look at Martin Luther King, Jr. He had a dream that he faced through challenges, such as Selma and every brutal punishment that he did not deserve. But he had an idea of change, and he was not sitting down waiting for it to happen; he was there in the action making his change happen. So no matter the fight I endure, I always look at the prize that is waiting for me and for us at the end of the tunnel.

Our voices have to be heard in order for our rights to be respected and protected. Because if we need to march, we will march, and if we need to stand, we shall stand up. If we need to speak up, we shall scream. We need to be heard to be taken seriously. In the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., "The only normalcy that we will settle for is the normalcy of brotherhood, the normalcy of true peace, the normalcy of justice." ♦



Ben helping children make posters for the Peace Walk.

Ways You Can Give

*We serve Philadelphia's economically poorest community, and so our programs are either free or charge only a nominal fee. **Your gift extends the hope and joy of education to our students!***

- * Become a monthly donor
- * Ask your employer to match your gift
- * Consider a bequest to Providence Center
- * Donate online with credit card/PayPal: www.providencecentershcj.org

Help spread the word! Talk to your parish, social club, alumni network, or other group about Providence Center. Invite us to speak, or come to visit our programs. We would love to meet you! ♦



Volunteer with Us!

Volunteer on your own or bring your family, co-workers, or parish! *There are many ways you can make a difference!*

- * Tutor adults learning English
- * Help kids with their homework after school
- * Come be a guest reader to the children, or lead an activity
- * Help us in the office with data entry, filing, and mailings
- * Volunteer your trade or skill, such as computer maintenance, graphic design, carpentry, plumbing, painting, etc.



You can also volunteer to help us collect school supplies or raise funds for our programs. Contact us for ideas!

To volunteer, contact:
info@providencecentershcj.org



Help Us Spread the Word!

Invite us to speak at your parish or community group! If you would like to arrange a presentation, contact David Chiles: dchiles@providencecentershcj.org



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