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Simply the Best
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ZOOM!

WHOOSH!

BONK!

Explorers Academy members experience engineering in action with PBS “Design Squad Nation”
At the Madison Square Boys & Girls Club, we’ve been providing thousands of New York City kids with hope, opportunity and a safe place to learn and play for more than 125 years, but for the hundreds of members who come through the doors of our four Clubhouses and three After-School Sites each day, we’re a brand new experience.

In that spirit, we’re encouraging our kids to “Be First” in 2011, celebrating the numerous first-time experiences enjoyed by children and youth at our Clubs—many of which are featured on the following pages. In January, the PBS television show “Design Squad Nation” chose our Joel E. Smilow Clubhouse to debut their “Pop-Fly” mega-catapult (p.4). It was an exciting experience and a great opportunity for youngsters in our Explorers Academy to get hands-on exposure to the world of engineering.

The dance stars of our Columbus Clubhouse got a special treat in December when they were invited to perform center-court at Madison Square Garden during a New York Knicks basketball game (p.4)—a first for several members of the troupe that they’ll undoubtedly remember for a lifetime!

You’ll also get introduced to our 2011 Youth of the Year: Keleicia Francis, Christian Guillen, Richard McBride and Natavia Louis (p.6). These four outstanding young men and women came in First Place at their respective Clubhouse competitions for excellence in embodying the Madison mission. They’re also breaking down barriers to achievement and overcoming obstacles. Natavia Louis can proudly say, “I’m the first person in my family to graduate from high school,” and I’m proud to say that Madison helped her achieve that dream.

On a somber note, I’m sorry to relay the passing of Edmund J. Blake, Jr. (p.3), a past President and Chairman of the Madison Board of Trustees. As anyone who had the honor of knowing Ed will tell you, he had a razor-sharp mind and a heart of gold. His generosity—like yours—put “Kids First” at every one of our Clubhouses every day of the year. He will be missed.

Sincerely,

Joseph Patuleia
On Friday, January 21, the Madison Square Boys & Girls Club lost one of our great leaders and closest friends when Edmund J. Blake, Chairman of our Board of Trustees, passed away due to illness. He was 82 years old.

Blake joined the Board of Trustees of the Madison Square Boys & Girls Club in 1977 and remained an integral part of the organization’s leadership and governance for 34 years. In 2003 he was elected President of the Board of Trustees, serving two successive terms before being appointed Co-Chairman in 2007. He is survived by his wife Carol.

At Mr. Blake’s funeral service, longtime colleague and Madison Board of Trustees member the Honorable Bruce Gelb remembered his friend for his dedication and genuine spirit: “You know you have a true friend when a simple handshake has a direct effect on your heart, as it did on mine,” Gelb recalled. “Ed’s heart was split, evenly, between his dear wife Carol and the young boys and girls at Madison. As President, he was, for years, the surrogate father and, while building his financial company, he opened doors for bright, young Madison interns.”

His words were echoed by Madison Board of Trustees President Myles D. Gillespie, who deemed Mr. Blake’s passing “a loss for New York.” “For over three decades as part of our Board of Trustees, Ed was a beacon of knowledge, a pillar of generosity and a shining example of the greatness that is possible through selfless leadership,” Gillespie stated. “The lives of thousands of children and young adults were made better because of his time on this world; his legacy will live on in them.”
Have you ever seen a giant, basketball-launching catapult? Neither had we! In fact, no one had until Friday, January 14, when the PBS television show “Design Squad Nation” chose our Smilow Clubhouse to unveil their Mega “Pop-Fly,” a massive catapult that hurled basketballs across our gymnasium — and our kids were in awe at this display of engineering in action!

“Design Squad” co-hosts Adam Vollmer and Judy Lee delivered an engaging presentation on the power of engineering before inviting more than 100 Explorers to try their hand at creating their own miniature catapults using nothing more than a paint stirrer, thread spools, a paper cup, duct tape and their imaginations. Kids experimented with an array of designs and concepts while asking Vollmer and Lee why they became engineers and discovering the many practical applications engineering has on our daily lives.

Special thanks to the Altman Foundation, RGK Foundation, NYSE Foundation, Inc., HSBC and Bloomberg for their ongoing support of our Explorers Academy. Your generosity enables the imaginations of our next generation!

Visit youtube.com/madisonboysgirlsclub and our Facebook page to see video of the Mega “Pop-Fly” in action!

 Forget “Dancing with the Stars”—on Monday, December 6, our Columbus Clubhouse Dancers had more than 19,000 Knicks fans on their feet as they took to center-court for a 90-second tour de force that showcased their hard work, poise and dedication to dance!

Corporate supporters from Ernst & Young were on-hand to witness the dazzling footwork of our Columbus Clubhouse kids for themselves and congratulate the terrific troupe of fancy foot-workers on a job well done.

After the show, our kids were treated to a pizza party in a skybox at Madison Square Garden where they cheered the Knicks on to victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves.

It was the perfect end to an incredible evening that’s bound to be a memory that will last a lifetime.

Visit youtube.com/madisonboysgirlsclub to see the video of the performance! Interested in becoming a corporate supporter? Call (212) 760-9600 ext. 209 to find out how your company can help impact the lives of thousands of New York youth.
For two magical performances in December, kids at our Thomas S. Murphy Clubhouse took a time machine back to the 1950s when they staged a performance of the hit musical Grease for family, friends and Clubhouse staff!

“I wanted our kids to learn about Broadway and theater, but I wanted to make it fun, too,” Murphy Clubhouse Cultural Director Alethea Sapp stated. “I wanted our kids to attach who they are to something everybody knows—and everybody knows Grease!”

Madison youth spent two-and-a-half months doing everything from learning the music and their lines to practicing the choreography of Dance Instructor Toni Murray and designing sets for the show. In all nearly 30 kids from ages 7 to 17 got a taste of the theater and an understanding of the work that goes into creating a live performance.

“We’re so much more than just an after-school program,” Sapp asserts. “We’re working for the community and in the community. We’re not just babysitting here; we’re giving these kids a purpose in their lives.”

Grammy Award-winning R&B superstar Ne-Yo gave hundreds of members from all of our Clubhouses a holiday surprise when he visited our Navy Yard Clubhouse in December to distribute toys and sign autographs for throngs of thrilled kids!

A national spokesman for the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Ne-Yo spoke to our members about the important role the Club played in his life and the importance of giving back.

The event was produced in conjunction with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, the United States Marines’ Toys for Tots program and Ne-Yo’s Compound Foundation, with snacks for our kids supplied courtesy of Frito-Lay.

Madison Associate Executive Director Steven A. Melton personally thanked Ne-Yo for remembering his roots and taking the time to share the selfless spirit that the holiday season is all about, and expressed his gratitude to additional guests Vanessa and Angela Simmons of Pastry Shoes as well as Ne-Yo’s mother Loraine Smith for their support of the Madison Square Boys & Girls Club.
Meet our 2011 Youth of the Year: Keleicia Francis, Christian Guillen, Richard McBride and our 2011 Youth of the Year Club-wide winner Natavia Louis! You’re going to be hearing a lot from these outstanding youth in the months ahead, and we’re proud to introduce them to you now!

Keleicia Francis (Thomas S. Murphy Clubhouse) You can describe Keleicia in many ways: an outstanding student, a proven leader and a role model for her peers. Since her first step into the Thomas S. Murphy Clubhouse in the first grade, Keleicia has embodied everything that is possible when youth stay on the path to success. “Growing up in the Club made me see it as more than just a place to keep me off the streets, but a place where I can call my home,” she says.

Christian Guillen (Columbus Clubhouse) Christian has big dreams and a will to achieve them. Seeing the toll depression took on his family members inspired him to focus with laser precision on his studies with the ultimate goal of becoming a psychologist. “My peers do things like cut class, use drugs and a whole lot of stuff they can get in trouble with, but I know that’s not my road to travel,” he declares. By staying in school, facing life’s challenges head-on and inspiring others at the Columbus Clubhouse to do the same, Christian is well on his way to greatness. “In my perfect world, I’m surrounded by a family who cares about me,” he continues. “The Club has become part of that family.”

Richard McBride (Joel E. Smilow Clubhouse) Richard is the middle child in a family of five and strives to set a positive example for his younger brother Bobby. He is interested in becoming an executive in the healthcare field, but knows that he can only accomplish that with a college degree. It’s a goal that the staff of the Smilow Clubhouse has assisted him with since he became a member 11 years ago. “The Club has been one of my biggest supporters,” he recounts. “The staff members always offered a helping hand. They showed me I was a top priority in their lives.”

Nativa Louis (Navy Yard Clubhouse) Life hasn’t been easy for Natavia Louis, but that never discouraged her. Living in project housing in a three-bedroom unit with eight people, Natavia saw the Club as a second home, a safe place where she could be herself. “The Club taught me right from wrong, kept me from the dangers of the streets and took me in when I felt unwanted at home,” she reveals. This year she will become the first person from her family to finish high school, and is excited to continue her studies in college in pursuit of a career in clinical child psychology.

All of our Youth of the Year winners will engage in an array of special events designed to showcase their talents and abilities. In the meantime, we wish Natavia all the best as she goes on to represent the Madison Square Boys & Girls Club at the New York State Youth of the Year finals in Albany this spring, and offer our sincerest congratulations to all of our Clubhouse Youth of the Year winners!
Cipriani 42nd Street was the place to be on Friday, December 3, 2010 as stalwart supporters and young professionals converged upon the elegant midtown Manhattan venue to combine their philanthropic forces at the 44th Annual Christmas Tree Ball to raise over $1 million for the Madison Square Boys & Girls Club!

The event was emceed by Thomas S. Murphy Clubhouse member Kristin Mason and Joel E. Smilow Clubhouse Youth of the Year Wayne Reyes, while entertainment for the evening came by way of the Columbus Clubhouse Dancers who had the crowd on its feet with a jubilant performance of holiday favorites culminating in a rousing rendition of “We Wish You a Merry Christmas” that had everyone singing along in the spirit of the season.


Visit www.madisonsquare.org for a link to our Flickr page featuring more than 200 photos from the event!
Mark your calendar for the “see and be seen” charity luncheon of the season!

Purses & Pursenalities

Join hundreds of New York notables at the elegant Cipriani 42nd Street for the latest edition of our popular annual luncheon benefiting the Madison Square Boys & Girls Club! Peruse dozens of designer handbags and shoes available for purchase before enjoying a delicious lunch honoring the philanthropic dedication of Asprey, Avenue Magazine and designer Eric Javits. Emceed by LX New York and NBC4 television personality Jane Hanson.

Find more info and RSVP online at www.madisonsquare.org/purses

Contact Hillary Manski at (212) 760-0074 or e-mail hmanski@madisonsquare.org for additional information and sponsorship opportunities.

The mission of Madison Square Boys & Girls Club is to save and enhance the lives of New York City boys and girls who by means of economic and/or social factors are most in need of its services.