



CHAUTAUQUA  
**STRIDERS**  
MENTORING & GUIDING YOUTH

*Chautauqua Striders is dedicated to the mentoring & guidance of youth through education, advocacy, & athletics.*

**MAKING STRIDES NEWSLETTER**

**Summer 2010**

## Mission Drives New Opportunities

By Deb Kathman, Executive Director

What a whirlwind the past five weeks have been! I believe my entire staff felt like they had been riding a roller coaster. We had the high of two successful events and the low of losing some very important program funding.

Striders, like other organizations in our community, is struggling with reduced funding from state and local entities. While always cognizant of our fiscal responsibility, we had to take a step back and re-evaluate our programming and services to youth and families. This is not always easy. We have never strayed from our mission, "to mentor and guide youth," and have never begun a program we didn't think would benefit them. However, we needed to tighten our belts or lose some valuable programs. We are working on it; it is a process, and we hope by next September, our programs will be stable.

We enjoyed back-to-back events the first two weeks of May. On May 7th, we hosted, along with various foundations and the county, a workshop on the 40 Developmental Assets for youth. 130 participants from community organizations, youth agencies, the Department of Social Services, and school districts spent an interactive day looking at the internal and external assets every child needs to succeed. As a result of this training, an advisory group will continue to support the asset approach with community organizations throughout the county.



On May 13th, a breakfast was held at JCC, entitled, "Investing in our Youth," and was sponsored in part by Jamestown Savings Bank, a division of Northwest Savings Bank, on the importance of mentoring. Guest speaker, Larry Selnick, shared how his bank and its employees had embraced mentoring in their community. Larry explained how they had overcome issues facing every employer who allows release time for volunteer opportunities. His power point presentation and follow up question and answer period went to the heart of mentoring and he encouraged participants to at least think about mentoring for their work place. Response cards placed at each table provided us with individuals and companies who are interested in making a difference in a child's life. Mentoring has become the second largest program of Chautauqua Striders. We know it is two-directional, mentors gain as much from the relationship as their mentees, and sometimes more.

Finally, as the school year comes to an end, I would like to say a special thank you to two of our volunteers, Ruth Lundin and Paul Hedberg. They have spent one afternoon a week for the last three months at CARE, our community after school program, located at our main office. It is hard to distinguish who has enjoyed it more, Paul and Ruth, or their student, Marcos. Whether they are reading to each other or working on a math problem it is easy to notice the nice relationship that has developed between them. It is surely friends like Ruth and Paul that help make our job a little easier.

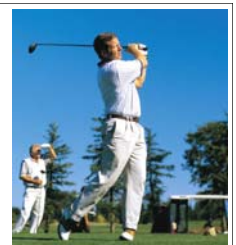
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**Fore.....the Striders!!!!**  
**2010 Chautauqua Striders Golf Scramble**  
**South Hills Country Club**  
**Saturday, July 24, 2010**

Join us on our new date and new course fore even more fun!!!  
 More information on our website!



## Tutoring Corner

### Elementary & Middle School News

#### Preparing Students for State Exams

By Michelle Waterman, Elementary School Coordinator

As the year winds down and reports are being written, I thought I would take a moment to share some numbers with you. Tutors at Bush, Fletcher, Love, Ring, and Rogers saw a total of 274 students afterschool from September to April. The students had a combined total of 10,750 tutoring sessions, or 8062.5 hours of tutoring time. In addition, tutors made 262 contacts with teachers and 55 contacts with parents (that we thought to write down—there were many more!)

Striders tutoring after school offered many great activities including a virtual tour of the Jelly Belly factory, along with some taste-testing; a “Pet Rock” writing and art project; a “Comic Life” writing and art project; “Secret Formulas” science experiments; a “Journal in a Jar” writing project, and many other special and long-term activities that helped build skills and complement the school day.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of my tutors, including those who have moved on to bigger ventures, and our FANTASTIC substitute tutors who were often available at a moment’s notice and came to our rescue more days than not this year. THANK YOU!! I look forward to seeing most of you back in September!

## Tutoring and more.....

By Julie Dudgeon, Middle School Coordinator

It’s almost unimaginable the 2009-2010 school year is coming to a close already. In so many ways, it has just flown by. Jefferson, Persell, and Washington Middle Schools, Lincoln Elementary School, and CARE programs have been blessed with outstanding and creative tutors. These dedicated individuals not only worked with students on academic assignments during the week but also reached back into their personal reserves of knowledge to provide fun and interactive educational games and lessons. They gave of their own time and resources for snacks, prizes, and parties for special occasions, and became mentors to handfuls of students in need of a guiding and steady hand.

It is with much gratitude Striders says good-bye to Anton Agafonov who has spent the last seven years tutoring and caring for students at Washington Middle School. He will be making more time for his own beautiful daughter, Sophia. To Allison, Chuck, Dave, Dee Dee, Donnelle, Jon, Keri, Kulle, Michael, Nancy, Sherry; subs, Michelle, Carl, Carolyn, Casey, Rachel, Tony, and volunteers, Alicia, Paul and Ruth, thanks and thanks and thanks again for all you are and all you do!



**Anton Agafonov** makes his last batch of traditional Russian pancakes for students at Washington Middle School.

#### Lighted School House News

By Pam Gustafson, High School Coordinator

A quote by Russell Banks says, “Storytelling is an ancient and honorable act and an essential role to play in the community or tribe.” This is especially true when applied to Ralph, a veteran tutor for Striders. He is a storyteller extraordinaire who brings the history of our country and our world to life for his students. Marcos, a Videography Class student from Jamestown High School, was given an assignment to select and interview someone contributing to and making an impact on the community by storytelling, or in Ralph’s case, tutoring. Marcos wrote the questions that would be asked and did an outstanding job conducting the interview. He asked Ralph about his early years as a college football player, his educational endeavors, his extensive teaching and coaching careers, his proudest accomplishments, and his feelings about tutoring with Chautauqua Striders. While the entire interview could have easily been filled with impressive and fascinating facts about his life, Ralph was adamant about focusing on Striders as a multifaceted agency that in his words is, “one of a kind.”

Marcos was comfortable with this assignment, and with Ralph, because of the trusting relationship the two of them have established by working together since September. They have spent days and weeks pouring over Global History homework, Castle Learning assignments, D.B.Q’s, and past NYS Regents exams. Determined to be successful, both Ralph and Marcos have worked extensively and diligently preparing for the end of the semester and the Global Regents. Together, they have read hundreds of practice questions and discussed information until they were both “satisfied” with the answers. The video they made not only chronicles Ralph’s career, but also gives a glimpse into the close bond that has formed between them. All of the interviews were showcased at the Reg Lenna Civic Center this month.





## Student Progress Sets Course for Future Success

By Galena Duba, SAFARI Program Coordinator

The end of the school year is almost here, and our students are hard at work preparing for their local finals and Regents exams. During the week before exams are given, SAFARI will be offering brief review sessions for several Regents exams. Students who are

interested in attending a review session should contact Galena Duba, SAFARI Program Coordinator, at 483-4204.

We are proud of the progress all of our students have made toward their academic goals. We will say goodbye to some amazing seniors in June and wish them well in their future endeavors. We look forward to seeing many of our underclassmen return to the program next school year. Their outstanding progress throughout the year inspires us to meet our new freshmen in September.

## Northern Lights

By Michele D. Starwalt, North County Coordinator

Striders North County is getting ready to set sail for sizzling summer fun. Students, tutors, and the Boys & Girls Club of Northern Chautauqua County are very excited to be participating in the Buffalo Outdoor Urban Education (BOUE) program on July 22nd.

This immense opportunity will be made possible by a grant through the United Way of Northern Chautauqua County. Students will conduct marine life experiments, learn more about Lake Erie, and enjoy a sailboat ride for over three hours.



Once again Striders will offer a Summer Academic Enrichment Program to any student in the northern part of the county who is enrolled or becomes enrolled at the Club. Math, science, arts, and

ELA activities will be offered, all supporting the NYS Learning Standards. The Summer Program helps prevent the students from becoming "rusty" over the summer and prepares them for their next grade level in the fall.

As the traditional school year comes to a close, we wish the families, faculty, and administration of the nearly 300 students who participated in Striders during the school year, a fun filled, safe, and happy summer! See you all in September!

### Chautauqua Striders Contact Information

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CHAUTAUQUA  
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### 2010 Board Members

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## Striding in the West County

By Annette Bittorf, Academic Program Coordinator

We are completing our sixth year at Ripley Central School, and our tutors worked with 57 students and assisted with over 3,000 assignments. Panama Central School tutors experienced a second successful year with 92 students from kindergarten to 11<sup>th</sup> grade and completed 1,300 assignments while in Striders afterschool. Our new program at Westfield Academy and Central School had 13 regular participants but 78 different students stopped by for academic tutoring throughout the year. Next year, we look forward to returning to all three western county schools and helping students achieve academic success.



WISH LIST

- |                   |                   |                  |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Pencils & Erasers | Electrical Tape   | Index Cards      |
| Lined Paper       | First Aid Kits    | Children's Books |
| 3 Ring Notebooks  | Digital Camera    | Board Games      |
| Washable Markers  | Permanent Markers | Gift Cards       |

# Outreach Program Opens Doors

By Karisse Rotger-Gonzalez, Hispanic Outreach Program

As my first school year with Striders comes to an end, I can't help but feel proud of many accomplishments made by our youth and families. I've earned the trust of my students, their families, my colleagues, and the community. I see the fruits of my labor when students come to me with their needs and I am able to help them. This year has been an incredible and inspiring opportunity for me. I'll have to say goodbye to some students and wish them well in their future lives, but look forward to meeting all the new ones I'll have next year.

New and exciting projects and activities are coming. The Hispanic Outreach Program, in collaboration with the ESL Program, is planning college trips, character building activities, informational nights, and more. Together, we will continue to work on the development of the Futuro Latino Club at JHS, the ESL Divas, and the Let's Share Lunch group at Washington Middle School. All this brings more exciting expectations for next year.

Please remember I'm always available for translation, home visits, advocacy, and casework. My office is located at Washington Middle School and my door is always open. Have a safe and fun filled summer.

# Playing Well with Others

By Arrick Davis, Project Reach Coordinator



Playing well with others is a simple but profound concept children begin hearing when they are toddlers. It is imperative they learn social skills, the earlier the better, so when they encounter people of different cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, they are equipped to handle themselves in diverse situations.

Group activities are effective approaches for teaching social skills, and they create a safe environment in which children can participate. Our year-end group activities include: Teambuilding at Mission Meadows, Bird Banding at the Audubon, and a tour of the Jamestown Fire Department. In addition, we will have our annual family picnic giving thanks to the families we serve.

Individual commitment to a group effort - that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work."  
-Vince Lombardi

The menu for the summer activities is comprised of: a golf outing at South Hills Country Club, and an overnight camping experience, thanks to Steve Sischo and Pat Hoover. Lastly, there will be a cookout at Strider Field, including an African drumming lesson by Tim Edborg, featuring a Djembe and a Cajon presentation.



For more information please contact Arrick Davis at 488-2203 ext 228 or arrick@chautauqua-striders.org

Project REACH puppeteer Cameron Morley lends a hand during a recent field trip to the Audubon Society.

# Successful Transitions

By Sharon Matson, Transition Team and APP Coordinator

This quarter, I attended my first Battle of the Classes at Jamestown High School, and the students had a screamin' night. I am looking forward to next year's battle!

The Transition Team met with new students on May 18, 19, and 20 during their 8<sup>th</sup> grade orientations at Jefferson, Persell, and Washington Middle Schools. Helping the Team to answer questions about high school were current 9<sup>th</sup> graders: James Burdic, Samantha, Platt, Kristina Gifford, Ashlyn Seekings, and Jennifer Rolfe. These students were able to talk about some of the challenges of adjusting to the "big" high school, such as finding classrooms. We explained to them about the fun activities and academic opportunities they will have to participate in at JHS, as well.

Our last "brownie day" for the school year was May 19, and we want to thank the Central Kitchen staff for the tasty brownies they supplied for our Transition students.

As always, we encourage our students to attend school and to do their best with class work. Attendance and performance go together for students to become successful.

# Optimist Club Youth Citizen Award

Each year, the local chapter of the Optimist Club recognizes area youth based on the following criteria:

- Character
- Scholarship
- Leadership
- Participation in a Variety of Activities
- Motivation
- Athletic Achievement
- Civic Responsibility
- Attainment of Personal Goals



Jeany and Marcos Melendez were chosen by Striders to receive this award. Both Jeany and Marcos attend tutoring at the Lighted Schoolhouse regularly. Even on days when there is no program, they are known to come to the office just to have a quiet work space or to utilize the computers. They

are committed to always doing their best, and will work as hard as necessary to achieve their academic goals. I have witnessed firsthand how diligent they are with every assignment and every test.

This sibling team displayed their civic concern by creating a way to raise money for Haiti after the devastating earthquakes. They came up with the idea, "Hearts 4 Haiti." They had a table at the Jamestown High School Academic Fair where they collected funds in exchange for a chocolate heart and a sticker of original design stating, "I donated to Hearts 4 Haiti." I could not have been more proud! Their initiative and their genuine concern for others should serve as an example for all of us!

# Mentoring

Community and School Based Mentoring Programs  
By Amanda Gesing, School-Based Mentoring Coordinator  
and Loretta Smith, Project Visions Mentoring Coordinator



## How Might You Answer the Question?

Recently, I heard the saying “Kasserian Ingera.” This is a greeting among the Masai of Kenya that translates to, “And how are the children?” It is still the traditional greeting among the Masai, acknowledging the importance the Masai place not only on their own children's well being but also on the well being of all children in the community. Even those members with no children of their own will traditionally answer, "All the children are well." This response is always given because they believe there is no peace, and no one prevails, unless all the children are safe and cared for. While Jamestown area community members are not walking through town and greeting each other with “Kasserian Ingera,” many individuals are placing a high value on area youth, not just through words but also through actions. Currently, Chautauqua Striders has 127 adults mentoring over 130 children in the Jamestown Public Schools and surrounding areas. These mentors take time out of their busy schedules to meet with their mentees during lunch at school or on the weekends and evenings by including them in their lives.

Imagine if you will, that as you pass by strangers, acquaintances, and family what would happen if everyone had in mind, “How are the children?” In what ways might our community change for the better? Would every caring adult feel compelled to influence a child in a positive manner, enabling Chautauqua Striders to serve even more children by matching them with caring mentors? Would every youth have a person to whom they could look to guidance and support as he or she navigated through childhood and adolescence?

“Kaserian Ingera.” How might you answer?

### Good Byes!!

As the school year closes, Chautauqua Striders is saying goodbye to two employees. Loretta Smith, Project Visions Coordinator and Galena Duba, Safari Program Coordinator. After a combined 40 years with Chautauqua County and Striders, Loretta leaves us for a much deserved retirement. Galena has been accepted in the University of Buffalo School of Law and will begin classes in the fall. Good luck to both ladies!

### Project ME Moment

By Lorraine Walker, Project ME Coordinator

Sarah Moser, a member of Project Me, GEAR UP's mentoring program, recently won an NYS Higher Education Service Corporation (HESC) sponsored essay contest at Jamestown High School. GEAR UP students were invited to submit their creative piece with the theme of, “How GEAR UP Has Impacted My Life”. Sarah was awarded a plaque and gift card at her favorite store at the April 27<sup>th</sup> New York State GEAR UP Conference in Buffalo, New York. Congratulations, Sarah...you are AWESOME!

### What Gear Up has Done for Me

By Sarah Moser

A thousand diamonds into the sky.  
I look up at them wondering their meaning, where they are?

I know where I am standing – frozen in time waiting for a decision to be made in my own defense. Where is your life going, Sarah?  
They wonder asking me not willing to help.

I am lost still waiting there for years and years living in ignorance, blissfully not truly knowing the potential I hold for a brighter future, where my life could go with higher education is waiting in oblivion for me until one day I am pulled from my ignorant bliss into a world where opportunity is thrown at me knowledge is given to me.

I can go to college whether I am rich or poor. This is how Gear Up has opened up the door for me to learn to my fullest extent.

All I needed was the resources which are given to me - no questions asked.

When given the ability to succeed with helpful knowledge there isn't anything I cannot do.



Sarah Moser shows her award from the New York State HESC Essay Contest.

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## It all starts here.....

Worldwide Athletics is referred to as sporting events that involve competitive running, jumping, throwing, and walking. The most common types of Athletic competitions are track and field, road running, cross country running, and race walking. The simplicity of the competitions, and the lack of a need for expensive equipment, makes athletics one of the most commonly competed sports in the world.

Chautauqua Striders was founded in 1979 as a track and field program for young people. Since then, thousands of young people have participated in athletics through a Chautauqua Striders. Our programs both introduce the events, as well as, prepare the area's best for regional and national competitions.



12 area athletes who participated in the Hershey's Track & Field Games at Strider Field will compete and represent our area in the NYS West Championships in Herkimer, NY on Saturday, June 19.



Chautauqua Striders is a member of USA Track & Field, the national governing body for Athletics in the United States. Though USATF, our athletes competed in local, regional, and national championships. Additionally, programs like "Win With Integrity" are aimed at educating youth, parents, educators, and coaches about the positive results that come from leading a physically active, drug-free lifestyle while living with integrity. This helps us develop athletes on track, in the field and for life.

Youth Athletics are often more than competition--they're also fun! Regardless of whether young athletes achieve a personal best, win a medal, or earn a shot at international competition, they'll have the opportunity to make new friends and a lifetime of memories! Please visit our upcoming events calendar on our website (address listed below) and make a date at Strider Field.

[www.chautauqua-striders.org](http://www.chautauqua-striders.org)