

# CHILDREN'S EXPRESS

"By children...for everybody"

## Caring teachers vent frustrations with school system

BY CHILDREN'S EXPRESS

EDITORS: TJ Ebel, 16; Chanda Boyden, 15; Amy Welsenbach, 15; Sharlene Toney, 14; Erin Cox, 15; Randy McDade, 16  
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INDIANAPOLIS BUREAU

**T**his past summer I had the privilege of training teachers. At 16 years old, I got to tell teachers they were wrong without getting into trouble.

These teachers came to *Children's Express* from Louisville and San Diego to be trained to teach their students to use our approach to journalism.

I always thought that teachers were part robot and part animal — always drilling students and being totally insensitive to our opinions and ideas. In the process of training these teachers, I discovered that they were human beings. If I had just one of these teachers, I would jump up and down with joy.

Here's what the teachers had to say in a CE roundtable:

### Worst experiences

**CHRIS:** A couple of years ago, there was a girl who had failed eighth grade three times and she had failed other grades. She was 18 years old and an eighth grader. I was bound and deter-

mined I was going to try and save this girl. I worked with her and worked with her. It came to the end of the grading period and she was passing and everything was going really well. Suddenly she dropped out and didn't even finish the eighth grade. I called her mother and begged and cried. I was crying on the phone. I just couldn't understand why this girl would do this, not only to me but to herself. I never heard from her. Her mother said she went to the country. That was the end of that. But that was tough.

**AMY:** The biggest obstacle in dealing with kids is getting them to care about what you're saying. If they're coming to school hungry and their dad just beat their mother up the night before, then it's very hard to get them to care about what a gerund is. You've got to get them to care. And you've got to get beneath all that other stuff first.

**PHYLLIS:** Some of the real brazen ones say, "Hey, I can make a whole lot more money selling drugs," and they can. They have brothers — they have family members who are making real good money selling drugs. And they're laughing at us. They're saying, "You don't know where the money is." They think we're ridiculous.

**LINDA:** I remember a Cambodian

student who had a very difficult time with all the teachers at school and for some reason we found a link. I was able to communicate with him very well and he trusted me, and then he did something (bad). I had to be the person to write the referral and

**JIM:** I would be shot by some teachers for saying this, but I would get rid of some teachers. Traditional teaching is: "I've got an agenda, a way in mind that it (an assignment) should be done. I'm going to tell you to be creative but if you don't do it the way I have in mind,

done on a shoestring. My classroom hasn't been painted since 1958... (I painted it) myself this summer with my own money.

### When it's worth it

**AMY:** The best thing (about) being a teacher for me is when there has been a success for a particular student, when I can help them know something that they didn't know before.

**SHIRLEY:** Sometimes you're the only one that child has to talk with and who takes time to listen to that child and his problems.

**LINDA:** I think the positive thing is that you get an education while you're educating other people. Every day I do learn something new — if it's just a fact about one of the children.

**CHRIS:** I always wish that I could keep in touch with students throughout the years just to see what they are doing now. Just to see if my teaching was effective for kids.

**"I think the biggest problem with teaching is that you're stuck inside those four walls."**

turn it in. That was the last straw. He was suspended from the school for the rest of the year. He came back, and the look on his face was, "I'll never forgive you for doing that to me." That really affected me deeply.

**What they'd do differently**  
**MIKE:** I think the biggest problem with teaching is that you're stuck inside those four walls and nobody wants to be there. You're isolated. Teachers have to exist in the Middle Ages. Can you imagine any kind of business where the employees don't have a phone or a computer or anything like that. Teachers do it all the time.

you're not creative."

I think a major flaw in our educational system is that we don't often ask the students what they think is best for them. I see teaching as being a guide and an advisor, not an imparter of information. Teaching is guiding.

**MIKE:** I think one will look back on history 50 years down the road and chronicle the decline of America as a world power from the point where they stopped funding their educational system. I'm not very optimistic about the future of education in this country. Why is it not working? Because nobody is willing to put any money into it. Things are

### Talkabout:

1. What qualities do you respect in a teacher?
2. What has been your best learning experience? your worst?
3. What do you suppose it's like to have you as a student?

## Temporary shelter for homeless young mothers and their kids opens

*"Lives are saved one by one. The way to make a difference is to help one person, then one person after that and then another person after that. In this way, Helen's House promises to make that difference."* (Daniel Kronenfeld)

Helen's House, a new transitional residential facility providing temporary shelter for young mothers and their infant children, was officially inaugurated recently at a ceremony attended by Mayor Dinkins, Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger and other dignitaries.

The new facility, a program of the Henry Street Settlement, is designed to enable homeless young mothers to keep their children and at the same time to develop the skills and to receive the counseling they need to become self sufficient.

"Although the needs of all segments of the homeless population are acute, the problems associated with separating mothers and children are especially significant among young, single mothers," said Daniel Kronenfeld, executive director of the Henry Street Settlement. "Facing homelessness, many young mothers find that they have no alternative but to hand their children over to family, friends or formal foster care programs."

"This is a tragedy, because fragmenting these young families often does permanent damage. Studies show that the longer family members are separated, the less likely it is that they will ever live together again. Helen's House will provide homeless young mothers and their children with decent shelter while they look for more permanent housing."

The young mothers and their infants will be eligible to live for up to a year at Helen's House, Kronenfeld said. While living there, they will receive assistance from the Henry Street Settlement staff in education, job skills training and finding employment and permanent housing. Helen's House is prepared to accept young mothers aged 24 years or younger.

Helen's House, named after Helen Hall, a long-time director of the Henry Street Settlement whose word focused especially on the needs and concerns of young women, is another in a line of Henry Street Settlement programs designed to alleviate the problems of homelessness. The Henry Street Settlement started the first transitional housing facility for families in 1972 when it opened the Urban Family Center, a shelter

for homeless families. Since then, programs of the Urban Family Center have become models for others across the country.

The UFC received international attention in 1989 when Princess Diana of Wales met with representatives of the group on a visit to Henry Street.

Helen's House, located at 309-11 Henry Street in Manhattan, is a new, four-story residence containing 16 studio apartments. A concrete and steel fireproof structure, it is located down the street from the historic Henry Street Settlement house.

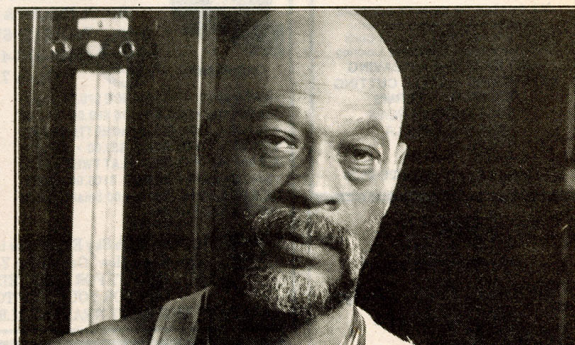
The construction of Helen's House was funded by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development. Ongoing operation of the residence is funded by New York City's Department of Human Resources Administration. Helen's house also received funds from the Overbrook Foundation, the Lehman Foundation, St. James Church in Manhattan and the New York City Emergency Food and Shelter Program (FEMA IX) for the purchase of equipment and furnishings.

"HPD is proud that since 1985 we have provided more than \$125 million through the Capital Budget Homeless Housing

Program to produce more than 2,000 units to service nearly 5,000 homeless New Yorkers with special needs," said Felice Michetti, commissioner of the city's Department of Housing Preservation and Development. "Facilities have been rehabilitated or constructed for the mentally ill, recovering victims of drug addiction, homeless low-income families and homeless pregnant young women."

The Helen's House building was designed by Herbert L. Mandel of New York. The general contractor for the project was Postcap Construction, owned and operated by Robert Capolino.

The Henry Street Settlement is a leading social service and arts agency that has served the Lower East Side since 1893. The settlement offers a wide range of youth, shelter, senior, mental health services, arts and cultural programs.



**MEDAL WINNER** — Olympic gold medal winner and former transplant patient Kendall Barnes will describe his experiences of winning gold medals at The Harlem YMCA on Wednesday, Oct. 23, at 6 p.m. The recipient of a kidney transplant trained at The Harlem YMCA in swimming and won the gold and bronze in Budapest, Hungary.



# Justice Miller could be the most popular in city

By **JESSE H. WALKER**

Special to the AmNews

Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Edith Miller could qualify as the most popular judge in the city since she ordered the state to give the city \$55 million it withheld for faults in a foster-care program.

The justice said the state unfairly sought to fill its own coffers. She directed the Cuomo administration to turn over \$54.9 million to the city.

In her ruling Miller found that the state's Department of Social Services conducted a two-year

audit of the Kinship Foster Care program in an "arbitrary and capricious manner."

The foster-care program places more than 22,000 children in foster care with their own relatives.

Miller declared the audit void and said the investigation was not done "in the interests of the children relegated to foster care but solely for the purpose of recouping the maximum sum possible from the city."

"In times of recession, the pressure on the state budget is taken out against the city," said

Lorna B. Goodman, chief of the city's Affirmative Litigation Division, who won the case on the city's behalf.

Miller, finding the state was "unreasonable" in its audit, also pointed out in her opinion that the state had not taken into account the huge expansion of the pro-

gram in recent years. The foster-care program, which allows children to be placed with relatives, expanded from 1,400 children five years ago to 22,555 today.

A spokesman for the State Department of Social Services said it has asked the state attorney general's office to appeal Miller's ruling.

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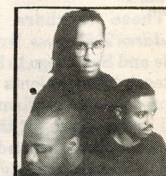
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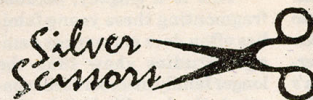
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