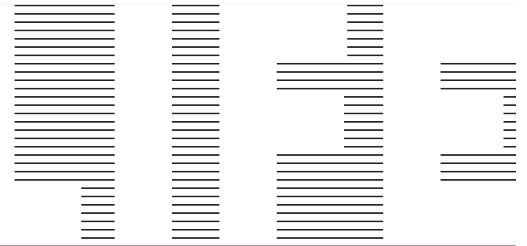




# SCAN



NEWS FROM SCAN NEW YORK

WINTER/SPRING 2008

## Positive Choices: SCAN's Violence Prevention Program Gets Youth on the Right Track

"He's done a 360° turn since he started SCAN," James Barry's grandmother, Pamela Matthews, told the guests at the gathering at SCAN Board Chairperson Jane Overman's home in November to celebrate the personal growth and achievement of James and another SCAN youth.

With three arrests on his record, 13-year old James was headed for placement when Derek Schuster, SCAN Associate Executive Director, pleaded with the judge to give James one more chance. Now enrolled in SCAN's Violence Prevention Program (VPP), James has, indeed, turned himself around. He's playing football and basketball, his grades have improved and his record is clean. "SCAN has helped me make better choices and to make my life better. Once I get off probation in April, I am going to continue to make my life better," James told the gathering which included James' support team – his mother, grandmother, stepfather, sister and brother. James was honored for his "turning his life around by learning to make positive choices".

"Derek's like a fisherman," SCAN Executive Director, Lew Zuchman, said. "He brings troubled young people to us, and we help them see how special they are." Derek, together with Brunilde Rivera, Violence Prevention Counselor, are key to enabling the kind of turnaround that James' grandmother spoke of. Their personal approach is no-nonsense, intensely committed and caring. Coupled with individual and group counseling, anger management



**TOP:** James Barry receiving award from SCAN Associate Executive Director Derek Schuster. **BELOW:** Christina DeJesus receiving award from Derek Schuster.

training and visits to prison venues, the SCAN program boasts unusual success for these 12-15 year old violence-prone youth. "Street life corrupts the well meaning person," said Derek. But a turnaround is possible when youth are shown that there are alternatives to violence, are encouraged to think about their actions and consequences and given the resources to deal with difficult situations. "We enter their lives at a good time, when they are struggling with the challenges of being a teenager," Brunilde observed.

SCAN youth 'graduate' from the VPP when they are no longer 'at risk.' Then what?

SCAN offers an array of services that provide a safety net for these youth. Services include after school programs, family counseling, substance abuse counseling, Hip Hop and creative arts and SCAN's *Reach for the Stars* upward bound program. SCAN also provides mentoring opportunities. Peer leaders are selected from the VPP's graduates and trained to help their friends and classmates learn anger management and communications skills.

Christina DeJesus (see related story on page 2), Eli Moran and Rafael Burgos, VPP graduates and either current or previous peer leaders, also attended the November event. Christina, 15 years old when she was arrested following a dangerous assault and now 18 with a young baby and heading off to college, was also honored at the event for 'taking life to the next level' through

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# SCAN Youth are Scholarship Recipients

Two SCAN youth, Christina DeJesus and Danielle Kelly, recently received college scholarships from the Sylvia & Herbert Woods Foundation. The Foundation, affiliated with the renowned Sylvia's restaurant in Harlem, is a long-time SCAN supporter and donor. Christina's scholarship application is reprinted below in full. Excerpts from Danielle's scholarship application follow.



CHRISTINA DEJESUS

I feel that I am entitled to receive the Sylvia and Herbert Woods Endowment Scholarship because I am in need of financial assistance to fulfill my educational goals. I am a 17 year old Hispanic female of the Dominican descent and of a single parent household. I am currently completing my senior year in University Heights High School and have plans of attending Bronx Community College for my Associates Degree, then Lehman College for my Bachelor's degree. Obtaining this goal recently has felt almost impossible since I am expecting a child. I am currently working and putting away my earnings for the baby. The money I earn is not sufficient to contribute towards my education as well. My mother is a single parent supporting two children, herself and a household. I would like to be able to assist her with my educational cost and this scholarship will help me do so. I feel I am deserving of this scholarship because of the dramatic changes and progress I have endured within the last two years. The person I am today is not the person I was two years ago. During that time I was very aggressive, short tempered, irresponsible and truant. I had lost respect for myself, others and lost desire for an education. Approximately, a year and a half ago I was introduced to the SCAN program which helped me set my priorities straight and regain hope in myself. Since then, I have developed a meaningful relationship with my mom (who never gave up on me), returned to school and learned to respect myself and others. My experiences have led me to believe that I should not give up hope in myself, as there is always someone, or something that helps me (us) stay strong and survive. The Sylvia Scholarship provides that hope for me as I am sure it does for many.

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DANIELLE KELLY

By the time I was eleven years old, my world came crashing down. I began to think about my parents again, just thinking and asking myself, "Is my father coming back, like he said?" I wasn't thinking much of my mother since I really didn't know her. To release my anger I would fight people or punch walls. If I didn't fight, I would come home from school, go straight to my room, and slam the door. I'd sit on my bed with a picture of my parents and cry.

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**Now I want to go to college and help my community.**

**I want to become a social worker and a lawyer to help children in various communities.**

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From freshman year to junior year, I have learned a lot of things about myself. I'm enrolled in a program called *Reach for the Stars*, which is a program for teenagers in high school. The program helps teens with college, career and life choices. It's also a safe place for kids to hang out. At *Reach for the Stars*, I am a tutor and peer mentor. I help people with homework, and at times [they] help me with my homework. We play basketball, softball, volleyball, and we have group discussions. *The Reach for the Stars* staff helped me get a job at an elementary school where I worked with kids from the ages of 6 to 10 years old. I worked there for 3 months, but then I had to quit because I need to focus more in my school work. Even though I loved the job, school always comes first.

Now I want to go to college and help my community. I want to become a social worker and a lawyer to help children in various communities. I want to tell children and teens that they are not alone, and they don't have to be alone. They must keep pressing on to get better and better. I would also want to tell them to always hold their heads high. Do I still want to find my parents? Yes, I still want to find them, but I also don't want them turning their backs on me again. So I am going to wait until the time is right.

# New Directors Bring Strength and Vigor to SCAN

*Over the last several years, SCAN has been resolute in its determination to strengthen its board. Its three newest board members reflect that charter and bring valuable expertise, professionalism and commitment to SCAN.*

**CLEMENT LAU** is a Corporate Vice President in the Mergers & Acquisitions department at New York Life. Previously, he was an M&A investment banker at Lehman Brothers, and prior to that worked at Enron Corp. Born and raised in Singapore, he served as an Infantry Sergeant with the Singapore Armed Forces and came to the U.S. in 1994. He received his BA in Economics and Mathematics from the University of Texas at Austin and, later, his MBA from Harvard Business School.

Clement is passionate about community involvement, having earlier volunteered as a Junior Achievement advisor and mentor to inner-city kids, and now as a small business advisor at Business Center for New Americans. Impressed by SCAN's "Yes, I Can!" theme, its organizational clarity and passionate leadership, Clement says he "was eager to join SCAN to help even more children, parents and families *Reach for the Stars.*"

**NADINE M. GOMES WILLIAMS** is an associate in the Trial Department of McDermott

Will & Emery LLP, focusing on labor & employment litigation. She is a 2004 graduate of the Georgetown University Law Center, where she was a 2002 Equal Justice Foundation Fellowship Recipient and, later, staff editor for the



Newly appointed SCAN directors Andrew Freedberg and Clement Lau. Missing is Nadine Gomes Williams.

Journal on Poverty Law and Policy. A long-time advocate for the disadvantaged, Nadine was an America Reads Challenge tutor and Child Abuse Prevention Program coordinator in Syracuse, NY where she got her BA in Public Policy. She then spent a year in Washington as a 'Teach for America' teacher. While in law school, she was

a law clerk at the Youth Law Center, an intern the Children's Defense Fund and a volunteer at the Capital Area Food Bank. As a lawyer, her many pro bono activities include acting on behalf of HIV/AIDS clients and immigrant domestic violence survivors. Nadine is no stranger to the work and mission of SCAN.

**ANDREW FREEDBERG** is a Research Analyst and Portfolio Manager at First Manhattan Co, a 43-year investment advisory firm in New York. Previously he worked as a Financial Analyst at Salomon Brothers. Andrew received his BA from the University of Michigan and his MBA from Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management.

Like Clement, Andrew was "amazed by the people I saw and stories I heard when Lew and I visited the facilities over the summer." Andrew hopes that his term on the Board "will deepen my understanding of the issues people in the communities SCAN serves face and my own empathy for what they have to deal with."

## Positive Choices *from page 1*

her participation in SCAN's Anti-Gang Violence Youth Initiative and other achievements over the last year." She said, "SCAN creates the opportunity for momentum in young people's lives. I was the first female peer leader. I started to help the others and then I realized I was helping myself."

The ripple effect is clichéd but



Violence Prevention Program staff and participants.

real. Eli said, "I don't only take my skills for me. I help my friends who have temper problems. I use those same skills to help them want to go the right way."

And when James was asked where he saw himself in a year, he said without hesitation, "I want to be the next peer leader."

# The SCAN Family at Christmas



Lew Zuchman, SCAN staff and SCAN youth at the annual SCAN holiday gift giving celebration at LaGuardia Memorial House. Over 3000 gifts, provided by SCAN partners and donors, were delivered to SCAN youth this past holiday season.

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