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our voice

Fall 2009

ywca of cortland child advocacy program opens

A ribbon cutting ceremony on August 19 marked the official opening of the YWCA's Child Advocacy Program. Congressman Michael Arcuri, Cortland Mayor Tom Gallagher and Cortland Police Chief Jim Nichols helped program director Rita Wright celebrate the opening. The center is located in Cortland at 19 Church Street and brings together a multi-disciplinary team to provide services to children, and their non-offending family members, who have been victims of physical and/or sexual abuse.

The purpose of the program is to provide a coordinated response to child physical and sexual assault that works to reduce further trauma to the child as well as to increase the chance that carefully coordinated evidence and testimony collection will increase convictions in these cases. In addition, Child Advocacy Programs work as funding conduits that can provide equipment and training to financially lean collaborators in the project, such as police departments and the District Attorney's office. The program is initially funded by an 18 month grant of \$141,000 from the NYS Office of Children and Family Services and a \$50,000 grant from the National Children's Alliance.

This unique, multi-disciplinary team is headed up by Rita Wright, who has directed the YWCA Aid to Victims of Violence program for the past 22 years and involves representatives from a variety of other agencies including Cortland County Child Protective Services, Cortland City Police, New York State Police, Cortland District Attorney's office, SUNY Cortland Police and County Mental Health. The ultimate goal is to improve the ability of law enforcement agencies to build a strong case against the perpetrator which will result in successful prosecution by the District Attorney.

Working with program director Rita Wright is a dedicated group of volunteers from a variety of backgrounds who comprise the advisory committee. Chaired by Jill Hearn, the group includes Jo Caratelli, Micki Cavanaugh, Nancy Dunbar, Dorothea Fowler, Jenna Gregory, Mike Kilmer, Nancy Kroot, Kathy McMahon, Kristen Monroe, Jerry Morrison, Tiffanie Parker and Maggie West. The committee assists Rita in writing and implementing policies and procedures necessary to the smooth operation of the center, as well as promoting mutual cooperation, support and understanding among members of the various organizations they represent.

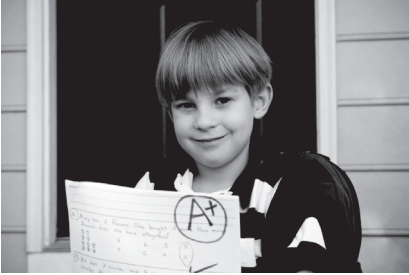


Congressman Michael Arcuri, AVV Program Director Rita Wright, Cortland Mayor Tom Gallagher and Cortland Police Chief Jim Nichols at the ribbon cutting ceremony



One of the many child friendly areas at the center.

bridges for kids success story



Never doubt that **your** support of the YWCA, including BFK makes a huge difference in the lives of the women, children and families in our community. Although the names have been changed, here is a suc-

cess story that will stay in your mind and in your heart.

In our *Bridges for Kids* program children ages 5 to 12 are matched with adult volunteer "special friends". The children and their friends get together weekly to do activities.

Jon, now 10 years old, has been in the Bridges for Kids (BFK) program since the summer of 2003. Mom enrolled Jon because he lacked a positive male role model and the family of three had an income of less than \$10,000 per year, which did not allow for much beyond basic needs.

Jon was first matched with Susan, a SUNY Cortland student who mentored him for nearly 2 years. Susan helped Jon with homework, took him to events like the Pumpkin Fest, helped him sell Boy Scout popcorn, and in general was a special friend. Jon missed her a lot when she graduated and moved away. They still stay in touch.

Jon was then matched with a retired grandfather, who is now providing the positive role model that mom had hoped for. Jack has been mentoring Jon for nearly 2 ½ years. Jon, who had a history of difficulty in school attained the Merit List last year, and is doing even better this year. Jack impresses on Jon that he needs to work for his successes, and always praises Jon for his good work.

To learn more about *Bridges for Kids*, or to volunteer please contact Sara Earl at 607-753-9651.

" alternative gifts" idea

It's not too early to start thinking about your holiday shopping. Why not give a gift that helps others? Use this handy "shopping list" to make a donation to the YWCA of Cortland in honor of that someone special this holiday season. Or how about putting the YW on your wish list?

- ◆ \$5 can purchase 1.5 cups of milk for 1 month for a low income child in preschool
- ◆ \$10 can purchase a warm hat and mittens for a child
- ◆ \$20 can purchase a punch pass for quality day care for children (ages 6 weeks—5 years) for up to 3 hours a day for 2 days in our *Drop In* center
- ◆ \$25 can provide 1 month of mentoring support to a vulnerable child in our *Bridges for Kids* program
- ◆ \$50 can purchase groceries for a family fleeing domestic violence and entering the safe house in the middle of the night

Stop by the front desk of the YWCA at 14 Clayton Ave to make your "purchase" and receive a holiday gift notification card. Or charge your gift by calling 607-753-9651.

child advocacy program wish list

Thanks to all of you who have donated items to help make the center such a welcoming, child friendly environment. Your support plays a critical role in the success of this new, multi-disciplinary approach to assisting child victims of sexual assault and abuse.

The YW has received calls from folks asking what items the center needs. Program Director Rita Wright has put together a "wish list". If you have items to donate, please call the YW at 753-9651 to make arrangements to drop them off at the center on Church Street.

Microwave	Cleaning Supplies
Kitchen Supplies	Children's CDs
Children's Movies	First Aid Kit
Puzzles	Stacking Toys
Rattles	Books
Toy Cars & Trucks	Stickers
UNO	Blocks
Teen Magazines	Art & Craft Supplies
Clocks	Calendars
Cards	Board Games
Crayons	Markers
Coloring Books	"Dress-Up" Box items
Doctor Kits	Dolls (varying ethnicities)
Baby Activity Centers	Stuffed Animals

special thanks

A special thanks to Karen Seibert for mobilizing the members of the Homer Garden Club. Thanks to their efforts what was once just pavement outside the Child Advocacy Program office is now a blooming garden. The members of the club donated their time and plants to make the entrance to the center welcoming and inviting.

We are continuously grateful for the many helping hands that offer assistance to the YWCA in a wide variety of ways. It is thanks to all of you that we continue to meet the needs of the community through the vital programs and services we provide to our friends and neighbors.

So on behalf of the YWCA of Cortland and the women, children and families you help everyday, please accept a round of applause.



Energy Flows Where Attention Goes

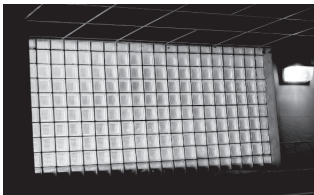
ywca news and updates

◆Welcome to Sara Earl, our new *Bridges for Kids* director. Sara joined our staff on October 19 and brings a wealth of experience and we look forward to working with her.

◆The 7th Annual Pig-N-Par golf tournament, held Friday, August 7, netted \$15,000. Thanks to all our sponsors and golfers who made this event such a success.

◆Childcare Program Director Jami Bistocchi landed a \$30,000 grant from the Health Foundation of Western and Central NY to improve the social and emotional well being of our preschoolers. She collaborated with the Racker Centers and the Cortland Child Development Center, thereby increasing the number of preschoolers that will be reached.

◆Pool users have noticed several infrastructure projects that were completed this summer including removing and replacing the ceiling, lighting, doors and one collapsing block window. The new window not only lets in more light, but blocks the cold air.



Before



After

health and fitness programs

Did you know that the YWCA Health & Fitness programs include:

- Over 25 Fitness & Cycling classes weekly
- Over 20 Water Exercise classes weekly
- Evening Yoga, Pilates, & Tai Chi
- Daytime Pilates
- Adult Karate
- Personal Training
- Women-only Weight Training

There is something for everyone, and any fitness level. All fitness, cycling and water exercise classes run year-round; new participants are welcome to join at any time. The Winter Class Guide will be mailed in mid-December. Check it out!

If I'd known I was going to live this long, I'd have taken better care of myself!

child care grant received

The Osborn room was the setting on August 20, 2009 for a press conference held by Sen. James Seward to present a grant of \$18,000 to the YWCA of Cortland childcare program. About 15 children from the YW's Learning Adventure preschool program were in attendance.

Sen. Seward noted the important impact that early childhood development plays in providing children with a good start in life. In addition, he spoke about the link between quality childcare and the ability of parents to go to work on a daily basis knowing their children are in an environment that is nurturing, developmentally appropriate, safe and stimulating.

Childcare Director Jami Bistocchi and Executive Director Amy Simrell accepted the grant on behalf of the YWCA. The grant will be split between 2 of the 3 licensed preschool programs: Learning Adventure and Here We Grow. These day care programs care for approximately 113 children on a daily basis.

Jami Bistocchi said these funds will help close the gap between the cost of providing child care (about \$171 per week) versus what the YW charges (\$161 per week).



Learning Adventure students look on as Sen. James Seward makes a presentation to Amy Simrell and Jami Bistocchi



YWCA Summer Camp kids express their **thanks** to the Cortland Breakfast Rotary Club for their generous donation that helped fund field trips to the Rosamond Gifford Zoo and the Ithaca Science center. Support like this is vital, especially in these challenging economic times, as we work to continue to offer programs and services to the Cortland community.



Where else can you find so many programs and services under one umbrella?



The **only** drop-in childcare center open to the public

The **only** warm water pool in the county

Model Moms is the **only** comprehensive support program for young moms, providing parenting and life skills training

Aid to Victims of Violence is the **only** rape and domestic violence program in the county, providing 24 hour hotline support

Bridges for Kids is the **only** mentoring program for at-risk children, ages 5-12, serving approximately 500 children annually

Childcare programs that care for 900 children per year

Health & Fitness programs including aquatics, aerobics, dance, cycling, strength training and much more



The YWCA of Cortland is a not-for-profit organization that supports the growth and leadership of women, and girls and helps families with quality programs in childcare, mentoring, wellness, crisis intervention, and social advocacy.
We value all individuals equally, regardless of race or gender.



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