



## btw @ pya

Fall 2007

### **A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR AND PRESIDENT**

Welcome to btw@pya, "by the way at Princeton Young Achievers," a quarterly newsletter to inform the PYA community of supporters and participants about all that's new and noteworthy at our organization! We look forward to sharing this newsletter with you each season, keeping you up to date on what is already an exciting year of learning, growing and achieving at our three learning centers.

Please share your feedback with us, check out our NEW website- [www.princetonyoungachievers.org](http://www.princetonyoungachievers.org), for the latest information, and by all means keep in touch. One of the beautiful lessons that PYA children, volunteers, and staff all seem to learn is that we ALL have something to offer. Perhaps our newsletter will inspire you to wonder - what might I bring to the mix?

It is our hope to continue to share the PYA story with a growing audience of community members who share our belief that every child has the potential to learn, grow, and achieve - and that each of us has an important role to play in the process.

***Pamela Elmi***

***Executive Director***

***Clayton Marsh***

***President, Board of Directors***

### **THE STAFFING STORY**

#### **PYA Welcomes a New Executive Director**

Pamela Elmi has hit the ground running in her role as new Executive Director at PYA. Ms. Pamela Elmi comes to the agency with an impressive history of professional engagement with the Princeton community. Her leadership, enthusiasm for the mission, wide net of community relationships, and organizational skills (a recent article in the Town Topics reported that she is so organized, she doesn't even have a junk drawer!) bode exceedingly well for PYA.

Prior to being appointed to her new role, Ms. Pamela Elmi was Director of Program Development and Facilities Management at the Princeton YWCA. She serves on the Board of Princeton Community Housing. Any interaction will confirm that she is passionate about the Princeton Community and especially about serving the children of PYA.

#### **Staff Raises the Bar on Quality and Diversity**

One of Ms. Pamela Elmi's first tasks has been to staff the three learning centers for this school year according to standards that include meeting state requirements for childcare centers, increasing the number of NJ state licensed teachers, and focusing on diversity in staff development. Our Site Coordinators have either a NJ state teaching license or Graduate level of study in equivalent field.

To prepare for the school year, all staff participated in an orientation which featured presentations from local partner organizations on issues of health and safety for children, such as HiTops, Princeton Healthcare System, Princeton Regional Schools, and Princeton Township Police Department. This is the kind of collaboration that makes for safe, strong, and healthy young achievers!

## **PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

### **Computer Connections**

If you know a school-age child today, you know the kind of excitement that a computer can add to the learning process. Thanks to a grant from the Concordia Foundation, PYA is thrilled to announce a new computer literacy initiative that will "bridge the digital divide" at its learning centers this year.

Using equipment that was donated last year by the Girls Scouts of Montgomery Troop 599, internet service supported by the Princeton Regional Schools and Bristol Myers Squibb, the children at PYA are now able to use the computers for supervised homework research. Dr. Wei-hsing Wang will be training PYA teachers and conducting an internet safety workshop for parents. These are the kinds of "high-speed connections" that PYA knows can lead to learning.

### **"Lights On, Afterschool!" Program October 18th**

As a member of the national Afterschool Alliance ([www.afterschoolalliance.org](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org)), Princeton Young Achievers enjoyed "Lights On Parties" on October 18th. "Lights On Afterschool!" is a community-based, nationwide effort to call attention to the importance of quality afterschool programming for children, families, and communities. PYA children decorated cardboard lightbulbs and Executive Director, Pamela Elmi, will send them to our local Senators in Washington, DC.

### **BEYOND THE CLASSROOM: PYA INSPIRATION WRIT LARGE**

Gracie: A Princeton Premiere for PYA

Princeton Young Achievers got to share in the glow of a local movie premiere, as the motion picture, Gracie, opened at Princeton MarketFair on May 31st and raised more than \$50,000 for PYA programs.

PYA and Gracie were a perfect match in many ways. The film, inspired and produced by the family of Princeton's own Andrew Shue and his Academy Award winning sister Elisabeth Shue, tells the story of a kid who follows her dream, who toughs it out against the odds, and who honors her hero with her life choices. What better message could there be for the kids at PYA, and for all of us? Children who attended the screening were thrilled to meet the film's stars, who were on hand at the theatre to sign Gracie t-shirts, books and posters, and to remind them all that "anything is possible."

### **PYA Discovers (and Shares) A Hidden Treasure**

"Remembering them [the children...], our determination cannot falter --". So read the inscription on a holiday card that was found in the PYA book collection by staff member Tonya Lawrence last spring. Such words would be in the spirit of Princeton Young Achievers no matter who wrote them - but they have become an especially treasured link to history because in fact their author was none other than Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr..

The card, along with a signed first edition of Dr. King's 's (1967) *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?*, and a first edition of "Letter from Birmingham City Jail" (American Friends Service Committee, 1963) appear to have been donated to PYA by Katharine Bretnall, a former member of the Quaker Meeting at Stony Brook, in connection with the efforts of PYA founder, the late Shirley Paris. The MLK treasures are to be proudly displayed at the Princeton Public Library for all to see.

### **WHAT CAN YOU DO @PYA???**

Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer or making a donation, may contact Princeton Young Achievers, 25 Valley Road, Princeton, N.J. 08540. For more information, call (609) 806-4216, or visit: [www.princetonyoungachievers.org](http://www.princetonyoungachievers.org).

### **SPECIAL THANKS...**

to our volunteer website/newsletter team:

Jessica Deutsch  
Sarah Lewis Smith  
Cameron Manning  
Stacey O'Brien

Welcome to our new webmaster: Vidhya Ramesh.

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