

FIVE REASONS TO GIVE. AHRC NYC FOUNDATION





STORM

“He’s learning to stand on his own two feet.”


— RENAE CARR, MOM

AHRC'S CAMP ANNE

Five years ago, Renae Carr put her son Storm on the bus to AHRC's Camp Anne for the first time and cried like a baby. “Our entire family had spent a weekend at the camp in May, and I knew it was a safe, fun environment,” says Renae, “but Storm was only five years old, and this was his first time away from home.” Of course Renae called Camp Anne to be sure he was okay. “Storm answered the phone and said, ‘Hi, mom. I’m fine, mom. Bye, mom,’” she smiles. “Every call for the last five summers has been the same. He’s engaged and having a good time.”

Covering 40 acres in the Berkshire region of New York, Camp Anne has benefited from AHRC New York City Foundation grants for construction and special programs. Every summer, the camp hosts separate sessions for campers with moderate, severe and profound disabilities from age five to seniors. Counselors are with campers 24 hours a day — one-to-one, two-to-one or three-to-one. Sunny days, they’re out boating, horseback riding, swimming or hiking. They’re busy indoors with arts and crafts, cooking and drama. Evenings are for socializing, and that includes music — Storm plays the drums — and dancing.

Playing basketball and going to the pool are Storm’s favorite activities, and this summer he learned to swim. “Every September, he comes home more independent and confident,” says Renae. “I feel we’re moving toward a time when Storm will be able to take care of himself. Camp is doing that for him.”



“I have my
own room.
It’s beautiful.”

— LOUIS PULASKI

AHRC GUARDIANSHIP PROGRAM

Louis loves cars, coffee and his CDs. The van trips he takes to and from his day program in downtown Brooklyn are a high point of his day. “I love the van,” Louis says, “I wash it.” He drinks his coffee black while he reads his morning *Daily News*. At the Dunkin’ Donuts near the AHRC residence where Louis lives, the staff know him by name. They also know him at the local music store, and jazz, rock, Latin or rap is always playing in his room.

“Are you proud of me?” Louis asks the residence staff after he washes the dishes. Yes, he has chores. He also has fun. That’s a priority of the AHRC Guardianship Program, which has received grants from the AHRC New York City Foundation. An AHRC trip to Disney World with his friends and staff from the residence was Louis’s first vacation, and he’s been to a Yankees game in Washington, D.C.

Louis’s life wasn’t always this way. Before he was 20 and the courts named AHRC his guardian, he’d had no schooling and his medical care was inadequate. Louis is now one of several dozen people for whom AHRC is primary guardian or standby guardian. Protecting his health and quality of life and acting on his behalf in legal, housing and emergency matters are AHRC’s responsibilities. Louis’s Guardianship Advocate enrolled him in day and recreational programs, and she never forgets a birthday or holiday. There’s a dinner dance coming up, and she’s helped Louis to buy a suit. Her hope is that his love of cars will lead to a job. His hope, Louis will say, is to do “everything.”



“I know where
I’m going.”

— IDALIZE LIRANZO

AHRC TRAVEL TRAINING PROGRAM

“My daughter Idalize is sweet and friendly. Everybody loves her,” says Idalia Liranzo, “and I’m not saying that because I’m her mother.” Justin Russo, Transition Developer, agrees: “Her determination and her ability to get around her neighborhood by herself are two reasons she was selected for the AHRC Travel Training Program.”

Recently expanded with a grant from the AHRC New York City Foundation, the program teaches the basics of safe travel, travel on public transportation between two set destinations and completely independent travel. Greater independence and community interaction are the program’s goals.

Idalize smiles when she talks about traveling alone. So does Justin. For six months, he and two trainers traveled with her to and from AHRC every day. Using verbal prompts and cues, they helped Idalize remember her route and the things she had to do to get on the train. Now, Idalize leaves her home on West 191st Street and takes the subway to Houston Street on her own. Safety is a top priority. She calls AHRC before she leaves for work and calls her mother when she’s heading home.

There’s only been one mishap. The first time she traveled on her own, a friend suggested a different route. Idalize took it and got lost. So along with her cell phone, Idalize now has a Global Positioning System and a new sense of confidence. “I want to go other places on the train by myself,” she says. Completely independent travel and a job in the community could be next. Travel training has set her on her way.

“AHRC is our family; our support system.”

— SABRETTA ALFORD, MOM

QUEENS CHILDREN'S RECREATION PROGRAM

Saturday may be Jahlexjius's favorite day of the week. Early in the morning, a bus stops by his home and takes him to the AHRC Queens Children's Recreation Program in Woodside. Unlike AHRC children's weekend recreation programs in the other boroughs, Queens receives no government funding and is supported solely by the AHRC New York City Foundation.

Jahlexjius meets 11 other boys and girls ages 5 to 12 at the Weingold Center, and from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. they have a great time. Six counselors make learning and therapy fun with sports, music, dance, games, arts and crafts, creative socialization and day trips. "Jahlexjius loves the playground, and the ladders, sliding board and monkey bars develop motor skills," says Sabretta, his mom and passionate advocate. "I like when he brings home his paintings."

Hugs, kisses and smiles are the way Jahlexjius tells his mom, friends and counselors at the program that he's happy. Autism and an intellectual disability have left eight-year-old Jahlexjius unable to speak. Working with AHRC counselors and his mother, Jahlexjius is developing new skills, becoming more independent and learning to communicate nonverbally. He used to cry when he was hungry. No longer. Now, he stands by his cubby, and the counselors know to help him get his food. "My son can't come home and tell me what's happened at school or if he's made friends," says Sabretta, "but I see the way he smiles and acts when he gets on the bus, and I know he's proud to be part of the program."





“This is my career.
This is where
I want to be.”

— JOSEITO GONZALEZ

AHRC QUALITY TONER CARTRIDGE PROGRAM

Weekday mornings, Joseito is on the M21 bus. He travels from the East 6th Street apartment he shares with his mother and arrives at AHRC on Varick and West Houston streets at 8:45 a.m. sharp. “Got to be on time,” Joseito says, “and got to do what’s best.” He does.

Joseito participates in the AHRC Quality Toner Cartridge Program, which was launched with a start-up grant from the AHRC New York City Foundation. He and his co-workers collect empty toner cartridges donated by organizations in New York City, then rebuild and pack the cartridges for resale. Afternoons are spent in skill-building classes. Observant and focused, Joseito is proud of the job he has had since 2005.

Technology, including the DVDs and high-tech games he buys with his earnings, is Joseito’s passion. He knows each toner cartridge by model number and how to take each one apart, clean it and rebuild it so it’s ready for sale and guaranteed good as new. “The hardest cartridge is the FX3,” he remarks. “You can have trouble taking out the mag rollers; that’s the part that magnetizes the toners.” If the men and women Joseito works with have trouble, they turn to him for advice. He’s earned their respect as a leader, and when a cartridge is finished and perfect, it’s high-fives all around.

AHRC NEW YORK CITY FOUNDATION

The love of friends and family, a safe place to call home, an education, good health and the chance to make a contribution and a living; these are the best things in life. They affirm our humanity and give us meaning. These are the things we all want for ourselves and the people we love.

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities are no different. They want their chance to be the most they can be, to experience the richness of life and to be contributing members of their communities. Along the way, just like you, they'd also love to have some fun.

Storm, Louis, Idalize, Jahlexjius and Joseito have shared their stories with you. With your gift to the AHRC New York City Foundation, many more stories can be told.

The AHRC New York City Foundation is a not-for-profit fund-raising and grant-making entity that works to ensure that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their parents and siblings live their dreams. To further its purposes, the foundation provides important philanthropic support to programs of AHRC New York City.

AHRC New York City offers a wide array of services to help thousands of men, women and children with disabilities lead productive and independent lives. Among these services are:

RESIDENTIAL SERVICES: Hundreds of men, women and children wake up every morning and go to sleep at night in the AHRC residences they call home. Sharing with their peers, doing chores and taking care of themselves, residents learn to make their way and mark in the world.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS: Nearly 1,000 children in four boroughs of New York attend AHRC preschools, elementary and middle/high school. Evaluation, early intervention and center-based programs are helping infants and children to learn and grow.

JOB TRAINING AND PLACEMENT: Every day, more than 1,000 men and women go to AHRC job-training and work programs. They develop more than marketable skills. Doing a good job for a fair wage builds pride and leads to new opportunities. Many of the people trained in AHRC programs go on to jobs in private industry, where they continue to receive support.

CAMP AND RECREATION PROGRAMS: For a week or two every summer, hundreds of children, teens and adults with moderate to profound disabilities get to go away to AHRC's Camp Anne. Adults with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities are welcomed at Harriman Lodge. Year-round, on Saturdays, Sundays and after school, AHRC also offers recreation programs. Time spent on the playground or in the country away from home is more than great fun. It's an opportunity to build confidence and experience a measure of independence.

HEALTHCARE SERVICES: People with intellectual and developmental disabilities often face complex medical issues and fall through the cracks of the healthcare system. Through AHRC, they gain access to medical, clinical, counseling and home-care services and a better quality of life.

SIBLING SERVICES: How do you feel when so much of your parents' time is spent caring for a brother or sister with disabilities? When you see him or her treated badly or ridiculed by peers? It can be hard for siblings to deal with these issues. In AHRC individual, group and family counseling sessions, siblings get to share their feelings and build better family relationships.

Many of these programs receive support from the AHRC New York City Foundation. Your gift to the Foundation can help ensure their continued excellence and growth.

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