



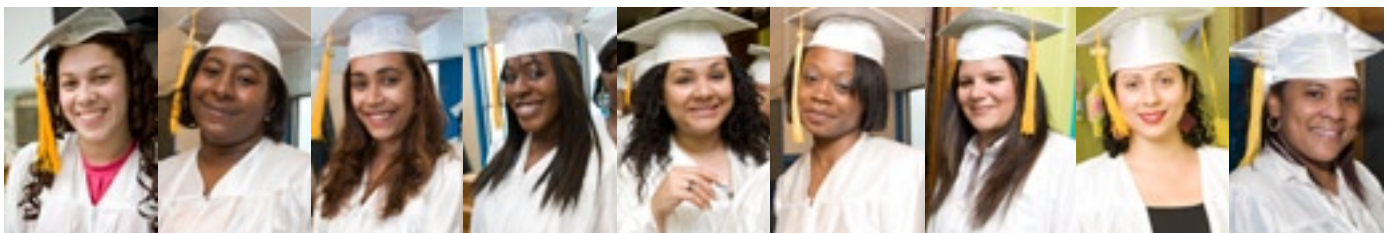
GRACE OUTREACH NEWS

“This is my first time in any school where I feel like my head is above water.”

*- Kowsilla Dukhi
Class of '09*



Grace Outreach has enjoyed many successes in 2009, highlighted by over 100 students taking and passing the GED exam, a successful piloting of a College Prep program with 38 students, and a graduation ceremony in June with 180 people in attendance.



We continue to marvel at how many women come to our doorstep to enroll, and how eager they are to take this important first step in re-establishing a positive academic track for themselves. We continually receive positive feedback from the students on so many different parts of the program, with the most-frequent being:

- how we individualize the curriculum for each student
- that there is a noticeably positive, welcoming feel to the organization
- the female-only student body makes it easier to concentrate and focus
- the teachers and tutors are smart and approachable

Executive Director

In July, Grace Outreach welcomed Andrew Rubinson, who comes to Grace Outreach after a 16 year run launching and leading *Fresh Youth Initiatives* in Washington Heights. Andrew has the proven ability to effectively communicate, engage, and inspire diverse constituents, including Board members, staff, clients, volunteers, community members, and supporters.

He is very familiar with the foundations and corporations which currently support Grace Outreach, and led a \$4 million capital campaign to help FYI construct a new youth center.

Since beginning in July, Andrew is off to an energetic start - jumping into the development and fundraising pieces of the organization, representing GO at a number of meetings around the Bronx, and learning the day-to-day rhythms of the GO program menu.



I'm delighted, honored, and flattered to have this new opportunity to work with so many wonderful people here at Grace Outreach.

I look to build upon the effective program already in place, work closely with the staff, students and Board, and engage a greater number of nonprofit partners around the Bronx.

The teachers and the tutors are particularly outstanding, and I will help us collect and manage even more data about our educational efforts so that we can increase our effectiveness over time.

- Andrew Rubinson





GO College Prep

The College Prep Program is intended to serve individuals who have achieved their GED. The program builds on the diploma to further strengthen students' academic skills. Our College Prep Coordinator, Carol Williams, has developed an innovative and curriculum including intensive preparation for the CUNY Assessment exams, critical writing, and critical thinking.

Our team also provides assistance with preparing college applications, securing financial aid and college counseling. One critical aspect of this program is to eliminate the need for remediation while attending college that would result in a decrease in each student's financial package – a prime reason why so many students drop out of college.

Our College Prep pilot had 38 participants in the past year.

The key statistics include:

- # who applied to college: 36
- # who deferred: 2
- # who consistently attended the college-level courses: 27
- # who completed and submitted financial aid forms: 31
- # who are still enrolled in college in September, 2009: 31

College Prep participants are attending:

- Hostos Community College
- Bronx Community College
- LaGuardia Community College (2-year schools)
- Lehman College
- John Jay College (4-year schools)



“Grace Outreach has helped immensely in preparation for my first year of college. For my GED I just needed to brush up a little bit and it didn’t take me long to pass the exam. But I was surprised that Grace Outreach had the College Preparation class right there for me. Carol covered what I needed for the CUNY skills assessment test and helped me get into Lehman College where I’m a freshman this fall. I’m taking 5 classes this semester while also holding down the tutoring job at GO. I feel like I’m definitely on my way to being a teacher.”

– **Liz Diaz**

2009 GED graduate and GO Class Valedictorian, College Prep participant, and current Tutor



Grace Outreach has been participating in a new collaborative effort called Jobs First. This consortium was put in motion by the JP Morgan Chase Foundation in early 2009, asking different youth-serving organizations in each borough to come together and explore the best ways to reduce the incredibly-high youth unemployment rate.

Here in the Bronx, the group members quickly determined that the best strategy at long-term job creation for local youth was to improve college access, college readiness, and college graduation rates, with a focus on getting young people into the City University of New York system.

In a few short months, our consortium has developed a model structure and curriculum for each organization to use, a sense of the number of students we can serve collectively, and a training track for professionals doing this work at our various organizations (such as GO’s Carol Williams) to share with and learn from each other. While GO is already running a College Prep program with many of these features already in place, we know that it is in our long-term benefit to take part in this larger effort.

The other members of the Jobs First Bronx consortium are:

- Good Shepherd Services
- CUNY Prep
- SOBRO
- FECS
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Phipps Community Development
- New Settlement Apartments

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