

Children's Services **Update**

March 2010



'Divine Intervention' - Program Transforms Parents into Advocates

Through her tears, Parent Advocate Shanene Bryant recalled her feelings during and after her experience with the child welfare system. "After reflection, I saw the activities of ACS to be divine intervention," she said. "I looked into myself and I made the changes that I needed to make."

Bryant was one of nine women who graduated recently from the Child Welfare Organizing

Project training program as part of the Parent Advocate Initiative (PAI). All of the graduates of the parent leadership program were once involved with Children's Services, either as subjects of a child abuse investigation, participants in court-ordered preventive services, or as parents who have been in foster care, and are now able to help other parents navigate the child welfare system. The graduation took place on Friday, March 5, at Philanthropy New York, 79 Fifth Avenue, Manhattan.

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Sonia Galarza Receives Prestigious 2010 Sloan Public Service Award

Sonia Galarza, Department of Juvenile Justice's Director of Programs, was honored on March 9th as a recipient of the prestigious 2010 Alfred P. Sloan Public Service Award. Galarza is one of just six New York City employees to receive the award this year.

The awards, the leading independent honor for City employees, are presented each year by the Fund for the City of New York and recognize outstanding civil servants whose professionalism, commitment and accomplishments embody the efficiency and spirit of New

York City and its government. In addition to DJJ's Sonia Galarza, this year's winners included employees from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Department of Sanitation, Kings County Hospital, Department of Education and the independent Brooklyn Library system.

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Ribbon-Cutting Marks Opening of Catholic Charities Sunset Park Early Childhood Development Center

The opening of five additional classrooms at the Sunset Park Early Childhood Development Center was celebrated on March 11th at a commemorative ribbon cutting by Catholic Charities of Brooklyn and Queens. The 4,000 square-foot of new space was made possible through a \$1.2 million grant from the Robin Hood Foundation and funding provided by the NYC Administration for Children's Services.

The five new classrooms resulting from the expansion now enable the center to meet the educational needs of an additional 114 children. In addition, this expansion allows Catholic Charities to serve over 400 low-income families in Sunset Park.

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Each Wednesday evening (and again on Sunday mornings), a child in foster care who is waiting for a loving, adoptive home is profiled during the news on WNBC 4.

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