

Pathways/Senderos Center

A Publication of Greater New Britain Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Inc.



Walkathon Fundraiser a Tremendous Success!

By Geoff Elterich

The 18th Annual Pathways Walkathon fundraiser was held on Sunday, September 25th. It was a beautiful, crisp autumn morning in New Britain. Almost one hundred people showed up at 10am to show their support for Greater New Britain Teen Pregnancy Prevention, Inc.'s Pathways/Senderos Center. Students, families, staff, board members, and volunteers all came out to enjoy each other's company and walk around the loop in Walnut Hill Park.

Attendees were treated to granola bars, fruit snacks, water, and fresh apples and apple cider from Rogers Orchards. After the 2 mile walk, consisting of two complete laps around the loop, we held a raffle with a number of great prizes. Not everybody won a prize, but we all had a great morning!

This is the most important fundraiser of the year for Pathways/Senderos. This year, we raised about \$14,000 between sponsors and walkathon participants. The walk was also supported by New Britain EMS and the police explorers, who made sure our path was clear of cars. Police Chief James Wardwell was kind enough to show up as well. We consider this a community event, and we consider Pathways/Senderos a community program, so it is great to see a variety of New Britain residents and employees come out to show their support.

It has been 23 years since we opened our Center on Arch Street, and 18 years since we began what was once known as Pedaling for Pathways. We have seen a lot of success in that time, and we plan on continuing our successful service delivery for many years to come. However, none of it would be or will be possible without the generosity of our friends throughout the community. We truly appreciate your continuous support. The boys and girls we serve, as well as their families, are forever changed for the better because of that support. Thank you.



Students enjoyed the walk on this beautiful morning



The New Britain Community came out to support Pathways/Senderos!

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A Letter from the Directors

Dear Friends,

As the new school year begins we are reminded each and every day of the importance of the work we do. Each afternoon at Pathways is filled with excitement and happiness. Despite what hardships our children may endure they come to Pathways filled with enthusiasm. The children know that Pathways is a place where they can feel safe and cared about.

The energy that is felt here is a true testimony to the hard work of our staff, Board of Directors and volunteers. Without their support and dedication, Pathways would not be what it is today. What started out as a small coalition exploring ideas to combat teen pregnancies in New Britain has now evolved into a thriving program with documented results, providing some of New Britain's neediest and vulnerable children with hope and much needed support.

We know that the comprehensive and intensive services

provided at Pathways make a real difference in the lives of our children. Our data and results drive our work on a daily basis. 100% of our participants graduate from high school, 81% of these graduates go on to higher education and only three pregnancies have been created in the more than 20 years the program has been in existence. We are very proud of the program's success and even more proud of the children here at Pathways.

We look forward to the future with great confidence and enthusiasm. With the ongoing support of the community and our supporters, we know that together we can make a difference in the lives of children in New Britain for years to come.

Heather Mills
Nick Jakubowski
Co-Executive Directors

Check out our web site www.pathways-senderos.com
for the latest news, photos and information about events.

Thanksgiving Wish List

Thanksgiving is one of our favorite times of the year! Spending time with family and eating a delicious, plentiful meal are traditions that everyone should have the opportunity to partake in. Unfortunately, many of our families are unable to afford a true Thanksgiving dinner without assistance. For the past several years, wonderful supporters like you have been able to provide that assistance, and we are hoping you will be able to do so again! On Monday November 21st, we will be providing Pathways/Senderos families with Thanksgiving dinner items.

For this Thanksgiving, we are looking for donations of any food items, especially non-perishables. We need **turkeys, stuffing, potatoes, cranberry sauce, canned vegetables, gravy, rolls, desserts and juices.** **Grocery store gift cards** are also welcome.

Donations must be received by Monday, November 21st. Call Heather Mills at (860) 229-2776, or email hmills@snet.net. Thank you for making Thanksgiving memorable for our Pathways/Senderos families!



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Awesome Summer Activities!



Josiah, Nazir, and Eli enjoying the inflatable flamingo!

Our recreational field trips serve as a reward and as motivation for our students. If they are committed to the program and they are committed to their school work throughout the year, they are able to go on the field trips.

As we neared the end of the fiscal year, June 30th, we had some extra funds in our budget. Since we were required to spend these funds before the new fiscal year, we decided to take our participants on several field trips. It pays to be budget conscious!

Last year we visited Nomad's Outdoor Adventure, a ropes course in South Windsor. All our students loved it so we decided to go again. Students climbed high into the sky and crossed rope bridges and other fun obstacles. Some of our students were brave enough to do the most difficult courses. They crossed bridges and platforms 60 feet up in the air! The zip lines remain everyone's favorite part and we hope to be able to do this again next year.

Lake Compounce is another one of our favorite field trips. It is close by and a lot of fun so whenever we have the funds during the summer, we try to visit at least once. Our students rode all of the roller coasters and bumper cars and they ate kettle popcorn and pizza. It's every kid's dream! Hopefully we can go back during October for their Haunted Graveyard, an event that has become tradition for us over the years.

Another traditional field trip is to our friend and board member Kathleen's house at Bashan Lake. She has a beautiful house on the lake where our kids swam, played volleyball, and enjoyed the beautiful weather. We were also treated to a delicious lunch. Kathleen cooked burgers, dogs, and fresh corn on the cob. We ended the day with ice cream sundaes and Kathleen's home-made whipped cream! We always look forward to visiting her and we can't thank her enough.

We also frequently visited another friend's house this summer. Marsha has volunteered at our Center for years and starting last year, she has opened her home and her pool to our participants in the summer. Once a week, we took a van full of kids to her house in Southington and spent the afternoon swimming and snacking on the food Marsha and her husband Fred provided. We are so grateful for her hospitality!

Swimming is a favorite activity of our participants so we made sure to give them plenty of opportunity to do so. We went to AW Stanley Park almost every day when the weather permitted. Our kids went swimming, hiked around the park, played basketball, and a new favorite activity, volleyball. We purchased a volleyball net and ball so we could bring it with us on our trips. We also went to Hammonasset Beach and spent the day swimming, playing beach volleyball, and burying each other in the sand.

Possibly our favorite trip this summer was to Brownstone Exploration and Discovery Park in Portland, CT. This was our first time at Brownstone, but hopefully not our last. Brownstone is a water park set in one of Portland's historic quarries. We visited on a beautiful day and everybody had a blast. Our students spent the day swimming and enjoying the many different activities. There were several ziplines, one of which starts on top of a 65 foot cliff and ends in the water below. There is a 100 foot water slide, a rope swing, and a wide variety of floatables that kids could climb and bounce on. A few of our participants went kayaking, and the bravest kids jumped from the 20 and 25 foot cliffs into the water! To top it all off, on the way home we stopped for Italian ice from Vecchitto's in Middletown.

At the end of the summer, we celebrated by grilling hot dogs and making tie-dye shirts. We were helped greatly by our summer intern and current academic tutor, Diego Peralta. Diego is a Pathways graduate and formed an instant bond with our students. It turns out he's a great hot dog chef too!

Over the years we have seen firsthand the benefit these trips and special events provide. They are fun, memorable occasions that keep the children closely connected with the program and each other. They bring us all closer together and they encourage our boys and girls to continue to work hard throughout the year. This year was very special because we were able to take a few more trips than we have in the past few years. We truly believe that the positivity from these trips and the summer overall have carried over into the school year. We're already thinking about activities for next year!



Pathways at Brownstone Park



A game of volleyball at the beach

More Summer Activities



Fun at Bashan Lake!



Taking in the view at Bashan Lake



Senior Natsalla admiring her tie-dye



Pathways Tie-Dye Workshop!

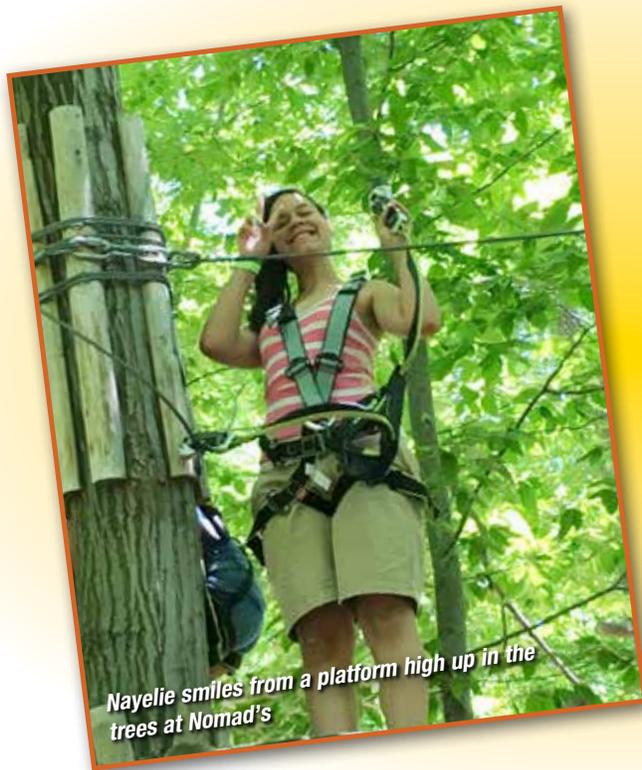


Pathways at Lake Compounce

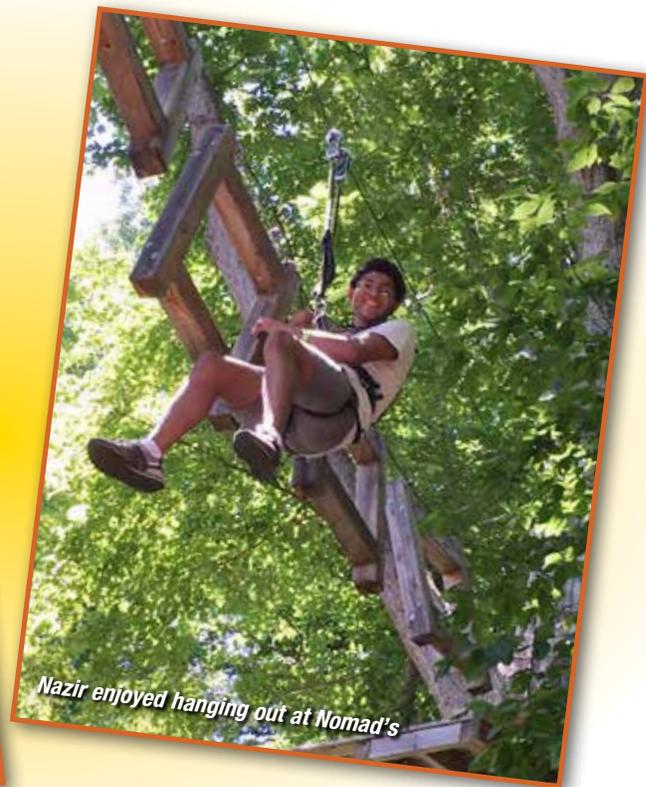


Group jump into Marsha's pool!

Nomad's Summer Fun



Nayelie smiles from a platform high up in the trees at Nomad's



Nazir enjoyed hanging out at Nomad's

A Cycle of Helping

By Alexis Rodriguez

At the Pathways/Senderos Center, we encourage youth to give back to their community and help others. Students assist each other with school work, cleaning up and other tasks. They rely on their peers for advice, however big or small. It is a way of building community and positive relationships with their peers. This is a testament to the home-away-from-home environment we have fostered at the center. This academic year we will place a special emphasis on community engagement and civic responsibility. Students are fortunate to interact with volunteers on a regular basis and receive various opportunities due to the generous donations we receive from supporters. While we help them become self-sufficient adults, we also want them to understand the value of giving back. It is a wonderful sight to see former students coming back to give their time to the new crop of students. We want our students to think of ways to give back to the broader community as a group. It is a way of developing skills such as team work, planning, and communication.

Students engage in group discussions where they can bring up issues that are of interest to them. We also encourage students to explore these issues in-depth as well as learn about different topics that may not directly impact them. Students learn about how ordinary people can influence change through commitment and collaboration. We will begin brainstorming ideas on what efforts our students want to make in regards to volunteering. It is important for them to realize the positive impact they can have on the lives of others when they decide they want to help. Learning about civic responsibility in general will teach kids that they have an active stake in the community that they live, learn and work in. It will also help them find and understand what causes are of importance to them. These are vital skills and knowledge areas for participating in a democracy.



Backpack Project

By Geoff Elterich

It is imperative that students start the school year prepared to learn. Numerous studies show that when a child starts the year behind his or her peers, that child stays behind. Many things can prevent a student from being prepared. A lack of proper school supplies is an obstacle too many students face. This is a problem we have tried to address for several years now.

Many of our participants oftentimes do not have basic necessities, from notebooks and pencils to deodorant and toothpaste. They are at a distinct disadvantage, so for the past few years we have provided all of our participants, and some of their younger siblings, with new backpacks filled with school and hygiene supplies. This Backpack Project, as it has come to be known, has provided great assistance to our families who often struggle financially. This project helps put our students on equal footing as their more well off peers and increases their chances of reaching their full potential.

We are grateful to everyone who donated supplies and money to assist our program and our students. Once again, Marshall's and Ocean State Job Lot were very helpful in assisting with our purchase of all backpacks and supplies. Without the support of individuals and organizations throughout the community, this project would not be successful. It is vital to the success of our participants that they receive these supplies, so we truly appreciate the support.

When our participants receive their backpacks they know that people care about them, and that feeling carries them a long way. Thank you to everyone who helped make this project a success!



Parents arrive to the Center to pick up backpacks



This year we had extra food for families as well

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Student Spotlight

Name: Syed Ali

Grade: 9th

School: CREC Medical Professions Academy, New Britain

Hobbies: Listening to music; watching crime tv shows, including my favorite show, Quantico (highly recommend it); hanging out with friends; playing badminton.

Future career: I have many careers that I am considering as of right now, but my top four options are Anesthesiologist, FBI Agent, Cardiologist, and Microbiologist.

College/university you hope to attend: I hope to attend Stanford University because of its astounding campus, its very low acceptance rate (which shows only the best make it in) and its successful medical school, which I hope to attend after attaining my baccalaureate degree.

You participated in a special medical program this summer. Can you describe it?

This summer I attended a 6 week Jumpstart Doctors Academy at UConn, Greater Hartford campus. For a majority of the time I was trained to take the ACT and taught how to score high with strategies that were efficient and accurate. Additionally, we increased our vocabulary acquisition and learned new principles. Besides that, we had a mentoring session with a UConn medical student. She described student life to us from her own personal experience, and she taught us the physiology of our brains and the illnesses associated with mental wellness. After 6 weeks, there were many cases where I applied the skills I picked up, and I also had a sense of confidence knowing what I will encounter in the future.

You also won an award recently. Can you describe that?

I took part in an activity at the New Britain Museum of American Art called the "New Britain Heist." With the support of the museum, North Oak NRZ, and the FBI, they set up an entire crime scene for kids to solve. The goal was to find the culprit who stole a piece of art, and to find the "stolen" artwork. After we solved the case, we were given an opportunity to participate in an essay competition. I ended up placing first, winning the grand prize of \$200. I even beat a high school senior who took 2nd place. Ultimately, this experience exposed some students to a wide variety of different career fields. When I saw what I could accomplish, I felt qualified for many different careers.

This is Syed's fourth year with Pathways/Senderos. His older brother graduated in 2014. Syed is a talented, friendly, and motivated individual who will undoubtedly continue to do great things in school and life. Syed is the perfect representation of a Pathways student and we are very proud of all his accomplishments!



Intern/tutor Diego Peralta with Syed Ali at Brownstone this summer

Pathways Meets a World Renowned Fashion Designer!

Earlier this year, our students visited the New Britain Museum of American Art to meet fashion designer Ruthie Davis. She was very warm and welcoming towards our students, and the fact that she was born and raised in New Britain made our students even more receptive to her story. They were amazed that someone born right down the street could become a globe-trotting fashionista!

Several of our students who are interested in fashion had some great questions for her and she was happy to oblige. With the help of a slideshow displaying her many designs, Ruthie detailed her journey through the fashion world. She worked for several different companies before venturing out on her own. After earning her Bachelor's degree at Bowdoin College, she went on to earn her MBA in Entrepreneurship from Babson's Olin Graduate School of Business. From there she held executive positions at Reebok, UGG Australia and Tommy Hilfiger. Finally, ten years ago, she achieved her dream of starting her own fashion line, launching RUTHIE DAVIS in 2006. Her specialty is designer boots and our students had fun playing with some of the prototypes.

Ruthie emphasized the hard work and perseverance she needed to get where she is today and she encouraged all of our students to follow their dreams. Our students felt a deep connection with their fellow New Britain native and it was a very enlightening experience overall. We are very grateful to Ruthie for taking the time to talk with us and to New Britain Museum of American Art for hosting the event.



Pathways students Jordan, Nesharae, Laneyshka, Elizabeth and Jaylene meet fashion designer Ruthie Davis

