



## Letter from our founder

Volume 3

Hello everyone,

It's a time for thanking people since it's just around Thanksgiving (even if you don't get this until after Thanksgiving!) and I'm in the mood to do a lot of thanking. There are so many people who do things at Kids Helping Kids and for Kids Helping Kids and I'm not sure everybody knows about all the work that goes on around here. People in New Jersey don't know about the people in New York and so on and so on. My letter and this newsletter is going to be about saying thank you and telling a lot of great stories about what people have been doing for Kids Helping Kids.

This year has been a tough one for me medically, but I keep fighting and I'm hopeful. I appreciate all the people around me that have worked even harder because of it (you know who you are). For all the volunteers who work so hard and sometimes get turned down or don't get listened to, let me just say, keep fighting and be hopeful because Kids Helping Kids has done great things for kids who can be back with their friends, trying to live a "normal" life thanks to you. And to all you parents and teachers and friends who have to remind us, and drive us and stay late and cheer for us, thank you for all the extra time and encouragement. We couldn't do it alone.

If you look back to 1997 and 1998, it would be hard to imagine how much we've grown since then. My friends and I were in 10th grade and now most of us are in college or have just graduated. That's pretty amazing. And even more amazing is how many are still involved with Kids Helping Kids in some way.

Have a great holiday season,

Sincerely,  
Mischa

## High School/College Clubs

### Montclair High School

Penny King

My job is to help coordinate the Montclair High School club with Kids Helping Kids headquarters. Since we're so close, we're often involved in coordinating ideas for fundraisers and to help with the development and execution of national campaigns. We've been very busy this past month with a flower bulb event and a terrific bracelet beadathon with a new bead store in town. We've got great support not only from all the volunteers, but from our adult volunteers as well.

Julian Canha

I'm thrilled to be part of the club at Montclair High School and was instrumental in getting it made official. The two projects that mean the most to me are the Art Card collection and the hospital visits. It's so meaningful to go the hospital and see the kids who you're working to help...it makes all the difference in the world. They're so glad when we're there. That makes all the other work really worth doing.

The second thing that's so important to me is the Art Cards. I've been helping to produce the cards, and distribute them.

*continued on pg. 2*

To learn more about Kids Helping Kids, a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, visit our website at [www.kidshelping.org](http://www.kidshelping.org)

Donations are gratefully appreciated:  
Kids Helping Kids, Inc., 229 Midland Avenue, Montclair, NJ 07042

# Look What We've Done Look What We've Done

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## High School/College Clubs

Montclair High School *continued from pg. 1*

It's close to home for me because my younger brother Justin, has drawn some of the cards for the last two years. What's remarkable about that is that Justin is autistic and yet he has an amazing artistic talent. These cards mean a lot to Justin, to my family, to Kids Helping Kids and to me.

## Montclair Kimberly Academy

Kristen Rode

I became involved in Kids Helping Kids one year ago after reading about the organization in the newspaper. My heart was moved by the ambitions of Mischa and Kids Helping Kids. I admired Mischa's devotion to helping others and I wanted to help spread the word to get more people involved in reaching out.

I worked with the administration at my school (MKA) in conjunction with Mischa, to organize an assembly where Mischa came in to tell his story. When Mischa came onto the stage that day, he captured the attention of all four hundred and fifty people present. Seventy people approached Mischa and me to express their interest in becoming involved. I was told by faculty and administrative members that they had never seen an assembly move so many people as this one had. I immediately responded to this interest by working with my school to establish a Kids Helping Kids club. This was no easy feat, but despite what I had to overcome, the club is now official.

## Leaving the parental units? Talk to Brielle

Now, in my senior year of college, I am serving as the Kids Helping Kids college and high school coordinator. One of KHK's current goals is to branch out to other schools – both high schools and colleges – and I am helping to facilitate that goal.

Just as Mischa started the Kids Helping Kids chapter at NYU, you can start one wherever you are. Josh Spivak is in the in final phase of making the Kids Helping Kids club official at the University of Maryland. Ryen Lopresti, a founding member, now in transaction support at Ernst & Young, lives in NYC and is organizing a club at Albert Einstein Medical School.

Our hats are also off to Maya Leeds, Zoe Spivak and Zoe Farris who are working on a KHK database that will include high schools around country. Here's to getting the word out! If you are interested in starting a KHK chapter at your school, please do not hesitate to email me with any questions or concerns. My email address is [bmadej@wesleyan.edu](mailto:bmadej@wesleyan.edu). I'd be happy to correspond with you about anything from starting a chapter and gaining club status to dealing with hospital administrators to planning different fundraising events or anything else that is on your mind. I'm thrilled to be working with Kids Helping Kids once again this year, and I know that if we work together, we can all make a difference!

## The "You Never Get Thanked" List

Toni West: For every design and every change we make without one hint of a complaint

Bill Shepard: Web Man extraordinaire!

Mr. Clifford: Words can never express how important you are to Mischa and KHK

Betty Strauss: A nurse with a whole different calling!

The Printer's Place: For putting up with our constant pleading for just one more little thing

Steve Aspero: Our very own legal eagle

Rebecca Muller: Who makes sure all our ducks are in a row

The Parents: Too many to name, too precious for words

And of course, Our Donors: Year after year: angels, every one of you

# Look What We've Done Look What, We've Done Look What We've Done

## Independent Events Support Kids Helping Kids

So many great fundraisers this year! And not just in KHK clubs, but also from individuals and groups who came together to help the kids!

### Manalapan

The Schaffer boys (with Mom and Dad) were busy helping Kids Helping Kids in South Jersey. They had a Video Drive\* that went to Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and Children's Specialized Hospital. Then Dad donated a LOT of tulip bulbs that were planted at Montclair High School. The plants will be sold in the spring. (Check back with us about getting bulbs, plants and flowers for your fundraisers). These amazing folks (remember the story about Eric's pet therapy dog in the last newsletter?) also did gift wrapping at Barnes and Noble.

\*Thanks to Maya Leeds and Danielle Rode for labeling, categorizing and boxing hundreds of videos!

### Francis Lewis High School, NY

A Future Leader, Choi Yi, took the initiative and visited Beth Israel North after running a Video Drive on her own. She brought a group from the Future Leader's Club from her school and spent the afternoon teaching the kids in the hospital how to do origami.

### Garage Sale for Kids Helping Kids

Another Ridgewood resident (a little younger than Lisa) took up the challenge and collected funds during his Spring Garage Sale for Kids Helping Kids. Cole Patterson along with his friends, was able to sell "gently used" items (toys were the biggest hit) to his neighbors and, at the same time, did a great job selling them on the idea of young volunteers helping kids in need.

### Naturally Yoga, A Natural Fit

A time of giving and divine sharing was enjoyed by everyone who attended a benefit at Naturally Yoga in Glen Rock, NJ. A long-time supporter of Kids Helping Kids, owner and teacher Sheryl Edsall, hosted a two hour class of heart soaring backbends taught by Damien, followed by a pot-luck supper and musical accompaniment by our ever faithful friend Daniel McBride (see Walk'N Roll). Namaste!

### Nutley, New Jersey

Middle school student, Michael Riccio, a member of People Student Ambassadors, organized the group to collect videos for the KHK Valentine Video Drive.

### Ridgewood High School, NJ

Lisa Nowinski took on the huge task of bringing Kids Helping Kids to Ridgewood High School's Project Interact. The group embraced the first project which was a Kids Helping Kids Heart Bracelet Bead A Thon done in association with Jolene Star, owner of the town's wonderful Bazaar Star Beadery. The event drew six times more volunteers than expected and the bracelets are selling better than ever expected. Another great benefit was the tremendous amount of news coverage Kids Helping Kids got in the local media. Great job Lisa and the Ridgewood team!



# Look What We've Done Look What We've Done Look What We've Done

## Very Special Kids We've Helped

### Qadir Ambrose, 12

Qadir lived through all the frightening things that a kid lives through when diagnosed with a brain tumor – hospitals, tests, operations, chemotherapy, radiation, being alone and scared – and they come home to a changed life. Working with the Brain Injury Association of New Jersey, Kids Helping Kids was able to give Qadir something to help him feel a little bit more normal again and get him back out into the world again...a bicycle.

### Kenya Wright, 13

What could be more terrifying than being awoken and finding your house engulfed in flames? When Kenya Wright found herself in that horrifying situation, she had to do something few of us could possibly imagine – she had to jump out her window to save her life. In doing so, she sustained a spinal chord injury. Now confined to a wheelchair, Kenya needs a ramp to get into her house, but her family had no money to pay for it. That's where we came in. Kids Helping Kids bought Kenya a portable ramp and now she can work on putting her life back together.



### Stefan Henry, 14

Stefan has a very positive attitude about life. Even though a car accident made him a quadriplegic, he maintains a great outlook. He lives in a small house with a small lawn. When we first talked to Stefan and his family, we talked about giving him a ramp, but that would have taken up the entire lawn and there are other kids in the family. So we decided to wait a little longer, raise some more money and instead, got Stefan a porchlift, which takes up much less room. Stefan is very grateful to the many volunteers who contributed to this much more costly solution, and he wants everyone to know how dramatically it has changed his life forever.

## “Friday Night Fever” Brings Our Mission to Life

Another on-going activity our volunteers have been enjoying is Friday Night Fever with the kids at Children's Specialized. Every Friday Night Fever event is a different adventure – a trip to the mall, the Haunted Trail on Halloween etc. These are great opportunities for our volunteers to provide companionship to the kids who've been affected by catastrophic illness or injury.



### Sarah Jameison, 17

Sarah Jameison, now 17 years old, had never been just your basic teenager. Gifted with an extraordinary voice, Sarah loved to sing and had taken singing lessons for many years. But one terrible day in 2003, she was in a terrible car accident that left her with severe brain injuries. After spending many months in the Weisman Children's Rehabilitation Hospital, Sarah went home, but she went home changed. The accident left her with severe weakness in the nerve controlling vocal chord motion. She could no longer sing in the same way as before. When KHK heard this, we decided that helping give Sarah back what was so much a part of her life before, would be very much true to our mission, so we funded six months of voice lessons for Sarah...a wonderful gift for a wonderfully talented teen.

# Look What We've Done

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## Family Fun With A Heart

Thanksgiving is always a wonderful time to gather the family around and count our blessings with our loved ones. Some of us watch the big game, some watch old home movies – we all have our family traditions. At the Patterson home this year, a new tradition was inaugurated – a tradition filled with heart and fun and a lot of paint! The Pattersons gathered around the Thanksgiving table and decided to have a paint fest for the KHK Art Card Collection. These Master Works may or may not make next year's collection, but it was great fun and a terrific idea for a family gathering.



## We Hit the Airwaves!

No, it wasn't your imagination, not "War of the Worlds" all over again. That really was our very own Laura Willcox and Brielle Madej being interviewed on WTQB Radio for "The Teen Show." A brand new show dedicated to positive things teens are doing in the world, the program director found us and asked us to be one of their first featured guests. Brielle and Laura, you were great!

## The 411

*Wherein we give voice and snaps to volunteers who are doing great things and hanging in above and beyond the call...*



Molly Zimmermann and Simone Calbi at the NASW conference booth

## The National Association Of Social Workers Conference Spreads Awareness

Molly Zimmermann and Simone Calbi, founding members and veterans of KHK hospital visits – among so many other events – had the extraordinary opportunity to attend the National Association of Social Workers Conference in Atlantic City to represent Kids Helping Kids. They set up a KHK booth and presented to Social Workers, counselors, teachers etc., explaining what Kids Helping Kids can do for their clients. The response was tremendous and the girls were able to make connections with professionals from agencies that we are certain to work with in the future. The importance of helping social workers, child life specialists, discharge personnel etc. understand how important Kids Helping Kids can be to a child or teen who is moving back into a life that is completely different than the one he or she knew, is critical. Molly and Simone were able to present our mission of being there when funds and insurance aren't, to provide the mobility equipment to get kids back into the world of their peers. More than one comment was overheard about them as well, alluding to how impressive our two presenters were, "restoring people's faith in the youth of America."

## Corporate Presentation, Learning To Raise Funds

This year, a number of the volunteers – with Mischa at the helm – had the chance to participate in a high level presentation to Manny and Andrea Schragger, owners of the Meadowlands Consumer Center. Their goal was to present the attributes of Kids Helping Kids in a formal way in the company's boardroom, using a PowerPoint presentation to help raise funds for KHK in a corporate setting. This was designed to be a run-through, but was taken very seriously with many rehearsals beforehand – many thanks to Mr. Clifford for all his time and guidance. The actual pitch was videotaped and critiqued. With a lot of excellent input by the Schraggers, who do this type of coaching for a living, the volunteer team did an excellent job presenting the organization and received invaluable feedback for improving even further. Our volunteers were overwhelmed with what they learned from an almost real-world experience. Lizzy Star said, "The presentation was an eye-opening experience. I never really knew how much work goes into a pitch to a potential corporate sponsor. Before the presentation, we worked hard composing what we wanted to say, but it's always more difficult to present in a boardroom than in a low-pressure practice situation. Luckily, Mr. and Mrs. Schragger were the perfect audience: they gave helpful, detailed suggestions on how to improve our presentation. These suggestions will help KHK perform successful pitches in the future and will also help each individual presenter, myself included, with any sort of public speaking we will ever encounter." Michael Rey, now a Senior at Harvard noted, "It was amazing to go in front of a corporation and present our ideas. It really made me feel like we were a professional organization- not just a bunch of kids anymore. Everyone did their part, and we all listened to and learned from each other. Overall, I think that giving this presentation took Kids Helping Kids to a new level."

# Look What We've Done

## Look What We've Done

## Look Who We've Helped

### The First Annual Kids Helping Kids Walk 'N Roll To Benefit Children's Specialized Hospital

"Before Children's Specialized, people never saw me as a person." One sweet little girl summed it up in that simple sentence as she walked determinedly on her hot pink crutches with a group of new friends. The place: the Jersey Gardens Mall. The time: October 17, 2004. The event: The First Annual Kids Helping Kids Walk 'N Roll To Benefit



The Walk'N Roll was hosted by popular radio DJ, John Bell of Z100's Z Morning Zoo and the Z100 Party Patrol. Besides the 2-mile walk, the event featured a fashion show featuring Miss Latina New Jersey and Miss Teen Latina New Jersey plus benefit concerts by an extraordinary local New Jersey high school jazz band and a very special performance by Daniel McBride, 13 Hands.

The Kids Helping Kids volunteers worked for months before the event signing up volunteers to walk, getting people to pledge donation money, organizing jobs, trying to drum up support and contributions, all culminating in a fun filled day that exceeded everyone's expectations.

Children's Specialized Hospital (CSH) Foundation, an affiliate member of the Robert Wood Johnson Health System.

Hundreds of teens, kids and adults gathered at the Mall for this very special event that was planned to help the occupational therapy program at CSH.

Children's Specialized holds a special place in Mischa's heart since he spent four months there after his yearlong hospitalization in 1997. As the largest pediatric rehabilitation hospital in the country, Children's Specialized offers an excellent occupational therapy program that helps a kid get ready to reenter the world after an illness or injury has shattered his or her life.



# Look What We've Done



## Children's Brain Tumor Foundation/Big Apple Circus

Every year, the Children's Brain Tumor Foundation holds a very meaningful event for their kids in association with the Big Apple Circus (Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center, NYC) that brings joy to kids who often live lives of sadness and hopelessness. They bring thousands of kids to see the circus. We have supported this event in the past and this year, Kristen and Danielle Rode, put on an unbelievable concert starring guitarist Mike Rayburn in New Brunswick, NJ. They raised enough money for KHK to send 20 kids to the Big Apple Circus. Kristen and Danielle (and don't forget mom, Laura) worked soooo hard for soooo long to bring the concert to life, they deserve a round of applause. The money also goes to supporting a telephone support group for teens (and their siblings) surviving brain tumors.

# Social Entrepreneurial Efforts

## Montclair Bejewels the Town!

Once again, the Kids Helping Kids Heart Bracelet made its way onto the wrists of the most fashionable folks in Montclair, thanks to the efforts of the Montclair High School Flagship Chapter. Working with Montclair Beadworks, the volunteers held a Bead A Thon (see Ridgewood!) and proved they could run a social entrepreneurial project, taking into account the cost of goods, marketing and selling. We'll get back to you with the final numbers.

## Newark – Not to be Left Behind!

Not wanting to be left in the dust, Kids Helping Kids whirlwind of an intern from Kean University, Ysaura Fernandez, put together a Bracelet-thon of her own, with a twist. She and her friends made bracelets for a bridal party! Keep it in mind!

## Art in the Park

Kids Helping Kids Holiday Art Cards / And even more bracelets!

Now a wonderful tradition, Kids Helping Kids participated in Montclair's Art in the Park Festival, showcasing our – yup! – Kids Helping Kids Heart Bracelets, and our beautiful Holiday Art Card Collection. If you're interested in our stunning bracelets, go to our website, [kidshelping.org](http://kidshelping.org) to see these in living color. If you'd like to submit Art for Cards next time around, please contact us.



## Bloomingdales or Bust!

Kids Helping Kids was proud to be part of the Bloomingdale's Shopping Benefit event. Held in 4 stores in New Jersey, KHK received a donation every time someone bought something and mentioned our name.

We know you all did your best that day, because the amount spent was enough to bring us to the level required to collect our donation. Thank you KHK shoppers!



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