



BHGA Newsletter

Summer 2012

Our Mission ~ The Benton Harbor Girls Association is a non-profit corporation dedicated to enhancing educational opportunities for middle schools girls in the Benton Harbor area. Our goal is to provide an academy for middle-school girls that offers superior education in a safe and nurturing environment.

From the Desk of the Director

By Dr. Patricia Ann Quattrin Ph.D.

The Benton Harbor Girls Academy can count the second school year as even more successful than the first, and that was not an easy accomplishment. Academically, our girls continue to prove how a non-graded, individualized learning environment and a sensitive teacher can increase a student's confidence about her learning ability and thus, exponentially, her academic skills. Girls who started our academy as fourth graders who did not know their multiplication facts mastered them within three weeks. Girls who struggled to read at a first grade reading level were reading fourth grade books to each other and to the class pet, Mandy, by the end of the year. When a girl did not understand a word used by the teacher, Office Manager, or Mistress of the Academy, she was sent to the dictionary to learn the meaning and then to write a few sentences correctly using the word. Before long, the girls were using these words in conversation.

The donation of a Rosetta Stone Language Program and two I-Pads, and the extension of the building wireless into our classroom, enabled the girls to study Spanish and to learn how to search the web for research papers and projects. We cannot thank our supporters enough for providing these gifts and many other materials for our classroom and our office.

Because of the building in which the Academy is presently housed, we could only educate five students this past year, although five more girls were waiting to be accepted. The Corporate Board struggled with and prayed about how to remedy this situation. God once again heard our prayers. We learned recently that a modular type building is being donated to us. When this building is set up on our property, also donated to BHGA several years ago, we will be able to accept and teach many more girls. Of course, it will take a bit of money to move the building to the property and set it up, but I know God will also assist this to happen, in Her Own Time.

Keep February 9th, 2013, open, as the Women's Service League has chosen the Benton Harbor Girls Association as the recipient of their yearly Benefit Ball. All our friends and supporters will receive an invitation to join the WSL in a gala celebration of the work that the BHGA does for middle-school girls. We thank WSL for this honor of being the beneficiary of their philanthropy.

Visit our new website, tell us what you think, and what ways you could donate your time or resources to our mission.

www.bentonharborgirlsassociation.org

Plan to attend our Fifth Annual Dinner Fundraiser, Sunday, October 28, at Lake Michigan Hills Golf Club. For information call 269.925.9922 or 314.517.2058.

Imagine Concert

By Mary Ann Lischer

The students of the BH Girls Academy were at their best on May 16 when they presented their spring concert "IMAGINE" under the guidance and direction of Charlene Jones, with assistance from Angelique Bell. More than fifty friends and parents attended and were wowed by the quality and professionalism the girls exhibited in their performance. The beauty of their voices amazed all in attendance as each of the students soloed and proudly showed off their skills. Any and all could have been contestants on "America Has Talent." Benton Harbor Girls Academy certainly has talent!

The show opened with a lovely song written by our own Miss Charlene, "He lives in me." Between each song, one of the girls presented a "Moment in Musical History" to highlight a great musical writer or performer. Miss Charlene and the "Charlettes" then did Ella James proud with their rendition of "At Last". Ella couldn't have done it better! Other songs presented were versions of "Let It Be" and "The Rose." The show finished with a tribute to the Jackson 5 and Michael Jackson with "I'll Be There" and "Thriller," choreographed by Miss Angelique, which had everyone in the audience wanting to get up and dance. Our girls can really move!

After the concert, everyone enjoyed delicious refreshments provided by many of the Academy's volunteers. The fellowship between parents and friends was a delight to see. The girls and their teachers were rightfully proud of their accomplishments, and all agreed that we will look forward to next year's performances with great anticipation!



Golf Outing

By Hilda Molter

Our 3rd Annual Golf Outing was held on July 29, 2012 at Lake Michigan Hills Golf Course located on Kerlikowske Road, Benton Harbor, MI. People who participated had a fun day golfing on a beautiful course and at the same time helped to raise money for the Academy. Each golfer paid \$100 for the day, which included a second FREE round of golf valid in 2012. A grand prize was given to the winning team plus there were many contests and other prizes throughout the day.

This was a four-person scramble, playing 18 holes with a cart. The day began at 6:30 a.m. with driving-range warm up and a continental breakfast. At 8:00, a shotgun start began the day which ended with a lunch buffet.

Another way that supporters helped out the BHGA was being a hole sponsor. For a \$100 sponsorship, people advertised their company, made a memorial tribute, a birthday greeting, or sent other messages. All in all, it was a great day on the course!

Late Day Activities Year in Review

By Katy Mahoney

It was a busy, fun year for the girls in the Late Day Program. The girls were given many great opportunities this school year, including art classes at Krasl, ballet at the Citadel, horticulture lessons with Emma Kinnard, needlepoint with Orla Mileski and Club H2O with Mary Holmes.



The art classes at the Krasl took place every Thursday from October through December. The girls learned how to make paper, created 3-D paper sculptures and spent several weeks learning pottery. They were taught to use a pottery wheel,

to mold clay into pots and to sculpt a bust of themselves. The classes were always full of excitement and left the girls looking forward to the next week. The Krasl continued providing classes at the Academy from January through April. Robin Reva helped each girl make an art journal. The pages of old books were covered with white paint, leaving many pages to fill with chalk drawings, paintings, poetry and collages.



The ballet lessons at the Citadel were once a week, culminating in a recital in early June. All the girls who participated became

great little ballerinas. During free time in the Late Day Program, the girls loved to have dance contests. The dancing usually was more of a hip hop nature, but was definitely influenced by what the girls learned at the Citadel.

Miss Emma did many horticultural activities with the girls. They made a terrarium that was sold at the dinner auction. They planted

bulbs in the fall and witnessed them growing into beautiful tulips in the spring. The girls made wreaths at Christmas time which were sold and the money was used to purchase fleece fabric. They used the fabric to make no-sew tie blankets that were donated to Birthright. The girls were very proud and excited the day they got to donate their blankets. Miss Emma finished off the year by planting a garden with the girls in the lot owned by the Academy. Hopefully it is surviving the hot summer weather.

Miss Orla taught the girls needle point. She came once a week and worked with the girls on a Mother's day project. When the project was completed, each girl had made her mother a beautifully stitched pillow. We had some fun and interesting conversations in our little sewing circle each week.



The girls participated in Club H2O each week. This was a wonderful experience provided by the Well of Grace Ministries. Miss Mary Gilliam taught the girls the



importance of God in their lives, as well as topics on self-esteem, bullying, personal care, and the importance of taking personal responsibility for their actions and choices in life. The girls each made an autobiography of their

lives from birth to where they see themselves in forty-five plus years. They were fun to read and will be valuable for the girls to reflect upon as they get older.

It was quite a busy year for the Late Day Program. The days that the girls did not have a planned activity were spent at the beach learning about the lake, or doing crafts, cooking projects, going to the library, to the park, or simply having free time. It was a learning year for everyone.

Girls Discover Summer Camp

This year the *Girls Discover* Summer Camp was held on Monday through Thursday from June 18 through June 28. Charlene Jones Clark was the coordinator. The program began each day at 10 a.m. and ended at 4 p.m. The girls enjoyed a number of different activities through BHGA's partnership with community organizations. Each morning, the girls participated in a reading program organized by Reading Specialist, Peggy Clore, which also included daily journal writing. She was assisted by volunteers JoAnn McDonald, Katy Mahoney, and Ella Jones. In the afternoon, the girls planted, watered, and weeded the BHGA garden under the instruction and supervision of Emma Kinnard. The girls not only learned how to garden, they also produced vegetables for themselves and others from this project.

Each Tuesday afternoon, the girls received a financial literacy lesson given by Josh Ugalde, manager of Flagstar Bank. Mr. Ugalde also took them on a tour of his bank and treated them to a trip to the Dairy Queen. Each Wednesday, the First Tee Golf Program hosted the girls at Harbor Shores, providing the girls with individualized, free golf lessons. On Thursday, Brenda Kragt, Educational Outreach Administrator for MDOT, gave the girls an engineering and science lesson, showing the girls how much fun these two disciplines can be. The girls learned t-shirt design from Jennifer Turner and were given music lessons by Miss Charlene. The music lessons enabled the girls to join Miss Charlene in her performance at the *Coming Home, Coming Together* concert featuring Niki Haris. On the last Thursday of the Camp, the girls took a trip to downtown Benton Harbor and celebrated Miss Charlene's birthday with cupcakes and *Gelato*.

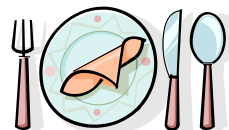
The girls enjoyed a homemade daily lunch organized by Fritzi Lochner and provided by volunteers Pat Damico, Diane Norton, Grace Mammina, Sharon Shari, Shirley Barrick, Judy Carson and Cathy Hanau. Although this year's summer program only lasted two weeks, the girls were exposed to and participated in a wide variety of experiences. But then, that's what *Girls Discover* is all about.

Volunteering with BHGA

By Allison Glenn

"In my humble opinion, which it may be, volunteers make the world go around." People standing and stepping up to help in many ways is what has happened and continues to happen at the Benton Harbor Girls Association and Academy. It is my understanding that it was with the help of volunteers that the promising journey of the BHGA began. Many of those volunteers remain involved six years later.

I began volunteering at the BHGA when, after applying for a part time paid position, I was informed the position had been filled. I desired to be involved because the programs at BHGA address youth development and education for girls. I became employed with BHGA and worked to develop the Volunteer Program. In developing the program, we implemented objectives to show appreciation for volunteer efforts and integrity. All of our volunteers have a position title and a written description of the duties and responsibilities. This information helps define their purpose, as they seek to give of their time, talent, and treasures. It is my hope that the Volunteer Program at BHGA will continue to grow as it garners training and development resources from our community.



Lunch at the Girls Academy

By Margaret Nuccio

Do I ask too much? When I call you for lunch "duty" at the Academy, do I ask too much? This past school year seventeen ladies and two gentlemen told me "No, you do not ask too much."

The willingness of so many to bring lunch once a month for our hungry girls has gladdened the hearts of all on the staff at the Academy. We are humbled and grateful to see what a community of love and service we have at SS. John and Bernard's Parish and other churches in the area. Your faith materializes in delicious menus and the willingness to spend time with the girls as you are able. We understand the many claims on your time in our busy community and we want you to know that you are so much appreciated.



End of Year Trip to Chicago
By
Carolyn Macumber

It was a beautiful day for our end of the school year trip. We had planned to take the train from Michigan City to Chicago and then walk to our destination.

Children piled into Dr. Patricia's and Mrs. Kyles cars for the drive to Michigan City. Miss Carolyn met them in Michigan City to board the train. A sea of yellow and green shirts along with our students in purple waited for the train to arrive. I had to smile as one of our older students mentioned the shirts and how she didn't want to be labeled a "child" in a tell-tale traveling school uniform. Our train ride to Chicago was somewhat uneventful. The girls played games, talked, slept and serenaded our train with songs they had learned from school.

The walk to Au Sable Museum was interrupted with short lessons on the architecture of the buildings we were passing. Dr. Patricia used her learning in Medieval Art to share with us lessons on what we were seeing as we passed various buildings. The children also noticed the beautiful ivy that sporadically climbed up the front of some of the buildings.

Before entering De Sable Museum, we ate our lunch in the park that surrounds the building. The children were blessed to have one of the Museum women take an interest in our group. She began to act as a tour guide, stopping at

prominent places for lessons in African American History. Our tour guide had the children lay down on the ground next to each other, head to feet and feet to heads. She talked about what it would have been like for Africans to travel in such a cramped position to America. Proudly she talked about the African Americans that have served in our military - specifically the Tuskegee Air Men. After our tour the children enjoyed shopping in the little store in the Museum.

Our trip back to Michigan City was enjoyable. Another teacher traveling on the train became interested in the girls and taught them some academic games that helped pass the time.

Both staff and children enjoyed a buffet meal that evening in Michigan City. All left the restaurant groaning over having eaten just a little too much. With stomachs full, the girls and the chaperones rode home happy. All in all - an exciting day away from the classroom.



Fifth Annual Dinner Fundraiser

Sunday, October 28, 2012, 6:30pm

Lake Michigan Hills Golf Club

Benton Harbor, Michigan

Call 925.9922 or 314.517.2058 for tickets

Benton Harbor Girls Association
for Learning & Self-esteem
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