

BHGA Newsletter

Summer 2014

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 Patricia Ann Quattrin Ph.D.

The Benton Harbor Girls Association for Learning & Self-esteem is in its seventh year of working in the Benton Harbor community, offering summer and after school programs to girls in the middle school. In a month, we begin the fifth year of the Girls Academy. It has been an interesting ride thus far! While we feel comfortable in the development we have experienced in the girls who come to the Academy, it has been challenging getting the right blend of staff in place.

This past year we enrolled ten girls and are pleased to report that by the end of the school year, all girls except one, and she missed way too many instructional days, acquired the skills of their grade level in math and/or reading. This meant, in some cases, moving up two grades in one year! With those girls expected to return in the fall, we will have two at 7th grade level, three at 6th grade level, and two at 5th grade level. We are looking to enroll more 4th and 5th graders.

The *Girls Discover* Summer Program enrolled twelve girls this year. The morning focused on improving reading skills. Four women worked with our Coordinator to mentor the girls in reading fluency, comprehension,

and vocabulary. These women, Vicki Born, Hilda Molter, Peggy Clore, and Victoria Bowman, in five weeks, brought most of the girls to the next grade level in reading. The girls spent afternoons playing math games, learning to garden, and taking field trips, such as to the Carousal, the Beach, and the Discover Zone.

Although the past school year went very well indeed for our girls, the board experienced organizational challenges that kept us moving. The Corporate Board has been very busy this summer assembling the staff for the coming year who will put into practice our mission and our philosophy of education and discipline. We are looking forward to the coming academic year, with fresh faces, new ideas, and lots of enthusiasm. More about that as things come into place.

The financials remain healthy, with new sponsorships joining the elite group of sponsors that continue to support a girl to attend the academy. However, if we expect the academy to grow, more sponsorships are needed. Check your pockets and under your bed. Perhaps you can find \$7,000 to help a disadvantaged girl develop the academic and social skills needed to succeed.

You Will Be Greatly Rewarded!

FALL FUND RAISER – FAMILY EVENT OKTOBERFEST AND TALENT COMPETITION

Saturday, October 11, 2014

Food, Drinks, Games, Face-painting, Craft Booths, Prizes & Much More

Look For More Information Coming Soon. Watch For the Fliers

Or Go To the BHGALS Website www.bentonharborgirlsassociation.org

A Non-Profit 501C3 Corporation

Red Scarfs

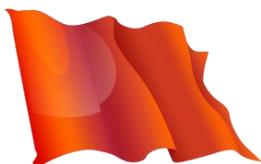
By Terry Blundell

The students at Benton Harbor Girls Academy were used to seeing their teacher, Samantha Jordan, wearing scarves as head wraps. But there was a special significance to the solid red scarf which Miss Jordan shared with the students. The color red is a sign of support for the 273 Nigerian school girls who were kidnapped from Chibok Government Secondary School in April 2014 by Boko Haram terrorists. “Bring Back Our Girls” is a world-wide campaign of support for the kidnapped girls and their families.

On a visit to the Academy, Sister Mary Anne Dalton and Associate Terry Blundell found out about the interest that the students had in participating in the “Bring Back Our Girls” campaign. The students explained the significance of their teacher’s solid red scarf and about the missing girls in Nigeria. They said they would like to wear red scarves also, but either didn’t have a red scarf or didn’t know how to wrap one. Miss Jordan said she would be happy to teach them how to wrap a head scarf and where to get one.

After their visit, Sister Mary Anne and I stopped at a local store looking for red scarves for the students but without success. Since the students had such an interest in supporting their sisters in Nigeria, finding the scarves became a “mission”. So they were found and sent to the school where the girls were taught how to wear them as head wraps.

Now the students at Benton Harbor Girls Academy are standing strong and wearing red with thousands across the world in support of the kidnapped Nigerian girls. You can find out more about “Bring Back Our Girls” at <http://bringbackourgirls.us/>.



Volunteer of the Year

By Hilda Molter

Margaret Nuccio was honored this spring as a “Star Volunteer of the Year” by the Volunteer Center of Southwest Michigan. Margaret was nominated by director, Dr. Patricia A. Quattrin, for her generous and extraordinary dedication to the Academy. Her tremendous contribution of time, talent, and treasure made her an outstanding candidate. Margaret volunteers in many ways to make a difference in the Academy. The staff and volunteers enjoy working with Margaret and the girls love her. Margaret endears all who work with her. She has made such a positive impression on those who know and work with her in the Academy, as well as her church and in her community.

Margaret gives unselfishly to many, and thus she is very deserving of this award. We are blessed to have Margaret as a volunteer at the Academy. We are especially proud for her to be recognized as a “Star Volunteer of the Year” in our community.

Volunteering Using Workshop Way

By Mary Ann Dalton

Most Wednesdays this past year (except for the several weeks of wintry snow and ice conditions!!), I drove from Nazareth in Kalamazoo to the Benton Harbor Girls Academy to volunteer as a support to teacher Ms. Samantha Jordan and the wonderful, growing, diverse young women in the classroom. Sometimes I would listen to students read or go over a lesson in social studies.

One of my favorite things was being able to use Workshop Way teaching techniques that I learned over the past 30 years. These techniques still “keep the shine on students’ human nature”. Students need to experience many daily bits of success in which they can feel important and intelligent. Even while making mistakes in the learning process, they feel their power to manage bits of content on their own. Teachers always look for the light bulb to go on in the eyes of learners.

Workshop Way philosophy helps the teacher free students from fear of not knowing and actually shutting down motivationally and mentally because they think they cannot learn. At Ms. Jordan’s invitation, I presented a lesson using several organizational frameworks of Workshop Way Whole-Class Math Lesson to bring daily bits of success. I then taught the students four Workshop math tasks which they would do in order and independently after the lesson. While students did the math workshop, I called students over in small groups to interact with them on the content using Workshop Way Thinkers on fractions.

Now for some of the specifics. The whole-class math lesson format has four small techniques before the actual math lesson of the day is taught. First, the teacher supplies a short math question and its answer pertaining to the day’s content. Then students pass this question and answer to each other in telephone style. All have the same question and answer and all can feel successful. Two other short techniques involve the teacher flashing 10 -15 flash cards with math symbols or figures which students

read in unison three times. For a card with a picture of a shaded fraction of $\frac{4}{5}$'s the students would say, “Four-fifths, four-fifths, four fifths” or seeing the card with .6 saying “Six tenths, six tenths, six tenths”. Students seemed to participate well once they caught on to this technique. The same pack is used all week, so students have a chance to see, say, and hear the same math symbols and content.

The other flash card pack the teacher flashes is 10 -15 phrases taken right from the current chapter of the math text. A volunteer reads the math phrase and everyone repeats it with power. This helps with fluency in reading the math text and familiarizes the girls with speaking this math language, which sometimes seems so foreign to them. I was surprised, but shouldn’t have been, when one student had trouble saying “perpendicular lines”. As teacher, it was invigorating for me to see the girls participating in these mini techniques designed to give daily bits of success before the lesson is taught.

The Math Workshop tasks I taught were: 1) Math Vocabulary, in which students look up three definitions from the glossary and put them on 3 by 5 cards; 2) Draw and Label, in which they draw fractions, angles, etc.; 3) Free Choice, in which students choose two out of three practice exercises from the back of the book; 4) Computer, in which students do their individualized math work from a specific program.

While students did their Workshop, I observed them doing the tasks at their own timing. They seemed to “light up” at being able to work on their own to do the tasks with variety and some choice. During Workshop time, I then called the young girls over to the table, two or three at a time, and we did some sorting and matching, using Math Thinkers. Benton Harbor girls at the Academy have so much potential. It is always exciting to see them in the act of discovering that they can learn, can think, and can manage their lives in the classroom.





Girls On The Run 2014

By Kelly Alexander

Towards the end of the school year 2014, I decided to coach for the Girls On The Run 5K program. At first, I thought this was a great idea to get our girls moving. Plus, they would all get a new pair of running shoes. This program turned out to be so much more! Our girls learned about self-esteem, hard work, healthy lifestyle habits, team work, and lots more. We had fun, some good days and some not so good days, but all our girls pushed through and finished the program and the 5K!

Training for the 5K was a wonderful time. I personally saw each girl gain something different from this experience. By the time we hit week twelve, they were all helping and pushing each other; they were complimenting each other, and they were focused on completing our 5K adventure!

About half way into our program, I helped the girls make multi-colored tutus. They each received some of each color of tulle and were told to make their Tutu in any pattern they wanted. They did a wonderful job. We had lots of fun creating them; the girls sang together and helped each other. Their tutus turned out so much better than I thought they would. They were very proud of their creations.

Before we knew it, the day was here for the big 5K event. I could tell some were nervous, some were excited, and some were both.

When the girls arrived at the event, they were proud to wear their Tutus. Other schools made tutus, also, but ours were definitely the BEST. This made the girls feel good and proud of themselves. I decided ahead of time to make sure I stayed behind with the girls who were near the back of the joggers. That decision turned out to be a good one. We had so much fun talking, and I literally dragged some of them to the finish line. The Run was a challenge, but we all did it with no shortcuts!

I am proud of all of them!!!

~~~~~ The Joy of Volunteering

By Margaret Nuccio

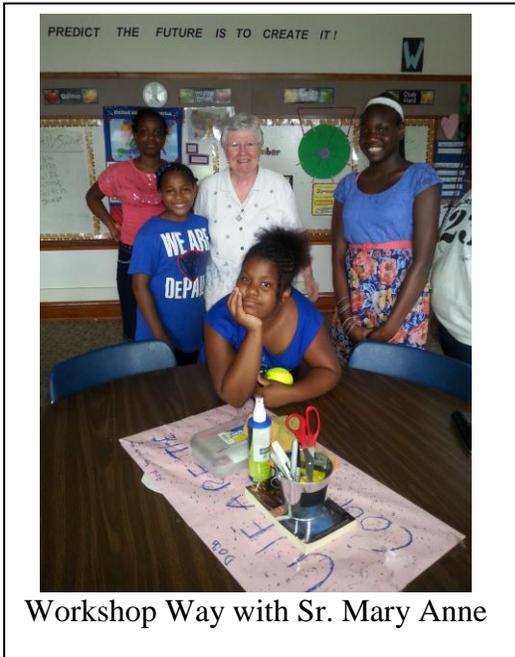
Yes, it really is a joy! No other emotion could hold together the dedicated band of wonderful people - ladies and men - who come regularly to the Benton Harbor Girls Academy (BHGA) on Columbus Ave. in Benton Harbor. They offer their talents and labor to enjoy being with lively young girls and to promote the stated aim of BHGA - For Learning and Self Esteem.

I came six years ago to help in the fledging after-school program. I was a reader then and now I shop and help with lunches. I quickly found that coaching reading was not my talent. But we have retired teachers who have the love and the expertise for classroom work. You can find your own niche. For me I am happy to use my penchant for finding the best cost and nutrition values in food shopping.

Tell us what you love to do. Do you have interests in reading, math or music? We need you. Do you revel in home interests such as crafts, gardening, after-school activities, such as sports and dancing? We need your enthusiasm. Would you like to talk to the girls on a topic that is your passion? Come once and come back if you like us. We have a good recycling program in which the girls enthusiastically participate. You could help keep that program on track.

If any of this sparks your call to serve our Lord in this needy community, please speak to Dr. Patricia Quattrin. She will gladly meet you and welcome you to the family.

Highlights of the Academy Year



Workshop Way with Sr. Mary Anne



Barb Morgan and Sherrie Nitz work with the girls on their quilt



Learning to quilt with Peace Lutheran Church Quilting Ladies



Performers in the Christmas Program with one of their admirers



Field trip to Potawatomi Zoo



Thanks for the Valentine Gifts, Ms. Mary Anne

Benton Harbor Girls Association
for Learning & Self-esteem
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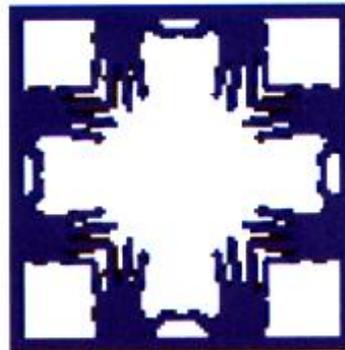
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~ BHGA Website ~
www.bentonharborgirlsassociation.org

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