



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE 52ND STREET PROJECT PROJECT UPDATE

FULL-COLOR WEB EDITION • VOL. 78 • DECEMBER, 2017 • GEORGE BABIAK, EDITOR



PLAYBACK OCTOBER, 2017

Kids write for themselves and adult partners

In Natasha Davis's *What Really Matters*, phone-obsessed Daiva Deupree (L) and studious Natasha (R) found themselves confronting a mysterious tree that wanted the answer to the title question.



In *The Misunderstanding*, by Rodery Rosario, Kyle Cameron was a mechanic who aspired to rapper stardom while Rodery was the humble leaf who coached Kyle on his performance skills.



Justin Walker White was a destitute man who wanted to join clean-cut but larcenous Ethan Perez on a bank job in Ethan's play *Bank Robbing*. The job made them wonder why we all think we need money to be happy.



A polar bear (Lakshmi DeJesus) and an Aussie teen (Rachel Claire) found that a bruin and a human could be buddies. The title? *Bear-ly Friends*. Get it?

REVISITING HOURS: THE DEJA VU PLAYS (AGAIN!)

THE 2017 PLAYBACK SHOW

This fall, we took eight 13-year-old Project kids and asked them to write plays to perform with adult partners (who served as directors). Here are some views of the production we rehearsed in the Hamptons and then staged at the Five Angels Oct. 27-29.

THE DESIGN AND TECH TEAM

Yuki Nakase..... Lighting Designer
Ciana Proto..... Sound Designer
Carrigan O'Brien..... Stage Manager

THE BRIDGEHAMPTON HOSTS

Alex Gersten-Vassilaros, Louis and Patrice Friedman, and Cathy Dantchik.



The Race to Home, by Lauren Amador-Cruz, featured Lauren as a lonely dog and Jody Flader as an avian flight instructor stuck in the same pet shop together.



Coleman Williams and Marchant Davis were a Home Depot employee and a cop who teamed up to solve a crime in Coleman's *Where'd He Go?*



Jose Gamo was a fraudulent genie and Stevens Velasquez the gullible victim who exacted a violent revenge in Stevens' *Don't Trust Anyone*.



In *Ana and the Pan*, by Ginaija Hires, with Ginaija as a beleaguered homeowner and Tina Chilip as the defiant frying pan who was sick of frying up smelly cod for her.

YOUR OFFICIAL RECAP OF THE LAST FOUR MONTHS OF 52ND STREET PROJECT HISTORY!

**STUFF AND NONSENSE:
PLAYS FROM THE PROP CLOSET**
THE WAREHAM ONE-ON-ONES

Right after the Block Island One-on-Ones were done (we covered them in our last ish), we whisked 10 totally different kids to Wareham, Mass. (the Gateway to Cape Cod), to do 10 totally different plays. Everyone had a blast on the trip and all 10 plays were staged at The Five Angels Theater, Aug. 18-20.

THE DESIGN AND TECH TEAM

Wes Braver.....Composition/Music Direction
Josh Langman.....Lights
Susanne Houstle.....Costumes
Alicia Moeller.....Sound Design
Emma Steiger.....Stage Management

THE WAREHAM HOSTS

Peter, Helen & Christopher Randolph; Joe McNay; Lucy Aptekar & Gerry Leader; Andrea & Emmanuel Daskalakis; Anne and Colin McNay; Gray & Rosemary Watson; and Sidney & Sam Pierce.

THE WAREHAM ONE-ON-ONES AUGUST, 2017

Kids act with adult partners in adult-written plays



SHOW PHOTOS BY ENRIQUE CABALLERO

Worlds on a String, by former intern and accomplished playwright Melissa Gawlowski, had Margaret Odette and Kai-ley Caton as a pair of scientists jumping from one reality to another while doing jazz solos on a trumpet.



Tahnee Cadrez's *Motor World Galore* featured Ethan Zenteno as a middle-aged used car salesman and Helen Cespedes as Kenny, a young, brash challenger to Ethan's outstanding sales record.



How to Cook Like a Pro by Melisa Tien, was a knockabout farce that cast Jade Johnson (wielding swordfish) and Flor De Liz Perez (that's Flor on the floor) as TV chefs engaged in a fight to the death with a live lobster (Jackie McKenna).



Jenelle Chu and Thiana Goode were a pop singing duo that tried to take a break from the stresses of their career by taking a space flight to a candy-themed planet. Christina Quintana wrote *Sweet Tooth Goes to Candyworld*.



In *Journey to Gold Mountain*, written by Jed Clarke, Jayden Alvarado was a fearful knight errant and Jed was a wizard of rather limited ability. Together, they managed to summon up the courage to defeat a 10 foot tall sock puppet. Uh, we mean dragon.



Michael Propster and Carlos Jimenez were Betta Fighting Fish that were, you guessed it, fighting. Michael's play was entitled *Alpha Betta Zeta* and taught us everything about Bettas from Alpha to Zeta.



Amari Dubose was a government-type agent and Corey Jackson his assistant in Corey's *Thanksgiving*, which depicted Amari and Corey's quest for a nice, fresh turkey. They found one, but pardoned it.



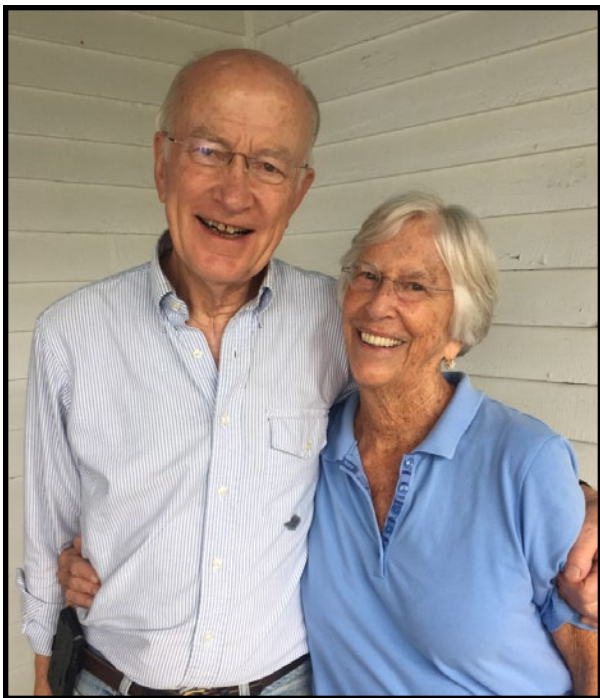
Carlo Alban cast himself as a lumberjack turned barber in his own play, *A Reckoning*. Derek Rey was a customer who turned out to be an environmentally aware werewolf: An awarewolf! (Not that funny, we reckon.)



Joel Gokalp and George Babiak realized their fantasy of being over-the-hill, quarrelsome rock stars in George's tribute to one-hit wonders, *Lizardbelly Lives*. Jackie McKenna and composer Wes Braver were the hapless drummer and keyboardist.



Danielle Davenport's play, *Saki's Lesson*, told the story of a young girl (Bryanna Ohene Kari Kari) who was inspired to design by a mysterious piece of fabric. Danielle did triple-duty as Bryanna's mom, a school principal, and a passerby.



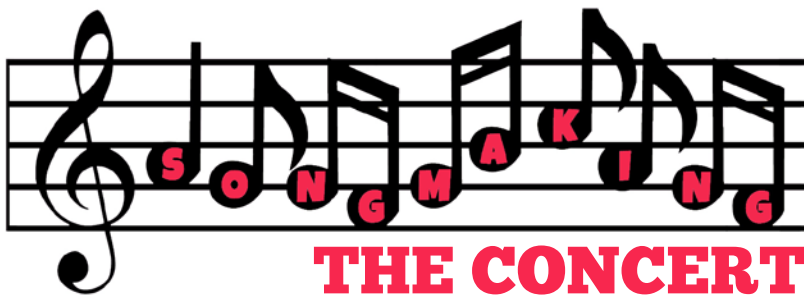
HELEN AND PETER RANDOLPH

26 YEARS OF RANDOLPH HOSPITALITY

It was way back in 1991 that the Project took its very first trip to Wareham, Massachusetts. Like the trip shown in this spread, it was a One-on-One and is remembered best as the "Hurricane Bob" trip. Yep, an honest-to-gosh hurricane hit Wareham head-on just one day after we arrived. The week away was spent carting water to flush the toilets and the beach was so contaminated with flotsam that no one could even swim. It was not an easy trip.

Nevertheless, the Project kept returning to the great, gray waterfront home of Peter and Helen Randolph to enjoy their unceasing generosity. For over a quarter of a century, the Randolfs and their neighbors allowed the children of Hell's Kitchen to traipse through their halls, sleep in their homes, and rehearse on their lawns. 2017 marked our final journey to beautiful Buzzard's Bay and we will always remember the serenity and kindness that Peter and Helen invariably showed the Project. We will also not forget their son Christopher's Sunfish sailing jaunts, high-speed water tube rides, fine lasagna, and the wonderful shows he performed, wrote, and directed over the years. It won't be easy to find another August destination as wonderful as Wareham. Thanks for a great ride, Randolfs! -GRB

GRB

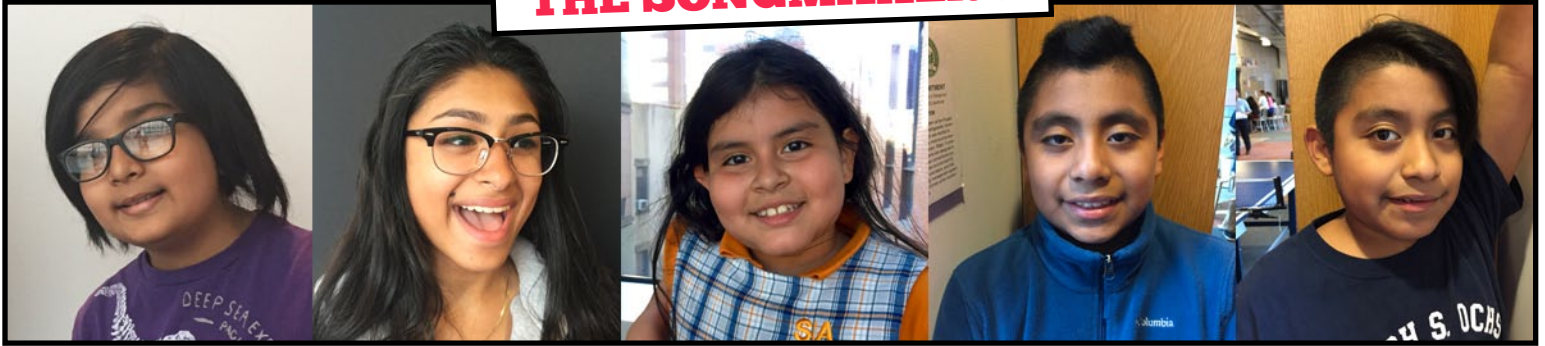


THE CONCERT

show at the Five Angels Theater. There were 12 songs in all, with titles like "Kicked Soccer Ball," "Bananas Forever," "My Future," and, most intriguingly, "Broken Objects Song."

The songs were written by the kids in the photos below. The music was composed and performed by adult volunteers Bryan Blaskie, Benedict Braxton-Smith, Alanya Bridge, Emily Chiu, and Patrick Thompson. Finally, the adult singers were Ato Blankson-Wood, Zoe Chao, Andy Danh, Marchánt Davis, Erin Felgar, Edelys Guerrero, Kendal Hartse, Greg Hildreth, Korey Jackson, Tommy McDowell, Doron JePaul Mitchell, Rob Morrison, Nadia Quinn, and Emily Skeggs. Sorry you missed it? We'll be doing some of the songs again at our annual benefit in May.

THE SONGMAKERS



Ryan Billah

Edelys Guerrero

Hannah Leon

Andres Mendoza

Angel Mendoza



FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY, THE FIVE ANGELS THEATER
WILL TURN INTO A WILD AND CRAZY DISCO!

LIVE DJ!

SNACKS AND
DRINKS INCLUDED!

COOL
PEEPS!

HOLIDAY
CHEER!

A BARGAIN BASEMENT BENEFIT
FOR THE 52ND STREET PROJECT

MONDAY, DEC. 18, 2017

8:00 PM TO 11:00 PM

\$25 IF YOU PAY IN ADVANCE,

\$35 AT THE DOOR

THE 52ND STREET PROJECT PRESENTS

THE FALL 2017 PLAYMAKING SHOW

STIRRING THE POT



THE
SPICY PLAYS

10 NEW PLAYS WRITTEN BY KIDS AND PERFORMED BY ADULT ACTORS
AT THE 52ND STREET PROJECT'S FIVE ANGELS THEATER

789 10TH AVE. 2ND FLOOR, BETWEEN 52ND AND 53RD ST.

FRIDAY, DEC. 8 AT 7:30 P.M.

SATURDAY, DEC. 9 AT 3:00 & 7:30 P.M.

SUNDAY, DEC. 10 AT 3:00 P.M.

4
BIG SHOWS

ADMISSION IS FREE, BUT RESERVATIONS ARE A MUST! TO BOOK YOUR SEATS, VISIT WWW.52PROJECT.ORG.

BIG KIDS BASH

On Tuesday, Nov. 7, we had another one of our infamous mini-benefits that we like to call **Big Kids' Bashes**. The theme was "Carnival." It was held in the clandestinely posh lounge of the **Town Tennis Club** on East 56th St. **Greg Hildreth** sang a song by ProjKid **Ryan Billah** while everyone tried their luck at the **Wheel of Fate**, **Ring Toss Rodeo**, and the **Incredible Corn Hole Challenge**.



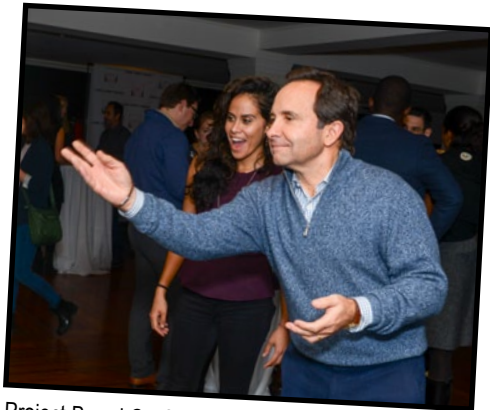
A trunkload of props and costumes always helps! Here, Yasmeen Allen, Ashley Baer, Kali Crandall, Kari LeBlancq, and Amanda Colletta clown it up.



Ryan Billah, center, wrote a song that entertained the Carnivalistas. He's seen here with composer Rachel Dean and singer Greg Hildreth.



Project Alum Leah Galimidi helped to host and run the Wheel of Fate.



Project Board Co-Chair Louis Friedman throws some bean bags at the Incredible Cornhole Challenge.



Avi Taussig (Center), one of the BKB planners, discusses her raffle strategy with some friends.



Ashley Marie Ortiz displays her extraordinary skills in the Ring Toss Rodeo.

PHOTOS BY KALI CRANDALL

WANT TO DONATE TO THE PROJECT?

It's as easy as 5 + 2! Just visit www.52project.org and click "You Can Help."

SCHOLARSHIP PARTY 2017

On August 1, in the eye of the storm between the July and August One-on-Ones, we held the annual Project Scholarship Party. We are always thrilled to see our kids as they wend their way through college and help them each with \$1000 per annum.

Seen at right, standing: Producing Director Gus Rogerson, Tiara Varela, Armando Cosme, Jr., Jazmine Mikell, Edison Sibri, Alvin Garcia, Joyce Cheung, Elena Caballero, Leah Macuilt, Melody Cruz, Tatiana Goode, and Board Co-chair Louis Friedman.

Crouching: Melissa Rebolledo, Brandon Leon, Gabriella DeJesus, Britney Trinidad, and, of course, Executive Director Carol Ochs.



MORE NEW RECRUITS! ...AND A NEW JOB FOR AN OLD ONE

The Project family keeps on growing and changing. Allow us to introduce the latest fine people to join our staff... and catch you up on the one whose job is evolving!

Kat Chua Almirañez - Associate Artistic Director

Kat has been working in the field of theatre in education for over 18 years. Prior to joining The Project in September, Kat was part of the Creative Arts Team (CAT) community for 21 years, going from youth theatre member in 1996 to becoming Program Director for the Literacy through Drama program. Kat is a visual artist, theatre artist, and a human rights activist. She earned her BA at New York University and is currently studying in the MA in Applied Theatre program at CUNY School of Professional Studies. Kat has had many exotic animals, including a tortoise and a hare (She had them race. The tortoise won.), two guinea pigs, two rabbits, and three fish. At the moment, her menagerie is limited to two dogs: Milo and Maddy. She is very proud to say that she has just learned to roller skate.



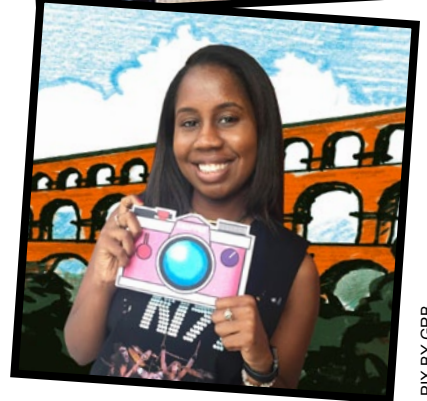
Caylyn Creager - Education Assistant

Caylyn is a Bay Area native and graduate of NYU Tisch with a BFA in theatre and minor in Law & Society. At NYU she performed in the Stella Adler tour of The Two Gentlemen of Verona and was VP of the Asian American Theatre Alliance. Caylyn has taught at Kids On Camera and the Marsh Youth Theatre as well as interned at the American Museum of Natural History. Recently, she spent a sunny summer at the Marin Shakespeare Company. She and her family are fans of the legendary band, The Eagles, and she has seen them at least 20 times. She is super excited to join the Project staff and to get to know all the talented kids!



Johanna Vidal - Education Director

Diligent P.U. readers may recall that in our last issue, Liz Bell announced her departure from her full-time position as Education Director. Johanna Vidal, who has been our Community Coordinator since May, 2013, will be stepping into Liz's shoes and moving into Liz's comfy corner office. Johanna is a Project Alum (Playmaking, Class of Fall, 2001) and a graduate of the University of Michigan with a degree in Spanish. While at U of M, she was co-Entertainment Chair of EnspiRED, an arts organization focused on self-expression. She also interned for En Nuestra Lengua, a Spanish immersion program where she helped kindergarten students enhance their vocabularies in their native language of Spanish.



The following foundations, corporations, and government agencies recently made generous grants to the Project. We are grateful to them for their support as well as to the many individuals who help sustain the Project's programs year-round.

| | | | |
|--|---------|---|----------|
| Robert & Ellen Bach Foundation..... | \$1,000 | The Stephen P. Hanson Foundation..... | \$10,000 |
| Eleanor, Adam & Mel Dubin Foundation | \$1,000 | The Morris and Alma Schapiro Fund | \$10,000 |
| Ninth Avenue Association | \$1,000 | Con Edison | \$10,000 |
| The Pamela and Wayne Garrison Foundation..... | \$1,000 | New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, General Operating Support | \$19,000 |
| Carnegie Corporation of New York | \$2,400 | Stavros Niarchos Foundation | \$25,000 |
| New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, Arts Education ... | \$4,000 | The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation..... | \$50,000 |
| The Neil and Carolyn Desena Foundation..... | \$5,000 | New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council | \$79,100 |
| Rag & Bone Industries | \$5,000 | | |

PIX BY GRB

MEGABITS



Liz Bell has another baby! He is a boy, and his name is Tozzi Lionel Stein. He was born on Nov. 15 at 12:12 a.m. and weighed 9 lbs., 1 oz. Liz and Tozzi are seen here with Daddy Andrew Stein and big sis Enza.



And TWINS! Here are Ben Mehl and Alla Mehl with their brand-new matching set of babies. Aviva and Talia were born on Sept. 15, and, as you can see, their folks have their hands full.



Project actor Mike Crane and Megan McQuillan have a new human in residence: Ms. Oona McQuillan Crane! She was born in Brooklyn on October 9 at 2:24 pm and she was a healthy 9 lbs., 1 oz (two heavyweights on one Megabits page!) and a towering 20 inches tall.



Here is Hazel Rose Dwyer with her parents Katie Kolb Dwyer and Kevin Dwyer just after making her debut on earth. She arrived on Oct. 15, weighing 7 lbs., 8 oz. and measuring 21" long.



On August 19, Project Alum Octavia Bionaz had little Stella in Naples, Italy, of all places. That's where Papa Paul Bionaz is stationed, and that's where the happy little family lives right now.



Proj composer Patrick Barnes (R) got married to his long-time partner Kent McIngvale (L) on Sept. 30 in their backyard at White Pond in upstate NY. Instead of rings, they opted for bear and deer tattoos on their forearms. How cool is that?



Patrick was NOT the only Project composer to get married this year! Looking like stars in an Italian movie, Avi A. Amon married Molly Theobald on July 29th on a Brooklyn rooftop near their house.



ProjVol Suzen Murakoshi and Bert Togikawa tied the knot on July 30, 2017 in the West Village in the cul-de-sac next to the Cherry Lane Theater on Commerce St.. Project Founder Willie Reale officiated (that's him in the blue plaid shirt).

WE'VE GOT A PODCAST!

EVERYBODY has a podcast nowadays, and we were beginning to feel left out. So, our tireless Program Director Garrett Kim took it upon himself to research how podcasts work, sourced the best cheap microphones, learned how to mix sound, and prodded kids and vols to create content. As you read this, the first episode is online. It's all about Playmaking.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

Go to the podcast section of the iTunes Store and search for "The 52nd Street Project" or "PROJcast."

When you see the bold, orange Shel Silverstein/Iris Brown logo at right, hit "SUBSCRIBE" and start enjoying stories, plays, interviews and more on a monthly basis. See you on the net!



9-11 CHARITY DAY

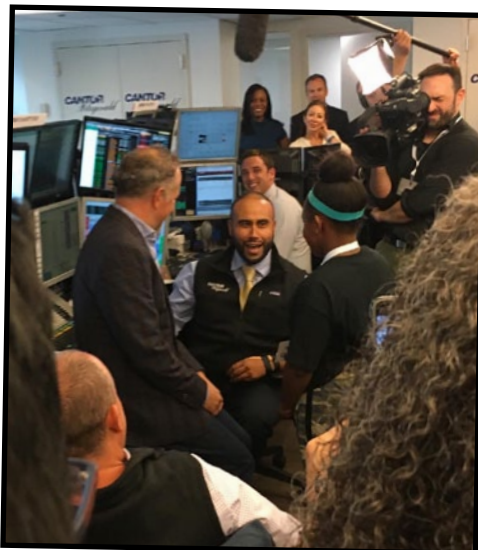
Each year on September 11, the **BGC** and **Cantor Fitzgerald Relief Funds** host their very special event, Charity Day. Celebrities handle the phones to make trades and the proceeds go to various good causes including, for the past 8 years, The 52nd Street Project. Proj Pal **David Costabile** (who plays "Wags" on *Billions*) smoldered as a temporary stock trader and netted some nice, fat profits for the Project. Proj Kids **Morgan Smalls** and **Daniel Martinez** came along to kibitz and learn a little bit about the stock market. We don't know exactly how much we'll rake in this year, but last year's Charity Day bagged us about \$30,000. Not bad for a morning's work, eh?



Morgan and Daniel ran into ProjPal Uzo Aduba (*Orange is the New Black*) at the event.



David Costabile and fellow Proj Pal Richard Anthony.



Amazingly enough, one of the traders grew up in Hell's Kitchen and went to the same school that Morgan attends today. He was able to sing the P.S. 111 school song, much to Morgan's surprise and delight.



Channeling his character from *Billions*, David was able to browbeat investors into buying more, more, more!

IN MEMORIAM



We bid a fond farewell to **Lili the Dog**, who belonged to Carol Ochs' clan but was a well-known member of the Project family as well. She tagged along on countless Project trips, spent many days at the Clubhouse and was beloved by kids and adults alike.

Flyer Bar Profile



SHIRLEY RUMIARK

What she does for us- Shirley is a Project board member, a longtime volunteer with countless shows to her credit, and, above all, a Project Alum. The first kid, in fact, to graduate from Harvard and the first kid to debut on Broadway (in *Latinologues*).

Occupation- “Actress, Daughter, Mom, Wife.”

Why she does what she does- “It’s the Project’s fault, really. As a Project kid, I got hooked on the excitement, fear, urgency and bravery of storytelling. I’ve seen how powerful it can be as an actor, a writer and an audience member.”

Hobbies- “Playing dress-up with my daughter. Recently, we were pirates burying a treasure chest full of blocks under the sofa. Aargh!”

Last book read- “*Drama High* by Michael Sokolove. It reminds me so much of The 52nd Street Project. The book is an homage to the profound power of arts education.”

Most recent accomplishment- “Learned Hebrew...nah, just kidding. Becoming a series regular on the new NBC show *RISE* premiering March 13, 2018. It’s a show based on the book *Drama High*.”

Best Project Memory- “Singing my heart out at the 2017 Project Gala in honor of our former and present Board Chairs. I was soooo nervous but had the best time belting shout-outs to folks who work hard for The Project.”

Credo- “No hay mal que por bien no venga” It’s the Spanish equivalent of “Every grey cloud has a silver lining.”

Advice to kids - “You are great. You are smart. You matter.”

Place of birth- “New York City. And raised in Hell’s Kitchen (Woot woot!)”

Habitat- “OMG!!! After answering this question for my characters in *Playmaking* I can’t believe I’m actually answering it for myself!! My habitat is a sparsely decorated apartment littered with toddler paraphernalia in Queens.”

Favorite thing about the Project- “That it truly is a safe haven for creativity and growth. Also, the foam core props are pretty rad.”

On Flyer Bars- “They’re a meal. True story.”

TRIP SNAPZ!



Wareham: Ethan Zenteno and Amari Du-Bose shared a birthday celebration with a simultaneous candle blowout.



Wareham: Each and every kid went sailing on Buzzard’s Bay with Commodore Christopher Randolph.



Bridgehampton: Marchant Davis, Rodery Rosario, Stevens Velasquez, and Daiva Deupree all made it through the Maize.



Bridgehampton: Teen Counselor Jade Cuevas displayed her bowling prowess at Wildwood Lanes.

ROUGHISH INTERNS GALLERY

Here are the hard-working, never-paid, ever-cheerful young people who worked with us this Summer and Fall. We can’t express our gratitude enough to them.



Eve Gertzman
Summer



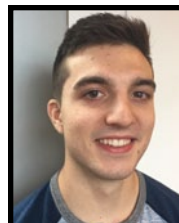
Tony Macht
Summer



Jackie McKenna
Summer



Alicia Moeller
Summer



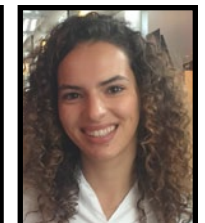
Jimmy Kenna
Fall



Carrigan O'Brian
Fall



Ciana Proto
Fall



Angie Toledo
Fall