

## 2010 Benefit a Resounding Success!

This year our Gala raised more funds for RMHA than ever before - over \$100,000! The Journal, honoring our past presidents of the Board of Directors, held a special dedication this year to Dr. Helen Meyers who had served as Director of RMHA for 28 years.

We thank all of our supporters and our Board of Directors who worked especially hard. The response was a tribute to our past presidents and, particularly, to our three special honorees, past presidents Deborah Pines, Marie-Jeanne Gwertzman and Sandra Lerner.

A presentation by Mayra Estrada, LCSW, Director of our Child and Adolescent Program touched the hearts of all who were present. Mayra imparted the passion she feels for the work she and her colleagues do. The stakes are high she said "because our work effects change in the lives and in the minds of the most precious natural resource that our community has, our children. We are embedded to fight a good fight within the most critical unit within our community, the family unit... It is human touch, human interaction, human relationships that make all the difference."

Citing examples of how change was brought about in several children's lives through therapeutic interventions, Mayra illustrated the value and importance of the work done at RMHA and the need for continued support from donors and government. (Selected pictures at right.)

### RMHA Colloquium Draws Interest at Riv 'Y'

An audience of over 100 attended the RMHA educational program "Maintaining Mental Health and Well-Being Throughout the Life Cycle" on Sunday, April 18th hosted by the Riverdale YM-YWHA. The program, commemorating RMHA's 50 years of service, was dedicated to Dr. Helen Meyers, noted psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, former Director of RMHA and mother of our current Board President, Andrew Meyers.

Dr. Donna Demetri Friedman, Deputy Executive Director of RMHA, our first speaker, discussed how a baby's brain is affected by both nature and nurture. "We have learned that emotion is related to learning and that the baby's connection to caregivers is



From Top (left to right): Hon. G. Oliver Koppell, Marie-Jeanne Gwertzman, Sandra Lerner, Deborah Pines and Hon. Jeffrey Dinowitz; Dr. Donna Demetri Friedman, William Weinbaum, Maria Capotorto; Sylvia Cruz, Sugiellis Gutierrez, Jenny Ruiz, Arlene Klingman, Mayra Estrada, Evelyn Alvarez, Lisette Aybar, Eileen Geigel, Stacie Degeneffe

crucial to learning. When babies are secure, they are able to explore; when they are deprived of stimulation, their brains do not develop as well."

At RMHA, in the Chances for Children Program, video-taping can show the babies' caregivers what they are doing that is helpful to the relationship and what can be improved. (continued inside)

(...from front page) Dr. Petros Levounis, Director of the Addictions Institute of New York, stressed that treatment works and people can recover. Showing the "Pleasure/Reward" pathways in the brain, he discussed how a war goes on inside when a person becomes addicted. He described past and current treatments for alcohol and substance abuse and detailed the many ways in which they work. "Addiction is a disease and should be treated as one," he said. He also emphasized the importance of prevention.

Dr. Alan Felix, Medical Director here at RMHA, focused on the role of the community in RMHA, from its inception, to the present day. He described our many programs that have been developed over the agency's 50 years which address the myriad needs of those in our community who struggle with emotional and behavioral concerns.

Dr. Paul Rosenfield, Medical Director of RMHA's Continuing Day Treatment Program, traced the history of mental health care from the earliest asylums to state hospitals, to today's proactive focus on recovery and community involvement.

Our Keynote Speaker, Dr. Carol Bernstein, President-Elect of the American Psychiatric Association, discussed the future of community mental health and how the health care reform bill will make it easier for those suffering from mental illness to get the care they need.

Thank you to the Riverdale "Y" and to the many staff, residents and clients who attended!



## From the Desk of the Executive Director



I join Andy Meyers in expressing my appreciation to everyone involved in RMHA's Gala this year. We had very good attendance, delightful weather, a successful new initiative in the Giving Tree, which combined to make for an enjoyable and successful evening.

I was delighted that, due to the generosity of an anonymous donor, we were able to have so many of our staff joins in the evening. It was entirely fitting that we honored our past Board Presidents for all of their efforts over the years. I am especially grateful to Mayra Estrada, our Child and Adolescent Program Director, for her moving vignettes that illustrate how RMHA truly does heal individuals and strengthen communities.

I know that our Program staff who made requests for The Giving Tree particularly appreciate the generosity of those who contributed to it. The items in The Giving Tree represent a range of needs that help us to respond to specialized needs of our clients and that are not able to be funded through conventional reimbursement mechanisms.

Thank you to our Board, our Friends and Supporters and our staff for all your efforts both with the Gala and throughout the year. I especially want to thank our elected officials whose legislative grants play such an important role in helping us to maintain our fiscal viability and which support vital aspects of our programs and operations.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Brewster, LCSW, Executive Director

## Notable News

- Dr. Paul J. Rosenfield, Director of the RMHA Continuing Day Treatment Program, served as course co-director of the 25th Annual Schizophrenia Conference held on April 25th at Columbia U. College of Physicians and Surgeons.
- We sadly report the death in March of Terese Lane, one of our earliest Board members, who served from 1963 to 1984, during which time she played an important role in RMHA's growth and development.
- Congratulations to Councilman G. Oliver Koppell on his reappointment as Chairman of the City Council Committee on Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Alcoholism, Drug Abuse and Disabilities Services.
- Welcome to Councilman Dr. Fernando Cabrera, representing the 14th Council District and newly appointed as Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Drug Abuse and Alcoholism. Dr. Cabrera is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor and Drug Abuse Counselor. Our Executive Director, Robert Brewster, LCSW recently met with Councilman Cabrera to discuss the need for continued funding for geriatric mental health services.
- Congratulations also to Tony Schwartz, husband of Board member Deborah Schwartz and long-time member of RMHA, on the publication of his latest book, "The Way We're Working Isn't Working".

## Thanks to Our Winter and Spring Contributors

We thank all the contributors who responded so generously to our Annual Fund Appeal. Gifts from individuals ranged from \$10 to \$50,000. We'd also like to thank the following foundations for their recent gifts: **The Dammann Fund; The Jarvis and Constance Doctorow Family Foundation, The Freed Foundation and The Lincoln Fund.**

Once again our elected officials came to our aid with special member items to support our administrative and programmatic needs. These funds will help us to respond to the close to 10% increase in calls for help to our intake service.



## A Message from Our Board President

Thank you to all who came to the Annual Gala and contributed to our Auction, Giving Tree and Journal. And what a Gala it was! We were very proud to honor our past presidents for all their work creating a stable foundation for the work the clinic does. Our new Giving Tree was a smash success, thanks both to our generous donors, and to our staff for contributing their wish lists. The Journal and Auction matched past successes, and our new venue, The Lighthouse at Chelsea Piers, was gorgeous (thank you, Chelsea Piers management and Abigail Kirsch for being so supportive). And the band, Fieldston students who generously donated their time and talent (and considerable charm), was a big hit by all accounts.

The showstopper was Mayra Estrada, who presented a series of compelling and moving case studies from the Child and Adolescent program. This was a particularly satisfying moment for me: not only were we highlighting the great work that RMHA's staff does, but we had been successful in bringing the staff, board and our guests together to appreciate that work, thanks to a generous anonymous donation underwriting the staff tickets. The RMHA staff provides

smart, comprehensive, nimble and humanistic therapy to a wide range of clients each and every day, and it was a joy to celebrate their work (they are also great dancers). After Mayra's talk there was a rush to the Giving Tree, as our donors raced to support that essential work.

Finally, let me give a special shout out to Adrienne Lange, Board Liaison, whom I did not sufficiently thank at the event. Adrienne is the calm in the eye of the storm where all the truly essential work gets done. She is a treasure.

Thank you to Rob, Donna, Alan, our past presidents, the Board, Joyce, our supporters and, most importantly, our staff for making this one of our most successful galas.

Andrew Meyers, RMHA Board President



From Right:  
Andrew Meyers,  
Deborah Pines,  
Marie-Jeanne  
Gwertzman and  
Sandra Lerner at  
the 2010 RMHA  
Benefit on  
May 5th, The  
Lighthouse at  
Chelsea Piers

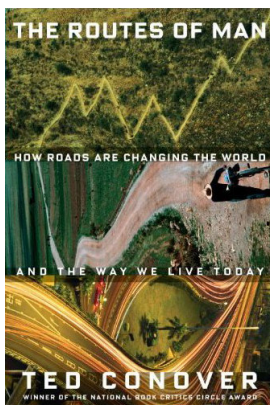
## Jobs Wanted!

RMHA's Vocational Services represents many qualified, experienced candidates available for jobs at all levels and in many different fields. Below is a partial list of candidates currently seeking employment. Employer benefits for hiring our candidates may include federal and state tax credits and salary reimbursement for the first month of employment. For more information and to request resume(s) please contact Rita Liegner, Director, at [vocationalservices@rmha.org](mailto:vocationalservices@rmha.org), or 718-796-5300 ext 109.

Art Teacher, NYS Certified  
Attorney (Corporate or non-profit)  
CASAC-T  
Data Entry Clerk / Word Processor  
Medical Secretary  
News Reporter - Community Affairs

Pharmacist (Technician, Hospital or Clinic)  
Phlebotomist / EKG Technician  
Research Assistant (Social Science or Science)  
Service Coordinator  
Teacher's Aide or Daycare Assistant  
Telemarketer / Inside Sales

## RMHA's New Parlor Parties a Hit



In our never-ending search for more interesting and entertaining ways to involve and inform more people about RMHA and at the same time raise needed funds, several board members are holding "Parlor Parties" in their homes.

Leading the way this Spring was Andy Meyers, Board President, and his wife, Dr. Beth Haase Meyers who offered an interesting and exciting evening with author, Ted Conover, who discussed his latest book, *The Routes of Man: How Roads Are Changing the World and the Way We Live Today*. The Meyers' provided a buffet supper and Ted Conover shared the experiences which helped shape his book. About 20 guests attended and all received a copy of Ted's book.

Soon to follow was a morning brunch and cooking demonstration by nutritionist, Hillary Irwin, which was hosted by Board member Lara Holtz for moms of young children. In addition to providing a delicious and healthy menu Hillary talked about the nutritional needs of young children and shared her recipes with the guests. Dr. Donna Demetri Friedman, Deputy Executive Director of RMHA, spoke about the mental health needs of young children and discussed a special program at RMHA called Chances for Children, a video-based intervention for young children and their parents.

Stay tuned for more exciting and interesting events planned for this fall.

# MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!

RMHA's 2nd ANNUAL RUN/WALK IS COMING SOON

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26th, 2010

To Volunteer, Run or Walk, send an e-mail to [5Krunwalk@rmha.org](mailto:5Krunwalk@rmha.org)

See our new website for more info [www.rmha.org](http://www.rmha.org)



## Our Newsletter is Going Green!

In an effort to be more environmentally responsible and to reduce our costs, we are transitioning to an E-Newsletter. Please help us by sending your e-mail address to [alange@rmha.org](mailto:alange@rmha.org)

If you'd like to remain on the "snail" mailing list, let us know that, too!

Thank you!!



RMHA's dedicated staff provides comprehensive services that address the psychological, behavioral and social difficulties affecting individuals of all ages. We provide high quality, affordable care to those who may otherwise be unable to receive essential services.

*By healing individuals,  
we strengthen communities.*



**RMHA, Inc.**  
5676 Riverdale Avenue, Bronx, NY 10471  
(718) 796-5300

Robert M. Brewster, LCSW  
Executive Director

Alan Felix, MD  
Medical Director

Donna Demetri-Friedman, PhD, LCSW  
Deputy Executive Director

Joyce M. Pilsner, MA  
Editor

Adrienne Lange  
Publication & Design

RMHA@RMHA.ORG • WWW.RMHA.ORG

**Summer Newsletter  
2010**

**non-profit  
postage  
paid**



**UNITED WAY  
OF NEW YORK CITY**  
Helps Here