



The Word

2023 Issue No. 1

Grandpas United™ Co-founders: Frank Williams, Jr. and Jim Isenberg
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Greetings from our Co-founders by Frank Williams Jr. and Jim Isenberg

Summer is here and Grandpas United™ is alive and well! Despite the pandemic, Grandpas United™ moved forward and expanded with chapters in five NY cities. In addition, Grandpas United™ continues to create innovative, intergenerational programs. Some may think that Grandpas are “grumpy,” but we’re actually quite resilient and committed to supporting youth in our communities.

With the ongoing support of our incredible state, county and city leaders, we are building a model of Grandpas United™ that can be replicated across New York, and hopefully, throughout our country. We were recently honored with a Program of Distinction designation by the national organization, Generations United. We continue our collaboration with CoGenerate as we further our Grandpas United™ programs which are intergenerational, diverse and relevant to the needs of our local communities. We built a new connection with the Dadvocracy Group in Maryland; our documentary, Gramps Not Grumps, was selected to be shown at their 2nd Annual Daddying Film Festival this year.

Our group of Grandpas enjoyed learning from guest speakers at our monthly Coffee with Grandpas sessions. Our bi-weekly mentoring training sessions continue, allowing us to share our youth mentoring experiences as well as learn about evidence-based approaches to working with young people. We also learned not to call young people, as it’s best to text them first. It works, for sure!

Our linkage with the nationally recognized Fatherhood program offered us opportunities to join with fathers who are committed to building strong, positive relationships with young men of color. Inspired by this initiative, our Grandpas came together to organize the JumpStart for Dads program, designed to mentor new fathers who are under 25 years old. This unique program is linked with the White Plains Hospital,



as well as local community and childcare centers. We wish to thank the White Plains Rotary Club for a \$1,500 donation to this innovative, intergenerational program.

Grandpas United™ continues to be actively engaged as youth mentors with the White Plains Youth Court. Grandpas provide weekly coaching assistance to support the youth’s efforts to complete graduation out of the Youth Court diversion programs. So far, the Grandpas have achieved a 100% success rate as there has been no recidivism from more than 50 youth mentored by Grandpas!

Grandpas have also supported the YPI (Youth Police Initiative) program that has now engaged both a boys group and a first group of girls. This “trust building” program is designed to build positive relationships between community youth and police. The YPI program has received great support from the White Plains Police Department and the local youth community.

Grandpas United™ proudly announced its third cohort of Civic Engagement Awards in June. The Awards program provides \$500 grants to each of the six White Plains high school seniors who are actively engaged with community service. We appreciate the support of the Gibbons family who have generously supported this program to honor their father and Grandpas United™ member, Solomon Gibbons. Grandpas United™ also hosted its second Talent Showcase, featuring the Grandpas Chorus, White Plains youth and the dynamic Gramps Not Grumps Band. Grandpas United™ definitely has rhythm! Finally, Grandpas United™ continues to recruit and seek new Grandpas. We know all our communities have Grandpas who want to be engaged, share their experiences and support our local youth.

So Onwards, Grandpas United™ as we build new organizations, involve lots of Grandpas and continue to be active members of our communities!

The 2023 Daddying Film Festival

Gramps Not Grumps, the short documentary created for Grandpas United™ was selected for viewing at the 2023 Daddying Film Festival & Forum (D3F) in June.

According to the DADvocracy Consulting Group, “Daddying” is what occurs when fatherhood and nurturing converge in service to a child. When we use the word father or dad, we refer to all those who play a fatherly role.

The Daddying Film Festival & Forum (D3F) was created by DADvocracy to offer children and adults a stage to express through film/video how they feel about the relationship they have or wish they had with their dads. In 2022, the Daddying Film Festival provided students and non-student indie filmmakers from 17 countries a worldwide stage to convey the importance of fathers in their lives.

D3F expanded in 2023 to also specifically encourage dad and father figure filmmakers to submit their own films for consideration. Grandpas United is proud to have been selected by the Festival’s panel of judges to be included in this year’s groundbreaking festival. In case you haven’t seen our documentary yet, [please click here and enjoy](#).



It’s Official – We are a Program of Distinction

Grandpas United™ is proud to have been awarded a Program of Distinction designation by Generations United. The **Program of Distinction** designation denotes that the awarded program meets the highest standards of intergenerational effectiveness and provides greater confidence in the program’s sustainability and capacity to achieve targeted outcomes.

Generations United’s **Intergenerational Program Certification** designations are based on the criteria that underpin the effectiveness of any intergenerational program and are intended to recognize the rich diversity among programs that involve older and younger generations.

We are grateful to all our amazing Grandpa volunteers whose hard work made this possible.



COFFEE WITH GRANDPAS...

*Grandpas United™ ongoing core program continues to inform and build connections as our Grandpas United community grows.
The Grandpas enjoyed very interesting programs this year, including:*



2023 kicked off with a conversation with Kent Washington, the first African American to play professional basketball in Communist Poland.

Recruited into the top Polish league in 1979, Washington went on to play five seasons in the Solidarity-era communist country. His story told for the first time in his memoir, *Kentomania: A Black Basketball Virtuoso in Communist Poland*, is unprecedented, weaving together professionalism, race, and politics in powerful and daring ways.

In honor of Black History Month, Grandpas United welcomed guest speaker Dr. George Pruitt, President Emeritus of Thomas Edison State University.

Dr. Pruitt, author of “From Protest to President” shared his experiences as a young boy traveling between Canton, Mississippi and Chicago during the 1960s and 1970s. Dr. Pruitt was engaged in high school and college in student protests and also had barbershop encounters with Malcom X.

Dr. Pruitt was instrumental in illuminating the significance of Historical Black Colleges and Universities across the country.



White Plains High School’s Principal Emerly Martinez, along with Assistant Principals Vitiello and Figueroa, spoke about “Preparing Our Young People for the Future.”

There are many innovative programs in process and coming soon at White Plains High School, including inter-generational opportunities for the Grandpas to mentor students in both academic tracks and pathways to careers in skilled trades.

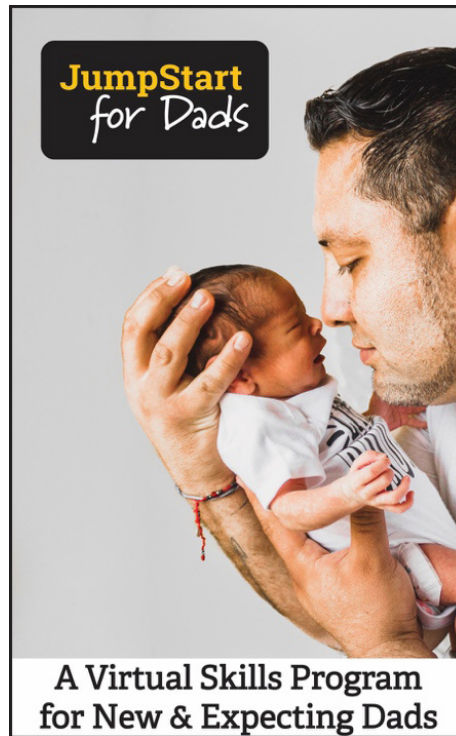
Dr. Leanne Levin, Clinical Psychologist at New York Medical College, spoke on the subject of The Aging Brain.

Some of the protective factors to improve brain function and delay cognitive decline included healthy lifestyle, keeping your brain active through hobbies and interests, as well as establishing and maintaining meaningful relationships through groups like Grandpas United. We completely agree!



JumpStart for Dads: Summer Update

By Dr. Vito Sessa and Ervan Caesar



It is an exciting time for Grandpas United™ *JumpStart for Dads* skills and support program for new and expectant dads! Much work on the program was done throughout the Winter and Spring. The *JumpStart* planning committee of Ervan, Vito, Ellen, Cassandra and Eric Rios put the final touches on our *JumpStart for Dads* brochure and poster.

Both the brochure and the poster were printed in English and Spanish, and the poster has a QR code for quick access to contact information. The promotional materials are being distributed to our recruiting partners, including White Plains Hospital, community health centers, obstetrical and pediatric offices, Planned Parenthood, houses of worship, and other community agencies. Committee members have already met with staff at White Plains Hospital, the Greenburgh Health Center, The Sun River Health Center in Peekskill and the Open Door Health Center in Ossining. All these recruiting partners have been VERY EXCITED about the program.

Anticipating high demand, more Grandpas have joined Ervan and Vito to be additional *JumpStart for Dads* facilitators. Thanks go to Paul Schiffman from White Plains, as well as Harry Campbell and Dave Shakin from Ossining. All of us, including Eric Rios (facilitator of our Spanish speaking program) have been meeting regularly to discuss how to introduce new dad participants to the program and how to best present the curriculum for our program, *Fathering in 15* from the National Fatherhood Clearing House (NRFC). Participant recruitment has begun and we hope to have our first session this summer. By the way, we need more Spanish speaking facilitators. Please refer anyone you know who might be available and interested to Cassandra, Ellen, Ervan or Vito.

Stay tuned for further updates of *JumpStart for Dads* later this year!



Q & A in a Gen2GenWay

by Ellen Barth



Sophia Farrell

Sophia Farrell graduated from White Plains High School and will be attending Siena College this Fall. She is White Plains 2023 Youth of the Year and a Grandpas United Civic Engagement Award winner.

Dennis Cuddy is one of our original Grandpas, joining us in 2018. He continues to be an active Grandpas United volunteer in White Plains.



Dennis Cuddy



Young Dennis with his grandfather.

Name/Nickname: Sophia Farrell	Name/Nickname: Dennis Cuddy
Age: 18	Age: 74
Hometown: Washington Heights in Manhattan	Hometown: Pelham, NY
What High School did you attend: White Plains High School	What High School did you attend? Pelham Memorial High School in Westchester
Who was your favorite teacher and why? Ms. Glazer, because she was always there for me since 1 st grade.	Who was your favorite teacher and why? My fifth-grade teacher, Mary Alice Kessler. Every day she started the class singing a song. It was amazing! She was the teacher all the kids wanted to have.
Favorite sport/hobby: Volleyball	Favorite sport/hobby: I enjoyed playing basketball and baseball as a young man. When I turned fifty, I started kayaking. One of my favorite kayaking memories was sunset on the Hudson River on July 4 th . We could see fireworks in the distance. Suddenly, a thunderstorm was coming in, so we raced to shore as far away from Indian Point as possible, until the storm passed. Very exciting, but then we had to kayak home after the storm.
Favorite social media platform: Instagram	Favorite social media platform: I am not on social media.
How many times per day do you look at your phone? 15 times a day	How many times per day do you look at your phone? Even with just email, I'm guessing I check my phone 40+ times a day.
What is your favorite game? Monopoly	What is your favorite game? As a child and again as a Grandpa, I liked Candyland. Now, I also like Spelling Bee.
Favorite song? "Grammy" by Drake	Favorite song? "Your Song" by Elton John
What do you do to exercise/move your body? I go to the gym. I like to do the machines and weights mostly, but I really do anything.	What do you do to exercise/move your body? I work out at the gym on the elliptical trainer and with free weights.
What is your favorite food? Jerk Chicken	What is your favorite food? I eat pizza way too much. I love grilled fish, especially Branzino.
What is your least favorite food? Blue Cheese	What is your least favorite food? I dislike Chinese food.
What famous person, living or dead, would you like to meet? George Washington	What famous person, living or dead, would you like to meet? I would like to meet the songwriters, Paul Simon and Elton John. I also want to meet my ancestor, Julia Burns, who bravely left Ireland in 1847 to escape the potato famine and start a new life in America.
How do you express that something is "great?" Fantastic!	How do you express that something is "great?" Awesome!
Favorite quote or words to live by? "No one chooses your path but you."	Favorite quote or words to live by? In addition to being musical, my family members were all teachers and counselors. When I told my mother I was going to be a teacher too, her advice was, "Make sure you see the kids that need you the most. Sometimes the neediest kids are the hardest to find."
Anything else you want to share with our community?	Anything else you want to share with our community? I've lived in Westchester County my whole life, including White Plains for 44 years. I think it's a wonderful place to grow up and raise a family.



Grandpas United™ Across Westchester

With the generous support of our state and local leaders, Grandpas United™ continues to expand its footprint with chapters in Ossining, Port Chester, New Rochelle and Peekskill. These new chapters are growing steadily as the Grandpas fulfill its intergenerational mentoring mission. Here is a sampling of what's happening around the county:



Our Port Chester group outing – The Big Catch – on June 28 was a blast! Four of our Grandpas and 14 youths went out fishing on a local fishing charter. The boat took us out from 8 am to 12 pm, and by the end, we caught 32 porgies. The Grandpas had a blast helping the kids cast their lines and re-bait their hooks. In all, it was a wonderful trip where laughs were shared, and lessons were learned. Many youth expressed a desire to go fishing again this summer. What is important is that we found a niche that unites the youth and Grandpas.

Port Chester Fishing Trip



On the boat in Port Chester



It's always fun to fish with the Grandpas!

Grandpas United™ Across Westchester *Contd...*



Ossining Grandpas have been engaging community youth through a number of intergenerational activities. Story time with Grandpas has been a regular feature in the after-school program and they recently started a joint program with the Ossining Public Library, where the children read stories to the Grandpas. Additional regularly scheduled activities for younger children include Singalong with Grandpa and Gardening with Grandpa.

In support of Ossining's teens, the Grandpas helped at the Student Job Fair for summer employment. They will be guest speakers at the high school leadership program in the Fall to talk about different career paths.

Recruitment for new members included an Open Mike Night at a local brewery and a Grandpas Appreciation dinner at a nearby restaurant.



Singalong with Grandpa
David Shakin



Grandpas of New Rochelle participated in the city's Juneteenth festivities. Over 50 children visited the Grandpas' games and activities booths for some intergenerational celebrating in honor of this important day in history.

The New Rochelle organization has successfully recruited new Grandpas by setting up tables at Planet Fitness and the New Rochelle Public Library.



PICKLEBALL!

White Plains Recreation & Parks Commissioner Wayne Bass arranged for the Grandpas to have court time AND a Pickleball professional coach this Spring. The group learned a lot and had a great time doing so. The Grandpas intent to train regularly in anticipation of an intergenerational Pickleball tournament. Stay tuned for more details.



Grandpas at White Plains High School *By David Greene*

For over a year, Grandpas United™ member, David Greene, has been working with White Plains High School's Internship Committee made up of teachers, parents, administrators, and school counselors to develop a Senior Internship Experience called SITE (Senior Internship Tiger Experience).

This Spring, its pilot program involving approximately 12 students was a big success. Some of the projects include work at White Plains Hospital, Burke Rehabilitation Center, The Youth Court, an insurance company, and an art gallery.

Next year the program will evolve to hopefully involve more students.

Additionally, we are working with the WPHS administrative team to identify ways for Grandpas to partner with WPHS staff members in hopes of mentoring students who may need additional support. This may be done through the internship experience or through other avenues which are still being explored.

Grandpas United™ Mentoring: Actual “Grand-fatherhood” Not Required!

By John Steward

I enjoy kids, I enjoy teaching them and learning from them. When I heard about mentoring opportunities at Grandpas United™, it certainly sounded interesting. I went to some of their meetings and was impressed by the skilled group of guys from all walks and ways of life. Through the meetings, I learned there are many boys right here in Westchester County who need male role models.

A role model — what’s THAT? It’s someone with a lot of wisdom, gained from experience. Grandpas United™ is full of role models! Some of us are grandfathers, but it’s not a requirement of participation. Our name is derived from the role we play, which is similar to the role a Grandpa often plays in the life of a boy: a unique voice of guidance. And “United” means that we work together to make things better in our community now and in the future. Under the umbrella of the White Plains Youth Bureau, Grandpas United™ pursues three main activities: one-on-one mentoring, group-to-group mentoring, and Grandpa Time.

One-on-One Mentoring

To understand the current one-on-one activities, we need to provide some background on the Westchester Youth Court. Youth Court is where boys in Westchester who have gotten into some type of minor trouble are sent. Taking responsibility for whatever they did usually involves community service that is, hopefully, enlightening rather than punitive. The role of the Youth Court is to determine the appropriate amount of community service the youth should perform to right the situation. The roles of judge, jury, prosecutor, and defense are all performed by high school students: the youth’s peers. They do a remarkable job.

One of the community service activities the Youth Court can assign is to spend time with a member of Grandpas United™, usually communicating by phone or on Zoom. Each session is about an hour. To prepare, Grandpas are trained by social workers, who help us understand the role of mentor — what it is, and what it is not. For example, mentors are not Mom/Dad replacements.

We are not social workers, teachers, police officers, nor do we serve as alternative communication channels for the boy and the people in his life. Our role is to know about the

youth and understand his situation. We’re on the his side: after we hear his story, our goal is to offer non-judgmental perspectives that can help him learn and grow from his mistake.

Group-to-Group Mentoring

Group mentoring started in White Plains’ Church Street Elementary School. Every other week, a group of Grandpas meets with more than a dozen boys during their lunch period. We spend time interacting with the boys, and we often split up into small groups to play various board games like chess, mancala, or sets. The members and activities of the small groups change each time. Despite their vast experience, not all Grandpas know how to play chess, mancala, or sets, so “who teaches whom” also changes — and that’s the most fun.

Grandpa Time: Coffee with Grandpas

Coffee with Grandpas is where we get to know each other and about community issues and leaders. The times and locations of these events vary, so we hope you’ll send us your email address to let you know when something’s coming up. We’d love to have you join us:

Could YOU be a Grandpa?

We welcome all men with experience who care about children and want to help their neighbors. The only age requirement is that you are over 45 and you don’t mind being referred to as “Grandpa.” The work is deeply rewarding and the networking and friend-raising that happens among the Grandpas is invaluable. We ALL learn!

Mentor training with social workers is provided every other week. The hour-long sessions help Grandpas who are new to mentoring as well as those with experience who want to improve their mentoring skills. *Mentoring Training* alternates with the *Group-to-Group Mentoring* sessions with the elementary school students.

Please join us! We need more Grandpas and we’d love to meet you! Interested? Please send your email address and contact info to grandpasunitedwpyb@gmail.com so we can notify you about our activities, OR just come to one of our Coffee with Grandpas meetings and meet the guys!

Grandpas United™ Civic Engagement Awards

As part of its ongoing mission, Grandpas United's Civic Engagement Award Program honors six graduating High School seniors who have developed the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make a difference in their community. These scholarships have been made possible by generous donations in memory of Grandpa Solomon Gibbons, as well as donations in memory of Grandpa Saul Yanofsky.

Together, the six winners have served people of all ages in and around our community and beyond. They have done so as part of the Youth Bureau, Youth Court, Westchester County Youth Council, White Plains Mayor's Youth Council, NAACP, White Plains Public Safety Explorers Program, their local churches, schools, and the Boy Scouts.

Beyond the typical volunteer activities included in civic engagement, they have won awards from other organizations, facilitated workshops at conferences, become spokespersons for their organizations at public events, board members in their organizations, raised money for needy persons, distributed food, tutored, taught art, and even interviewed Grandpas to match them to young folks in need of mentoring.

Their future plans include a wide variety of objectives from cybersecurity and law to serving those in need, as well as politics. They are quite a group of highly talented, committed young people, and Grandpas United is very proud to honor them.

Meet the 2023 Grandpas United™ Civic Engagement Award Winners



My Name is Sophia Farrell. I am a 12th grader at White Plains High School. I was born and raised in Washington Heights in Manhattan and moved to White Plains in 2020. I live with my biological sister, but she is like a mother to me. In school, I was a student of the quarter last year and this year and now I am in the National Honor Society. I am a part of the GO Senate and am in the Margaret's Place peer mentorship program and Midnight Run. I help tutor a student in my old teacher's science class. In addition, outside of school I was a part of the Youth Court, am President of the Mayor's Youth Council, youth of the year for 2022, and a part of Family services of Westchester's Youth Council. After high school, I plan to attend Siena College and study law and politics. I want to go to law school and become a lawyer or politician because I want to help people get what they need.



Hello, my name is Katherine Peller. I am a senior at White Plains High School. I enjoy art, gardening and reading. I have reached out through my community connecting to people through the things I enjoy. I have helped and taught people of various ages how to paint and enjoy art at paint nights. I have grown and shared plants to people in need and I have helped in my school library and book/library club to better the library and make it a safe space for everyone. Connecting people and giving them the chance to explore and grow has always been something I have enjoyed and thrived for.



My name is Tyler Japal, a high school graduate from EF Academy New York, as well as a rising freshman at Cornell University where I will be studying government. I have been a part of the White Plains Youth Bureau since elementary school and would not have gotten to this stage without their guidance and opportunities. I participated in their boys Saturday Academy program and volunteered in Youth Bureau food drives. As a member of Westchester County Youth Council (WCYC), I advocated for funding programs that created opportunities for leadership training, mental health wellness, and tutoring for youths and their families. I also facilitated training to raise awareness and educate youths to make better decisions, including for their own safety, on topics such as gun violence, mental health, and racism. As an Eagle Scout, I organized Troop-sponsored events including fundraising and community service to support the elderly, veterans, fellow scouts, and our military troops.



I am Daniel Rivera and for the past two years, I have volunteered at the White Plains Youth Bureau, helping needy families struggling with necessities. I did spring planting at the Bethel Community Garden, and harvested and cleaned up in the Fall. Over the past three years I have bundled and distributed groceries and gifts during the holidays. I plan to continue to be an active volunteer at college as well as in the local community.

An act of civic engagement that I am most proud of is my involvement at the White Plains Police Department. As a member of the City of White Plains Public Safety Explorers Program, I have had the opportunity to see directly how policing is done in my community. I have learned a lot about what police officers actually do on the job. I learned that police officers spend most of their time supporting the community carefully and conscientiously which, unfortunately, attracts little attention or credit. I am glad to know that our police make our safety an absolute priority.

My volunteer work in my community gave me a deep appreciation of why it is necessary to understand and appreciate different perspectives. Walking in someone else's shoes would make us less critical and more considerate. I will attend Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University - Daytona Beach to study aerospace engineering in the fall.



My name is Alicia Garcia, I am a high school senior at White Plains High School. I enjoy playing badminton, tennis, and photography. I have been doing community service for four years from making get-better cards to being a front desk receptionist at the White Plains Hospital. I have done many things for the community including: making small yarn bracelets and cards for cancer patients, participating in school and out of school events, connecting with leaders from 16 different countries, creating a YouTube channel, Instagram presence to reach teens worldwide social and emotional support, and tutoring kids from pre-k to 6th graders. I have been in the Key Club as the General Organization rep. Our activities this year included collecting new toys for less fortunate children and raising money to help a school faculty member's health. Being a leader is what I hope to continue.



My name is Marc Rosenthal, a White Plains High School graduate going into Cyber-security at Rochester Institute of Technology. The most memorable volunteer activity I did during the past few school years was volunteering as a White Plains Community Youth Court member. My work with this social justice program was to assist youthful offenders who committed a misdemeanor crime from entering the juvenile justice system.

As a Youth Advocate, I got to learn about the clients first-hand and presented a statement at the Youth Court hearing painting them in a good light. They are a person who made a mistake, so my job was to let the jurors see their human side and to request they provide the client with a second chance. Programs like Youth Court gives client a second chance so they can move on with their lives. This Program fills me with a sense of pride like no other and I'm grateful for having had this opportunity.

Camino de Santiago: Walking the Pilgrim's Path

by Dean Wiltshire

Two years ago, I wrote on my bucket list that on my (70th) birthday, I would walk the pilgrim's path in Spain called The Camino Santiago. Inspired by a friend who had walked it, as well as the movie "The Way" starring Martin Sheen, I decided a 490-mile walk was a wonderful way to commemorate my coming of age into my seventies.

I arrived in France on April 28, 2023, with one pair of hiking boots and all my provisions in a backpack, with intentions of completing the walk in six weeks, starting from St. Jean-Pied-de-Port in France to Santiago de Compostela in Spain.

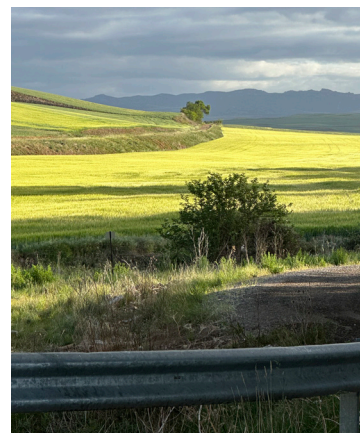
The ancient pilgrim path, also known as "The Way of St. James," dates back to the 9th century. Years after Christ's crucifixion, the disciple St. James was preaching in Jerusalem, where he was killed by Herod in 62 A.D. His body was

carried by his disciples from Jerusalem to Santiago, Spain and the route they traveled has been traditionally marked as the Pilgrims Path.

Today, it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and people from all over the world with no religious intent or affiliations walk the path for the experience of viewing ancient towns, cathedrals, unforgettable mountain ranges, serene pastures, waterfalls, and wild horses roaming freely.

Few words or pictures can adequately capture all my experiences, but the one thing that stands out are the people I

met on the 490-mile walk. I have made friends with many people from various parts of the world who were also traveling on this peaceful journey and shared and learned a lot about myself and others. Arriving in Santiago on June 2, 2023, I received a certificate validating the miles traveled and returned home feeling renewed.





Jackie Robinson Museum Intergenerational Fieldtrip

by Dennis Cuddy

In honor of Black History Month, two Youth Bureau vans filled with students and Grandpas made the trip to Lower Manhattan in NYC to visit the Jackie Robinson Museum. It was a beautiful space with a mix of classic display cases and interactive multimedia to keep everyone in our intergenerational group interested.

The museum chronicles Robinson's extraordinary life against the backdrop of U.S. history, beginning with his birth in 1919. The artifacts, videos and interactive experiences highlight Robinson's multifaceted commitment to advancing equal opportunity for all through activism, civic engagement, and economic empowerment efforts.

The main gallery started with a short video that got the group started and then we walked on our own.

There were lots of impromptu small intergenerational conversations between the Grandpas and kids inspired by the exhibits, especially discussions about racism and his impact on the sport.

One of the key points our group explored was how Robinson became a champion of the Civil Rights Movement when he didn't have to and it was physically dangerous to do so. It helped the youth appreciate when athletes and celebrities get involved in social justice causes today.

After the museum, we ate lunch at a pizza place where slices were only \$1.00 each, just like in the Grandpas' days. It was great day of learning and lots of fun.



Youth & Police Initiative for White Plains Girls

By Cassandra Mindingall

YPI (Youth & Police Initiative), co-founded by our very own Grandpas United™ co-founder, Dr. Jim Isenberg, had its beginnings as part of the Boston-area police academy for cadets. The goal was to help officers gain a better understanding of the culture of the youth they would serve. What better way to do this than to include the youth of the community, thus creating a mission “to build trust and break down stereotypes between youth and police.”

Last year, Grandpas United™ sponsored a great YPI cohort, partnering with the StepUP boys of the WPYB. This year, seeing the opportunity for a “first”, the Grandpas sponsored a “Girls’ YPI” cohort. Not only were the youth participants girls, but all of the officers, facilitators and liaisons were women.

We recruited the youth from the various YB programs and with the help of SRO Winston McCormack at the White Plains High School. Capt. James Spencer and Lt. Gus Fazzino brought together a team of phenomenal officers. The participants were told only the basics and they didn’t know what to expect.

The first 3 days of the 5-day session were dedicated to the youth for self-awareness exploration, meaningful

conversations around relevant topics, games and public speaking activities. The officers joined the group on day four. They were greeted with presentations by the teens. They, in turn, had to give the same type of presentation, without any previous preparation. This activity built the connection. The role-play activity gave a “shoe on the other foot” lesson. Through the conversations, each participant learned more about themselves and each other.

Everyone expressed how impactful and valuable this experience was. They all expressed that being amongst all “girls” made it comfortable, and they would not have been as open had the group been coed.

“I’m grateful to have been a participant in the YPI program and to serve as the Police Department’s liaison. Although I’ve worked with many youths in the community, it was a privilege to work with the same group of youths for five consecutive days and see their transformation. We learned from each other, enhanced communication, dispelled stereotypes, and most importantly built stronger bonds. Every police officer and every youth across this country could benefit from what YPI has to offer.”
– Detective Christina Brown





HAPPY *Birthday* **Grandpas!**

January 20 – Darrel Kidd
January 20 – Warren Marsh

February 16 – Mario Sidona
February 21 – Bob Miller
February 24 – Scott Horecky
February 26 – Marc Sharff

March 5 – Gene Kava
March 6 – Lee Wiederkehr
March 9 – Daniel Russo

March 14 – Leonard deVere
March 20 – Ervan Caesar
March 31 – Grady Lockhart

April 12 – Edward Williamson
April 19 – Dean Wiltshire

May 6 – John Roche
May 23 – Nick Krzeminski

June 26 – Time Egan



RECENT EVENTS

August 1, 6:00 pm

White Plains National Night Out

August 4, 1:00 pm

Grandpas Go To Camp with Macaroni the Clown

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 9, time TBA

**Grandpas United/Youth & Police Initiative
Cookout**

September 10, 2:00 - 4:00 pm

Grandparents Day at the White Plains Library

September 21 – 9:00 am

Dads Take Your Child to School Day

September 23, 12:00 noon – 4:00 pm

White Plains Family Fun Wellness Fair

BE ON THE LOOK OUT FOR...

Ongoing

Grandpas United Mentoring Skills & Support Group

TBA

Grandpas United Annual Community Breakfast

High Five with Grandpas (Middle School)

Flying Drones with Grandpas (STEM Academy)

For More Information Call: 914-422-1378



Sponsored in part
by the Westchester
County Youth Bureau



The mission of Grandpas United™ of the White Plains Youth Bureau is to utilize the talents, skills and experiences of our Grandpas to improve our community. We aspire to serve as male role models and mentors to enhance the growth and development of our youth, while sharing our talents and experiences with one another, enabling us to maintain our dignity, self-respect and self-worth.

For more information, call the White Plains Youth Bureau at 914-422-1378,
Visit www.whiteplainsyouthbureau.org/adults-parents or email GrandpasUnitedWPYB@gmail.com.