

BRAYCE

Brazilian & American Youth Cultural Exchange



Newsletter, Autumn 2008

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Mission

To build bridges of opportunity to enable young people to develop the skills necessary to become effective leaders and inspired members of their communities

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Welcome to the seventh BRAYCE Newsletter

BRAYCE is proud to announce the realization of a major goal - the completion of a true cultural exchange between the United States and Brazil. For the first time, BRAYCE sent an American student, Springfield College senior Teresa Tursi, to work in projects in Rio de Janeiro with IBISS. She stayed with the Shorter family in Rio and we hope to increase the pool of potential host families in the future.

Other ground-breaking news was the visit to Chester of our Brazilian partner, Dr. Nanko van Buuren and his son, Juninho. Their stay was action packed beginning with a reception chez Calder where we were honored to be joined by our State Senator, Eileen Daily. At his suggestion, Juninho, with the enthusiastic agreement of Camp Hazen, will be returning with 3-4 colleagues in 2009 to teach campers the Brazilian martial art of Capoeira, percussion and football. Juninho is an accomplished athlete and musician.

BRAYCE welcomed Pauline Batista, our first BRAYCE recruit from ITAE (Institute for Arts and Education) in Paraty, to participate in the Leadership I program at Camp Hazen. Pauline enchanted campers and staff with her lovely smile and outgoing personality graduating from the program with flying colors. In 2009 we plan to recruit 2 young leaders from ITAE for Camp Hazen while sponsoring an American student to intern in this expanding organization in Paraty.

We have learned how crucial it is to provide adequate language tuition for our recruits in both Brazil and the States in order to ensure students get the most out of their respective exchange programs. In Brazil we have a three-year financial commitment for English language courses encouraging 12-13 year olds to sign up. Students will have 3-4 years of English lessons before reaching the age when they could be considered for selection by the BRAYCE Program. In the States, we are currently investigating similar options.

Chester Highlights

- BRAYCE super star, Rafael Guerra, proved to be the extraordinary young leader we knew he could be, given the opportunity, as he completed a full summer as a Camp Hazen counselor. Rafael has resumed his university studies in Tourism in Rio.
- Pauline Batista, BRAYCE recruit from ITAE in Paraty, graduated from the Leadership I program at Camp Hazen.
- Dr. Nanko van Buuren, President of IBISS, stayed three nights at Camp Hazen with his son Juninho, observing and participating in many camp activities.
- Nanko, Richard and Margot met with Jim Austrausky and Hannah Lintner of Essex Television who are assisting BRAYCE with the production of a documentary about the cultural exchange program.
- John Williams, owner of the creative graphic arts firm of Williams and Company in Chester, and Mary Devins, Associate Director of the Toor Cummings International Studies Department at Connecticut College, have joined the BRAYCE Board. Welcome!
- BRAYCE hosted a dinner at Restaurant du Village on Tuesday, September 30. Guests were invited to enjoy a wonderful dinner while learning about the BRAYCE Cultural Exchange Program.
- Planning is underway for our Third Annual fundraiser ball, *Samba Rio*, to be held on Valentine's Day, Saturday, February 14, 2009, in the Catholic Parish Center, in Chester. Please MARK YOUR CALENDARS. The event is part of the Chester Winter Carnivale weekend. Check our website www.brayce.org for more details.

I feel that I had a great success: I travelled to another country by myself not knowing what I was being thrown into while knowing little of the language. Despite these circumstances, I established myself in Terra Encantada and became a known member of their community. The most rewarding has been working with these beautiful children and to know that what I can help with is making a positive difference on their education.
Teresa Tursi August 2008



Counselor Rafael instructs campers



Pauline learns to overcome fear in space



Rafael, Nanko, Pauline, Denise Learned, Senator Daily, the Calders and Juninho

Rio de Janeiro and Paraty Highlights

- Teresa Tursi, BRAYCE's first American to intern in Rio, worked in IBISS projects in the favelas of Terra Encantada, Vila Cruzeiro and the orphanage of Santa Clara. She also visited Paraty to meet with Maria Helena Dantas, Executive Director of ITAE, to discuss establishing a BRAYCE internship in 2009. Congratulations, Teresa!
- Although busy with college studies, Rafael will continue to be involved in the favelas of Terra Encantada and Jardim America. He will work on creating a bi-lingual student manual to prepare Brazilian BRAYCE recruits for the Camp Hazen experience; participate in the ESL (English as a Second Language) classes in Terra Encantada; assist in the selection and preparation of new recruits for Camp Hazen and act as Reporter-at-Large from Rio providing updates to BRAYCE on projects and activities.
- Once the new construction at ITAE is complete, Pauline will be teaching English as a second language (ESL) as well as coordinating with Rafael to develop the bi-lingual student manual, helping to identify a suitable candidate for 2009 and assisting the director with paperwork, passport applications and visas for the next recruits.
- BRAYCE graduate, Gilmar Aragão, has moved away from Terra Encantada. However, inspired by his training and experience at Camp Hazen, he has enrolled in university in Rio and working hard at improving his English.
- Suellen Alves, 2006 BRAYCE graduate, is attending classes at university and continuing to lead the mentorship program tutoring youngsters after school at Terra Encantada. She has nine assistants who work with 146 children.
- Under the tutelage of Nanko's assistant, Marlies van Exter, and proudly equipped with workbooks and dictionaries, 12 young Brazilian students meet twice weekly to study English in Terra Encantada. Teresa reports that the new Art Center is almost complete. It will have classrooms for arts and crafts, music, dance, theatre, English lessons, a library and a media center. The center will serve three favelas, consisting of some 20,000 persons.
- The media center will be filming the Brazilian piece of the BRAYCE documentary.
- Richard and Margot plan to be in Rio and Paraty in January 2009 to visit BRAYCE graduates, discuss future plans with IBISS and ITAE and meet potential recruits for the 2009 Camp Hazen Leadership Program.



The LEA 1 group assisted runners at the 2008 Chester Road Race.



The Hazen Cross Roads. After this experience, no child is ever the same.



Pauline and Rafael with BRAYCE Board Member Barbara Delaney.



Teresa with young members of her large fan club in Terra Encantada.



It takes courage, trust in your leader and a strong sense of adventure to attempt this sheer rock face.



Summer training is now over at Camp Hazen and many new leadership skills are already being put to work.

To all BRAYCE volunteers who enthusiastically support our events, write wonderful press articles, donate endless time and effort and appreciate the work we are doing — THANK YOU



Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.
Margaret Mead

