

BRAYCE

Brazilian & American Youth Cultural Exchange



Newsletter, Spring 2007

In this Issue

- Welcome
- Program Status
- Chester Highlights
- Rio Highlights

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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 our Fourth Newsletter

Welcome! There have been a number of important developments since our last newsletter that we would like to share with you. This includes our visit to Rio de Janeiro and the very successful Chester Winter Samba Carnivale at the Ivoryton Playhouse. In Rio, Gilmar Aragao and Suellen Alves have assumed greater responsibilities in the favela of Terra Encantada (see overleaf for details). We also had meetings with contacts for introductions to potential corporate partners and sponsors.

Year Two is going to differ somewhat from our earlier thoughts. Casa Azul in Paraty is not yet ready to identify and support two young leaders and in Rio the search for suitable young leaders with some basic English is expanding to beyond Terra Encantada to neighboring favelas. This will provide a larger pool of potential candidates and help strengthen IBISS's work in the whole area. We are optimistic that Nanko van Buuren will visit Chester in the Summer when the new BRAYCE recruits are at Camp Hazen. Once again, thank you very much for your continued interest and support of this important program.

Margot, Richard and Caitlin

Chester Highlights

- Presentations to area Rotary Clubs continue: Middletown in January, East Hampton in April
- Invitation from St. Johns Church in Essex, CT, to include BRAYCE in their Alternative Giving Program
- Presentation to Chester Merchants that led to their sponsorship of Samba Carnivale 2007 on February 17th
- Over 200 attended the Chester Winter Samba Carnivale held at the Ivoryton Playhouse with all proceeds to BRAYCE. The event was sold out. Planning is in progress for 2008. Photographs overleaf and at www.theartofseeing.com/samba.

Rio de Janeiro Highlights

- Richard and Margot traveled to Rio in early February, 2007
- Richard, Margot and Marlies, from IBISS, met with US Consul, Steve Ruken and staff to discuss the visa application process. This was an opportunity for us to fully describe the BRAYCE initiative. The presentation was well received and we were given assurance of the Consulate's support in the visa applications for future recruits for the BRAYCE cultural exchange. This was a very significant vote of confidence.
- Visit to favela Terra Encantada to meet with Gilmar, Suellen and others to discuss their individual projects and progress
- Tour of the nearly completed renovations of the Community Center and upcoming renovation of an adjacent two story building destined to become the area Arts Center. The new two building complex is being called Espaco Encantada
- Tour of another IBISS Community Center project in Vila Cruziero. The project provides a wide range of services including education, social, healthcare and sports programs for 5,000 young residents of neighboring favelas
- IBISS launches a TB awareness program in Terra Encantada
- Visit to Paraty for discussions with the principals of Casa Azul and another established organization (ITAE) providing after school youth services for 500 youngsters. These also include education, social, healthcare and sports programs.



The almost completed Community Center



The next challenge! To turn this derelict into a vibrant Theatre Arts Center to serve the surrounding local communities and to train many youngsters in drama, music and dance



Gilmar and Suellen explain the wonders of Camp Hazen to Rafael Guerra one of the leadership candidates for the summer of 2007

Our nation will succeed or fail to the degree that all of us, citizens and businesses alike, are active participants in building strong, sustainable and enriching communities
Arnold Hiatt ex - CEO StrideRite Corp

In Terra Encantada, Gilmar and Suellen have assumed greater responsibilities:

- Both were involved in conducting the first ever communitywide census.
- Suellen's new responsibility is participating as a workshop leader to create awareness and prevention of Tuberculosis (which has dramatically increased over the past five years) in Terra Encantada and other favelas
- Gilmar will be responsible for organizing and teaching theatre and dance programs at the new area Arts Center, now being called Espaço Encantada (see photo on front page).



Rafael, Suellen and Gilmar



Palm Tree at the Samba Carnivale



Nanko, Antonio (Director of the Vila Cruzeiro Center) and Margot



The Historic District, Paraty



Historic Paraty waterfront



Scenes from the Chester Winter Samba Carnivale at the Ivoryton Playhouse, Ivoryton, Connecticut

US Ambassador to Brazil, Clifford Sobel, commented to Congress at his confirmation hearing in June 2006 "I look forward to building new bridges...and bringing young Brazilians here to study and work. I have been, and will be a huge supporter of foreign exchange programs. Working with the Brazilian Government, I look forward to reaching out, as we do so well in the United States, to those who have not received the benefits of international trade and an expanding economy, including those that are disadvantaged, at-risk and left behind"