



Bridging Volunteers and Agencies

# VRC VOLUNTEERING NEWS

Bridging Volunteers and Agencies

www.volunteer-referral.org

Summer 2009

## VRC Celebrates 20th Anniversary – More Interviews, More Volunteers, More Service, More Parties!



Ahead of the October 1st Fall Benefit, VRC President Elaine Orr conducts research over brunch at the Cotton Club

The Volunteer Referral Center has been celebrating its 20th anniversary this year in a number of exciting ways, and there's still more to come! So far this year, we have marked milestones and brought together VRC founders, Board members, volunteers, and staff to celebrate the collective accomplishments of the VRC, and we held an event in honor of a very special member of our VRC family.

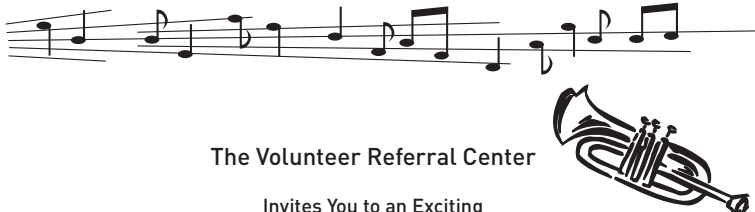
Our Spring Benefit took place on April 15th, with a trip to the 59E59 Theaters in Manhattan for the world premiere of the play "Chasing Manet," a comedy by Tina Howe. A delicious dinner of New American cuisine at the Cinema Café on 60th Street preceded the performance. The play was a hit with all who attended, and the fundraiser was a great success.

On May 14th, Julie Pershan and Jonathan Cohen graciously opened their home in Manhattan for a surprise party in honor of the inimitable Nancy Carr. Nancy served as VRC President for an amazing 20 years, and as guests were treated to drinks and hors d'oeuvres, we paid tribute to Nancy for her two decades of service. We presented Nancy with a scrapbook of photographs commemorating her years of dedication and hard work on behalf of VRC; VRC also presented Nancy with a lovely engraved silver picture frame, which was later filled with a photograph of all the VRC Board members, volunteers, and staff who attended this very special evening. The occasion was marked by warm and funny speeches saluting how much VRC has achieved under Nancy's tutelage. VRC, as well as the NYC non-profit community at large, has much to thank Nancy for, and this surprise celebration was a tribute to the great achievements of a truly venerable community leader and philanthropist. Thank you, Nancy Carr!

Save The Date for our Fall Benefit at Harlem's world-famous Cotton Club on October 1st, 2009! This year's Fall Benefit promises to be a fun-filled evening of dinner and dancing at one of the world's best-known jazz clubs.

The Cotton Club All Stars band will be playing all of the classic jazz and blues music that helped launch the careers of great artists like Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, Ethel Waters, and Lena Horne, and we'll enjoy fine Southern-style cuisine at Harlem's most storied and stylish nightclub. This is one party you won't want to miss! Keep an eye out for the invitation, which will be arriving in your mail box very soon.


As we continue the festivities, we are also working toward making improvements to existing VRC programs, planning new programs, keeping up with the increase in requests for interviews, and keeping up-to-date with all of the fascinating new ways of communicating our mission to a broader community of volunteers. And, we will be planning more ways to fête VRC and our 20 years of service... Details to come!



The Volunteer Referral Center  
Invites You to an Exciting  
Evening of Dinner, Blues and Jazz at

**THE COTTON CLUB**

Thursday, October 1, 2009 at 7:30 p.m.  
656 West 125th Street



## VRC Welcomes New Volunteer Sherida Byron



Best practices: Interviewers Sherida Byron and Jane Kronholz discuss tricks of the VRC trade

The VRC is pleased to announce our newest volunteer is Ms. Sherida Byron! Sherida found her way to VRC after meeting Pat Girardi and Elaine Orr at the JPMorgan Chase Volunteer Fair in June. When Sherida came to VRC for her interview, we could tell right away from her strong professional and volunteer background that her experience would be a great asset to VRC. After a brief conversation, Interviewer Jane Kronholz suggested that Sherida might be interested in becoming an Interviewer herself, and Sherida enthusiastically agreed. Her commitment to working with and helping people is immediately evident from her warm smile and friendly demeanor, and in mid-July Sherida began conducting her own interviews at VRC.

Sherida moved to New York City from the island of St. Vincent over 30 years ago, and she worked at JPMorgan Chase for 25 years in various capacities, most recently in credit risk management. Even before the downturn in the financial markets forced the elimination of Sherida's position at JPMorgan Chase, she had a great deal of experience in volunteer work; Sherida has been volunteering her time with New York Cares for over 10 years. Additionally, she has donated her time and skills to the American Red Cross, studying disaster relief management among other topics at the Red Cross's headquarters in midtown Manhattan. Sherida's talents extend well past financial and philanthropic endeavors; she also enjoys baking, gardening, and crocheting. VRC is lucky and grateful to have such an accomplished new volunteer: welcome Sherida!

## VRC Attends Volunteer Fair at JPMorgan Chase

On June 9th, VRC President Elaine Orr and Executive Director Pat Girardi attended the JPMorgan Chase Volunteer Fair in the Financial District. VRC was one of 7 non-profit organizations that participated in the fair, and since

then VRC has welcomed more than a dozen displaced JPMorgan Chase employees to our office for interviews. Volunteer fairs have been organized by the JPMorgan Chase Career Services department to help displaced employees find meaningful ways to spend their time and give back to the New York City community as they transition to their next jobs or careers. As reported in our last newsletter, the number of interviews conducted at VRC has been on the rise, up 41 percent in the first half of 2009 as compared to the same time last year. According to VRC internal statistics, the number of people identifying themselves as unemployed has also almost doubled. As more people look to become volunteers, VRC will be actively participating in volunteer fairs around the city, empowering individuals and agencies with the information they need to make a difference in our communities. VRC is looking forward to attending another JPMorgan Chase Volunteer Fair in fall '09, and participating in volunteer fairs at Marble Collegiate Church and the Fashion Institute of Technology, where we are certain to discover many more prospective volunteers to contribute their talents and skills to VRC and our partner agencies.

The number of interviews conducted at VRC is up 41 percent this year

## Word From VRC President Elaine Orr

The first half of 2009, and the first six months of my tenure as VRC president, have gone by so quickly. Many changes have taken place in the first half of this year, both at VRC and in the world at large. The VRC office has been very busy throughout this time; certainly, the ongoing economic downturn has contributed to the sharp increase in the number of interviews that have been conducted at the VRC office, and we expect to remain quite busy through the end of the year. We've been occupied with many other projects as well, and as autumn approaches, we will be working on a host of tasks, big and small.

Among the changes at VRC is our new staff. We are very pleased to have Pat Girardi as our Executive Director; Pat



Smile! Meet the new VRC staff: (L to R) Pat Girardi, Nicole Friedman, Becky Hamburger, Elaine Orr

## Word From VRC President Elaine Orr (continued)

brings much experience to her new role, having served as the Executive Director at the Parents League of New York for many years. Additionally, we are happy to have Nicole Friedman as our Director of Communications; Nicole returned to her hometown of NYC last year after spending several years working as a communications specialist in Washington, DC. Nicole will also continue her work with the Young Professionals Committee. Finally, we've been delighted to have Becky Hamburger working with us this summer, dedicating her time to grant writing and development efforts. Becky will resume her graduate studies in Public Administration at NYU in the fall, and will continue working with us as a volunteer. Brienne Cliadakis, our past Executive Director, has "retired" to Beacon, NY, where she lives with her husband and son, and runs the very popular Zuzu's Café.

So, as we are fortified with the energies of our new team, we will be working through the summer to plan additional programs and find innovative ways of tackling the challenges we face. In the meantime, we are celebrating our 20th anniversary of service to the NYC community and our agency partners, and we hope to see many of you at our grand Fall Benefit at the Cotton Club on October 1st. The 20th anniversary benefit celebration is certain to be a great time, and your contributions are more vital than ever in helping us continue to provide our community with the unique services of the Volunteer Referral Center.



VRC Founders gather to honor Nancy Carr. (L to R) Robin Withington, Nancy Carr, K.K. Leisure, Alice Greif, Kathy Pershan, Joanne Slusser, Mary Lambert

### Surprise! Celebrating Nancy Carr for her 20 Years of Leadership

I arrived before Nancy at Julie Pershan and Jonathan Cohen's stunning apartment overlooking Central Park on a glowing May evening. The room was brimming with F.O.N. (Friends of Nancy), present and past VRC volunteers, husbands, sons, daughters, and agency representatives - all awaiting the honored guest's appearance. We came together to honor Nancy's 20 years as President of the Volunteer Referral Center. While directing VRC, Nancy had become known as one of the important non-profit innovators in New York City. Knowing that Nancy would not have agreed to any special event to mark her 20 years as VRC President, the party was kept a surprise.

When Nancy arrived she appeared to have no idea that the party had been planned. Always modest about her accomplishments, the first words Nancy spoke were, "No, I don't deserve this; all of you deserve to be honored, too!"

The guests felt otherwise. All agreed Nancy deserved recognition for her years of service, and for giving them the opportunity to be part of a cause they believed in. As one of the volunteers said, Nancy's time as president gave the VRC volunteers "real happiness."

Throughout Nancy's two decades as VRC president, she was in the office every week providing leadership and guidance. Over the years, VRC referred thousands of volunteers to hundreds of agencies that helped provide healthcare, infant care, elder care, tutoring and mentoring, care for the environment, arts appreciation, legal advocacy, and many more important causes.

Nancy, you have given all of us happy memories and a great sense of accomplishment. We thank you for your many years of leadership, and your continued commitment to the Volunteer Referral Center.

--As reported by  
Robbie Hodgson

#### EDITORIAL TEAM

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Nicole Friedman  
Roberta Hodgson  
Elaine Orr

##### Photographers

Sherida Byron  
Pat Girardi

## Individual Contributions

In response to our 2008-09 Annual Appeal, our Fall 2008 Benefit (Irma La Douce) and our Spring 2009 Benefit (Chasing Manet) many people supported VRC. We at VRC are very grateful for all these donations. Thank you!

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**Support VRC  
As We Celebrate  
Our 20th Anniversary!**



**October 1, 2009**

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