

# Martin De Porres Group Homes Bi-monthly Newsletter

www.mdpggh.org

March & April 2018



**Motivational Mondays at MDP - Each and every week.  
Officer Mike Thomas, Detective Dean Elmore, Former NFL Player, AB Whitfield**

## Virtues for March & April

# PIETY

The virtue for the month of March is Piety. Piety is generally used to refer either to Religious devotion or to spirituality, or often, a combination of both. Piety is actually a lot more than just being prayerful. It's a pretty tough virtue that takes constant daily effort. Piety means we give to God what he deserves from us -love, time, prayer, worship and we respect the things and people of God, in our case, respecting and caring for the young people entrusted to MDP. As Youth Specialists, we need to have Piety in our hearts in order to stay grounded to our mission. Piety must be action--guiding, producing the array of outstanding trauma informed services we offer our young men. Our devotion must always be to our young people and to their success. Another distinction of Piety is its reliance on community connections and relationships. As a Martin De Porres Group Home community we have to work together to reach our goals as we help the young men reach theirs.

*"If you face God in prayer and silence, God will speak to you. Listen in silence because if your heart is full of other things you cannot hear the voice of God. What is essential is not what we say but what God tells us." (Mother Teresa)*

# PRUDENCE

The virtue for the month of April is Prudence. Prudence is often associated with wisdom, insight, and knowledge. Prudence gives us the ability to govern and discipline ourselves by the use of reason. Prudence allows us to discern the true good in every circumstance we are faced with whenever we are dealing with difficult situations, especially the young people entrusted to our care here at MDP. Furthermore, Prudence leads us to choosing the right means of achieving success with the young people we are responsible for. In order to help the young people entrusted to us make the necessary changes in their lives, we must be prudent in our thoughts and in our actions at all times. The words we speak to them may not be heard by many, but many will see the prosperity of the work that we have done by using Prudence as one of our tools.

**"There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure." (Colin Powell)**

## MDP Employee Highlight

Each edition of the newsletter highlights a few employees that do extraordinary work with our young men and help our guys become responsible and humane contributors to society.

This month, we recognize the new leadership team in our Ozone park NSP. Colin Stewart, who has been in the agency for over 5 years has risen up the ranks quickly and as of March 1st, has taken on the responsibility of Site Director. Colin started as a Waiver Service Provider, then became a Youth Specialist shortly after. His work ethic as a YS gave him the experience to be an excellent Case Worker and that experience allowed him to make a seamless transition to Site Director. Colin has the tools to succeed at whatever he does and MDP is proud to have him in this capacity, leading our young people and the staff to newer and greater things. Carlos Fredricks has been with MDP for over 5 years as a youth specialist and mentor to our youth. His experience has prepared him to take the next step as the Assistant Site Director in Ozone Park. Carlos brings an unmatched level of maturity, competence and leadership to Ozone. MDP is very thankful for the hard work these gentlemen put in and are excited for what is to come.



## Women's History Month 2018

March is Women's History Month, a time dedicated to remembering the contributions of women both in our past and in our present as well as all the women at MDP. Let us reflect on and remember the strength and timeless spirit of the women in our lives. We devote this month to all the trailblazers, activists, pioneers, entrepreneurs, colleagues and the countless women who have contributed and continue to contribute greatly towards shaping our world, country and MDP.

As we take a moment to reflect on the impact women have had on our lives it is important that we honor the memory of the many remarkable women that are no longer with us, whether it be our mothers, grandmothers, sisters, and/or aunts or any women that has touched our hearts at some point in our lives. We were all touched and influenced by women let's give them their just due.

The stories, or more accurately, the lack of stories about women, in the history of humankind, leaves a gaping hole in our hearts and in our spirit. The narrative about women, historically and today, has been either absent or villainous. Unveiling their stories and successes will not just be liberating for girls and women, it will be a gift to the world. If we ever hope to ever see a flourishing world, then we need equal contribution from women for this vision to be realized. The women's perspective has been suppressed throughout history so it is important to shine a light on its uniqueness. We all need to explore and understand the loving, healing and powerful attributes women have to contribute to our lives and to our world.

At MDP, we are blessed to have strong and intelligent women as pillars in our mission and as cultivating instillers of hope to our mission but more importantly to the young men in our agency. We at MDP give a special thanks to all the women that helped pave the way for our agency to get to where it is today. We are also extremely grateful for all of the women that are currently helping us sustain our mission.

Thank you to all the women at Martin De Porres Group Homes and beyond!!!

**Thank You -** *Emelda, Gladys, Yvette, Lorna, Juliet, Nicole, Shequita, Najimah, Judith, Margaret, Heather, Danilsa, Jamila, Chrystal H., Liann (Congrats on your baby girl), Carlene, Crystal M., Danielle, Zariya, Debra, Genelle, Bianca, Cleo, Taren, Khadega, Zina, Maya and Sarah.*

## MDPGH Resident Highlights

D'andre came to MDP about a year ago and had some struggles early on as he transitioned into a new program with different structures and expectations than he was accustomed to. The constant in D'andre's life was his love for basketball and he quickly gravitated to his mentor who shared the same passion for the. D'andre struggled in school and he was resistant to building relationships with the staff at MDP. D'andre failed all of his classes his first semester and there was minimal improvement the following semester, making him ineligible for his school's basketball team. However, over the last 6 months, he has been major improvements, thanks to the hard work of the clinical and education teams. D'andre passed all of his classes and is doing extremely well in all facets of the MDP program. It is only right that D'andre is recognized for the turnaround that he has made so that we can all encourage and push him to stay on this track.



**D'andre and his mentor,  
Mr. Paradise**

### **The Trauma Box – Staying Trauma Informed at MDPGH**

Young people in NY witness extreme events and suffer chronic exposure to aversive stimuli, leading to a great amount of trauma. While putting more emphasis on education, employment and housing programs is important, it comes far short of the required “positive relational interventions” needed to repair cognitive, emotional, and physiological damages these young people have to deal with day in and day out.

At MDP, our Lasallian Culture of Care, a trauma informed care model, focuses on Positive Relational Interventions that aims to create a climate that allows our young men to learn how to cope and continue healthy growth. This is made possible by the development and presence of healthy and positive relationships – connections to people who have been trained to understand each of our young men’s reactions to traumatic experiences. Our model and practice has developed a trauma informed staff that are determined to provide the best care for our youth. Working with the young men at MDP calls for sensitivity, maturity, and a stable sense of self. MDP staff have a responsibility to be the symbolic representation of the safe, nonviolent world these young men are not accustomed to.

Giving our young men a safe and secure place to build relationships and lifetime connections with the MDP staff takes a youth away from the exposure to criminogenic behaviors and violence which can eventually lead to preventing recidivism amongst our youth. The importance of addressing this issue of generational criminogenic behavior cannot and should not be underestimated. If these issues are left unchecked, criminogenic tendencies will grow, with consequences impacting education, employment and every other facet of our young having healthy citizenship and social development.

MDP’s focus on trauma training with the staff has helped create a culture of caring people that have a deeper understanding of the young people that come into our programs. It is our utmost goal to touch the hearts of our young people in the deepest and most meaningful ways so that their lives can be transformed.

# MDPGH Program Highlights

## MDPGH Queens Village

The MDPGH Queens Village house welcomes Kamari to the family. The young men in QV have all done really well and all are transitioning back to their families this month. Jaden is in MDP School where he has been doing really well. Nate played HS football this year and is now on his school's track team. Andy is passing all of his classes this semester. Vinny started



community school in February and he loves it. For the first time in his life he wants to go to school every day. The young men in QV went to the Bronx Zoo over the winter break and enjoyed their day with the animals.

enjoyed their day with the animals.

## MDPGH Springfield

Our young men at the ABH have been progressing well. Brandon is on track to transition home to his dad in the coming months. Edward is a star on his HS swimming team. Robert is excelling in school and tries to stay involved in community activities. D'andre continues to



harness his basketball skills and has made significant progress academically. Tyrese and Jeremy are getting new experiences every day and are very appreciative of the opportunities. Both are doing well in school and in program. The young men at the ABH were able to go to the Transit Museum and Ice Skating during the winter recess. As you can see, they had an awesome time.



## MDPGH Elmhurst

Our Elmhurst young men were able to see 'Black Panther' on opening night - Wakanda Forever! Omalie is enrolled in a GED program and will be transitioning home this month. Obeb will be transitioning to his



mother after he transitions to a community school. He did really well in Belmont and is ready to apply what he learned there in his next school. Chris started a cabling certification program with C-Tech and is excited about making 6 figures one day. The program is for 10 weeks on Saturdays. The group spent some time in New Roc City during the winter break.



## MDPGH Ozone Park

Ozone said bye to one of the pillars of the program, Mike, who transitioned back to his aunt. Mike will be missed by the staff and residents. Rahiem took full advantage of his time with MDP and is doing everything in his power to graduate HS in January.

He came to us with less than 6 credits and now has 27 credits and is taking extra classes three evenings a week in his community school. Kavanaugh will be transitioning to his new school in the coming days and continues to do well. He was able to get into the C-Tech program where he will be able to get certified to run copper cable. The Ozone youth were unable to escape the escape room....maybe next time.



# Martin De Porres Wins Championship in Harlem for the 6th Consecutive Year

Another tournament and another championship for the youth at MDP. After winning the 'Harlem Mother's Saves' Black History Month tournament the last 5 years, MDP was not favored to win in 2018 because of the departure of some core players from last year's championship team and the influx of new players to this year's squad. However, MDP went undefeated for the week and for the 2nd straight year faced Children's Village in the finals. MDP was led by one of the newcomers D'Andre who, at times, put the team on his back, but he also had a lot of support throughout the tournament. Nate, Obeb and Mike scored some key baskets all week including in the final game. Raheim and Tyrese were instrumental on the defensive side of the ball. MDP was missing two key players in the final game, Omalie, the teams leading rebounder and Kavanaugh, the teams leading shot blocker. Omalie was unable to come to the game due to a prior family engagement. Kavanaugh injured his ankle in the semi final game and had to be sidelined. Although the team missed their presence on the court, MDP prevailed for the sixth consecutive year under the guidance of the coaches, Boyd and Davis. Great Job and Congrats MDP!!!

