

# WHAT'S BREWING

## 2005-2006 NEWSLETTER



GBS joins forces with the NFL & Autism Speaks. See story on page 2.

### HEADLINES

*A message from our Head of School*



The year has come and gone so fast it is hard to believe that this time last year we were wondering if we really would be able to pull off the move. Well, here we are 1 year, 84 vibrant kids, and 52 dedicated staff later and it still feels brand new. It has been quite an experience and I have to say that doubling in size certainly has its obstacles! We couldn't have done it without pulling together as a community. The patience of our board, the parents, staff and kids through the transition was immeasurable. Now when I walk through the quiet hallways into rooms bustling with happy kids learning, I recognize just what a gift we have been given. To watch the pre-schoolers engaging and problem solving with each other while running through the sprinklers and laughing so hard they can barely stay standing, makes me realize that it was all worth it. As I pause to reflect on this year I can't imagine things getting better than they are at this moment - but - Then I think about where I was last year and I know they will. I can't wait!

### CONTENTS

**Kick Off For a Cure**  
pg. 2

**Class News**  
pg. 3-6

**Alum News**  
pg. 7

**Parents Page**  
pg. 8

**Gillen Brewer Events**  
pg. 9

**Donation Form**  
pg. 12

There's More Brewing on our website. Visit us at [www.gillenbrewer.com](http://www.gillenbrewer.com)



David and Keba dancing during music

## THE GILLEN BREWER SCHOOL TEAMS UP WITH SOME OF THE NFL'S BIGGEST NAMES

**March 14, 2006** - The Gillen Brewer School teamed up with Autism Speaks and the NFL for *Kick Off for a Cure*, a spectacular VIP benefit honoring Notre Dame head coach Charlie Weis, Morgan Stanley chairman and CEO John Mack, Corning chairman Jamie Houghton, and film producer and New York Giants owner Steve Tisch. The evening was organized and co-hosted by NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue, Autism Speaks founders Suzanne and Robert Wright and Henry Schacht, chairman of Gillen Brewer's Board of Trustees. It was a special thrill to hear football legends and leaders of Industry and finance recognize GBS for the Important work we do. The gala raised not only an incredible \$1.5 million (with GBS and Autism Speaks sharing the proceeds) but awareness about the vital role schools like Gillen Brewer play in the lives of special needs children and their families. And the news gets better still...the proceeds received helped us to (a) achieve our goal of \$4.02 million, concluding Phase I of our capital campaign (b) meet our challenge grant from The Kresge Foundation (c) get a head start on our \$2 million Phase II campaign goal.



*Head of School, Donna Kennedy and Chairman of the Board, Henry Schacht*



*Pre-K teacher Brigid Connelly and Head Coach of Notre Dame, Charlie Weiss*



*School Age teacher Kristen Miner and NFL great Emmitt Smith*



*Occupational Therapist Lindsay Shaw, Pre-K teacher Caroline O'Conner and Speech Therapist Janine Rooney, pose with Giant running back Tiki Barber.*

# ALUMNI NEWS

See how some former Gillen Brewer Students are doing today



Victor Schragger

I started going to Gillen Brewer in 1994 and graduated in 1999 when I was seven. Now I am finishing 8<sup>th</sup> grade and it has been a big step for me because I'm getting ready for high school. Winston Preparatory School is a good environment for me because I am learning different techniques to find answers, highlight texts and take notes. The teachers have been supportive throughout the years to teach me new material in a way that is easy for me to understand. My focus instructors have helped me to become more comfortable to self-advocate when I am having trouble identifying with the materials. The teachers have also assisted me to be more aware of my learning style and have shown me specific techniques to use to complete my work. For example, when I am having trouble, they will review the topic again and explain it more clearly. They use the white board to help me visualize the information so I can comprehend the subject. Furthermore, students have been more encouraging so I answer questions and take more risks in class. Winston has helped me to be more independent in that I am able to do my homework alone. I put a lot more effort into my schoolwork and spend more time studying for tests and quizzes. To sum up, Winston Prep has made it easier for me to overcome my learning difficulties so I can achieve my goals.

I got a great start at Gillen Brewer which has helped me be successful at Winston. I had a great time there and made a lot of good friends.

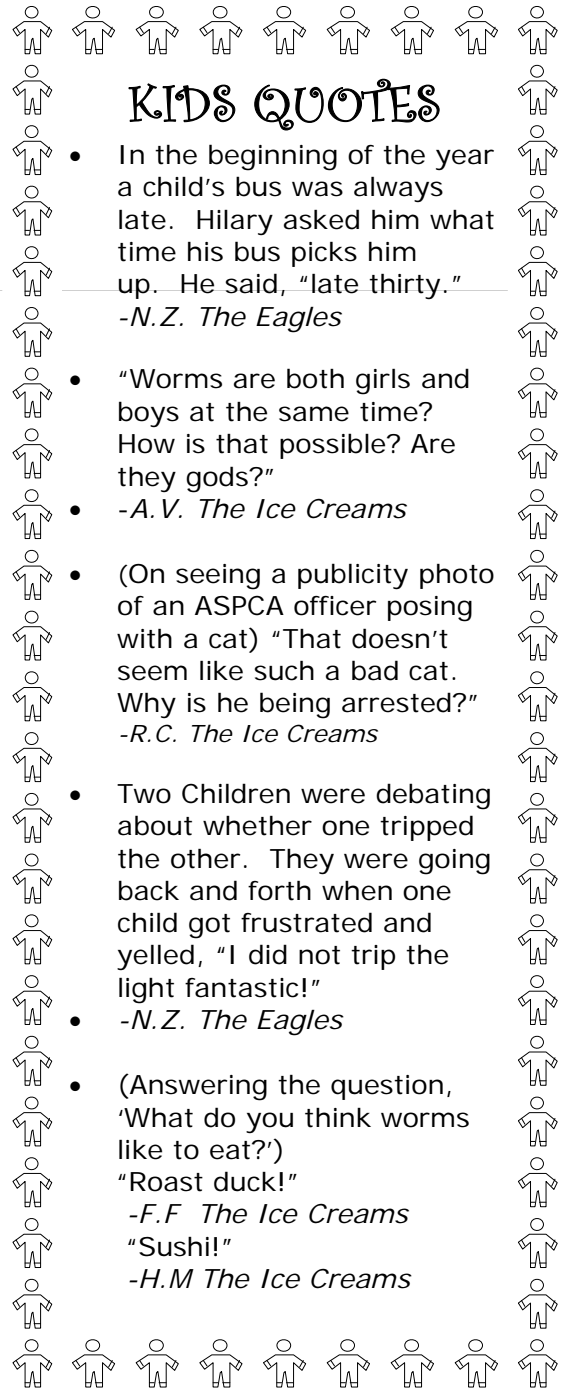
**-Victor Schragger**  
**Gillen Brewer 1994-1999**

It's been only 10 Years since I went to Gillen Brewer. Today, I go to Horace Mann School, and next year I will be a freshman in High School. I play competitively in several sports, most notably, soccer, and tennis. I've been playing these sports for a long time, ever since I was in elementary school. I'm able to pursue my love of these sports in and out of school. During the fall, I play soccer on my school team. In the winter, I play hockey on a highly competitive team, which plays in Hackensack, New Jersey, which sometimes travels to different states. In the spring, not only do I play tennis on my school team, but I also play soccer on a travel team outside of school. In my daily athletic activities, I've come a long way from the Gillen Brewer Playroom.



Brent Arnaboldi

**-Brent Arnaboldi**  
**Gillen Brewer 1994-1996**



## KIDS QUOTES

- In the beginning of the year a child's bus was always late. Hilary asked him what time his bus picks him up. He said, "late thirty."  
-N.Z. *The Eagles*
- "Worms are both girls and boys at the same time? How is that possible? Are they gods?"  
-A.V. *The Ice Creams*
- (On seeing a publicity photo of an ASPCA officer posing with a cat) "That doesn't seem like such a bad cat. Why is he being arrested?"  
-R.C. *The Ice Creams*
- Two Children were debating about whether one tripped the other. They were going back and forth when one child got frustrated and yelled, "I did not trip the light fantastic!"  
-N.Z. *The Eagles*
- (Answering the question, 'What do you think worms like to eat?')  
"Roast duck!"  
-F.F. *The Ice Creams*  
"Sushi!"  
-H.M. *The Ice Creams*



Andy showing off his "Big Kid's Roundtable" certificate

# FAMILY BULLETIN BOARD

Some family activities and recommendations from Gillen Brewer families



## Robin & Jay Spindel (Jordan):

A great recommendation – NY Kids Club. Even though it's not near us, I held my son's birthday party there last year after going to another party there from someone at the school. They run a very structured program with over-enthusiastic (in a good way) staff. Jordan had his first large party there and I was really worried how he'd react. It went so well and they were great at splitting the kids up into small groups and keeping them engaged at all times. We liked it so much that we're sending our son there for a couple weeks of the camp this summer. They have pre-school programs through age 9. Both locations are west side on 68<sup>th</sup> and 87<sup>th</sup> streets.

## Cathy Nemser and David Sher (Joshua):

Joshua enjoys Little Chefs afterschool at the 92nd Street YMCA.

## Allison and Rick Vella (Andy):

I just found out yesterday that you can go fishing in Central Park. There is a stocked pond at the north end of the park and they supply the poles and the bait (corn). There is a nice variety of fish and you throw back what you catch.

## Lisa Porter and Rick Blake (Ethan):

I would like to recommend a drop-in program at Gym-time (Gymtime.net) for the preschoolers. Instead of signing up for a session, you can choose from a several different classes/times throughout the week. A great rainy day activity or playdate. Very small class sizes are another plus.

## Helen and Manny Demos (Manny and Michael)

We have been reading *Treasury of Classic Bedtime Stories* written by Thornton Burgess, illustrated by Harrison Cady. Also, *Treasury of Classic Children's Literature* Volume II selected by William F. Buckley, Jr. and *Queen Zixi of Ix* or *The Story of the Magic Cloak* by L. Frank Baum. The children are enjoying these books immensely each night. They look forward to this reading before bedtime—they are lots of fun!! Highly recommended!

For more Family Activities visit [www.gillenbrewer.com](http://www.gillenbrewer.com)



## A MESSAGES FROM THE GILLEN BREWER PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

What do we mean when we talk about community? Surely GBS stands as a fine example—the kids, the families, the teachers, therapists and staff work so hard together toward the same goal, making our kids the best they can possibly be. As a community Gillen Brewer is so much more than the sum of its parts. This year, of course, the Gillen Brewer community has a new base in the wonderful facility on 92 Street. (Many of us who remember the accommodations on Park Avenue now have cause to think of them as cramped rather than cozy!) The GBS community grew as it moved so that 85 children were taught in the new school versus 48 in the old. With growth come new challenges. A bigger group means more work. The impressive turn-outs at both TV Turn-Off Week events (more than 100 people attended the camp-fire sing-along in school and the pizza-in-the-park) demonstrate just how vibrant, and fun, our community can be. At the same time, the community has fallen short and the school had to cancel the bi-weekly swimming sessions in the summer program for lack of funding. As long as GBS offers additional programs, like swimming and art, music and movement, and as long as it tries to hire more experienced teachers and provide enhanced therapy services and everything else it does above and beyond what's required, fund-raising is going to be at the center of the PA's role in this community. This is a wonderful, growing, generous community, and it's our responsibility to make sure it can continue to be all this.

-Jan Jackman & Catherine Coakley  
Co-Heads, GBS Parents' Association

P.S. Since this writing, the GBS community came together and broke a school record. We are pleased to announce that we reached a very important goal with 100% of our parent body contributing to the 2005-2006 Annual Appeal.



Marco with mom and little sis



GBS Parents in one of our many parent workshops

## GBS IS PART OF SEVERAL "SHOP & EARN" PROGRAMS:



Birthday? Anniversary? Promotion? Say it with flowers! Mention GBS & Plaza Florist will donate 10% of your purchase price to the school. Offer good through spring 2007.

**Plaza Florist, 1110 Park Avenue, NYC 10128**

**Tel: 212-744-0936/Fax: 212-831-4575**

Great news all you on-line shoppers! **Schoolpop** is back & here's how it works: log onto [www.schoolpop.com](http://www.schoolpop.com), select The Gillen Brewer School as your recipient (or enter our ID#0629945), choose a participating merchant and order as usual.

Do you have a **Washington Mutual Visa Check Card**? If so, sign up for their WaMoola for Schools program & GBS will earn cash for every purchase you make with your card. Stop by your local Washington Mutual branch, call 1-866-WAMoola, or sign up on-line at [www.wamoolaforschools.com](http://www.wamoolaforschools.com)

...and now for something completely different. GBS has joined the **Lands' End** preferred school program which will donate 3% of net sales from their *School* catalogs & web pages back to GBS. Coming soon, you can add the GBS logo to the items you order. Orders can be made by phone, mail, fax or on-line but don't forget to mention our Preferred School number: 5950. **(Note: Gillen Brewer does NOT have a school uniform.)**

## Thank You

Generous support from GBS families and friends has allowed us to purchase or install the following:



AlphaSmarts keyboards & new software for keyboarding...



Assistive technology and Software for our web site...



Rock Wall and hooks for the OT sensory gym...



...and A portable sink for the Art/Music Room



Ethan, Dawson and Jack Swinging in the OT gym



GBS children recording our school song

You can own your own copy of the Gillen Brewer DVD, featuring the professional recording of our school song for only \$20.00. The DVD features great footage of the children in their daily life at GBS, all set to our school song. Call 212-831-3667 to purchase.

## RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY FOR GILLEN BREWER'S NEW BUILDING

**October 27, 2005** The GBS community celebrated the move to our beautiful new home with a ribbon cutting and dedication ceremony. Head of School, Donna Kennedy, Co-founder, Laura Schacht Bilicic and Board Chairman, Henry B. Schacht, spoke eloquently and movingly to a packed house about the school's mission, its history and its future.



The event included several important announcements and presentations including:

- The official launch of the school's Building Campaign
- The Kresge Foundation's award of a challenge grant to GBS
- Mary Flieger and Kathryn George Tyree were presented with a plaque and cited for their "*dedication as parents, partners, and Board members*" and for making "*our new home a reality*"
- In honor of his "*extraordinary leadership and endless Support*", the new building was dedicated to Henry Schacht (Chairman of the Board of Trustees) and has been named *The Henry B. Schacht Learning Center*
- Named for Donna Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, and Netty Morales in honor and recognition of their dedication and devotion to GBS since its founding, the Kennedy/Morales Scholarship Fund was established to provide financial support to cover tuition relief for a GBS student.

For More info and photos of these or any other events, or more info on ways to give, visit [www.gillenbrewer.com](http://www.gillenbrewer.com)

## SPRING BENEFIT AUCTION WAS HUGE SUCCESS

**April 5, 2006** – *Building for Tomorrow* was the theme of this year's spring benefit auction, our first in our new home. The rains let up and the clouds parted in time for 232 guests to mingle and bid on a terrific variety of silent auction items. GBS alum dad Bill Tyree returned to the stage (also known as Ida's reception desk) to serve as the evening's live auctioneer. Once again, Bill managed to keep the bidding lively and the assembled crowd entertained. A big round of applause to benefit chairs, Kim Butenhoff, Catherine Coakley and Ian Jackman (co-heads of the GBS Parents Association), and their team of committee members and volunteers for planning and organizing an evening that was not only beautiful and festive but helped to raise over \$200,000 for our school



SAVE THE DATE !

SPRING  
BENEFIT  
AUCTION

MAY 10, 2007

## THANK YOU IAN!

This is one of those thank yous that is difficult to write, not for lack of good things to say but for the abundance of them. Ian Jackman is moving on this year and leaves us with some awfully large shoes to fill.

During both his two-year tenure as class rep and his subsequent two years as co-Head of the GBS Parents' Association, Ian was often the lone dad in a room full of moms. Others might have been intimidated. Not Ian. He brought to these roles a perspective that was as insightful as it was Invaluable.

Ian has led our community by example and was often the first to volunteer for GBS events. He was there for set up and clean up; he took the helm of our book fairs and was on hand for every hour of them; he applied his skills as a writer and editor to our auction journals, making them the most literary, literally, in the city. And that's only the beginning.

So, thank you Ian for your dedication and support. These two qualities are talked about frequently at GBS but they cannot be over-used nor their importance over-emphasized. Most of all, we thank you for the gift of your friendship.



Ian Jackman

# WHAT'S BREWING IN THE CLASSROOMS

## THE BLUE ROOM

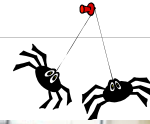


*The Blue Room in the sprinkler*

The Blue Room has much to be proud of. Over the course of the school year, the children have grown into a

true community. Teachers have emphasized building friendships, fostering independence and developing a sense of responsibility. We feel so much pride looking back at how far our children have come! The children explored various interests this year including: making pizza and pasta, visiting both the doctor and the dentist, the seasons, ocean life, the sensory alphabet, plant life and perhaps the most memorable and extensive unit was on fruits and vegetables. The main goal of this unit was to allow children to explore fruits and vegetables in a multisensory way, and perhaps increase their desire to try new foods and add them to their repertoire. Favorite activities during this unit included painting with produce, making fruit and veggie salads, making pickles, comparing/contrasting various fruits, exploring new and "strange" produce (such as the uglifruit!) and finally growing a vegetable garden. The highlight of the unit was our green bean harvest. Our plants yielded 15 delicious green beans that were enjoyed (or at least tasted) by all. We see the effects of this unit daily when we see children who would never have dreamed of touching a fruit or vegetable, such as blueberry, eagerly try it during snack. Although there is no guarantee that a child will like what he or she is tasting, the fact that they are willing to try something new is a great accomplishment!

## THE SPIDERS



*The Spiders getting ready for a trip*

The Spiders have been working very hard all year having fun and learning lots of new things about our world. We have explored all the various climates

such as the desert, arctic, and rainforest. We learned about the six types of animal groups which are insects, mammals, fish, amphibians, reptiles and birds. We have learned about taking care of our environment by reducing, reusing and recycling and have developed a very good sense of community and what it means to have responsibility for our actions. Through practice, practice, and more practice we have learned how to solve problems by using our words calmly and by offering reasonable solutions to our classmates. We are readers, writers, scientists, mathematicians, builders and artists in the making. The Spiders really enjoy working with their hands to create art, books and to explore the pretend world.



*Artwork by Matthew of The Spiders*

## THE RABBITS



The Rabbits had an exciting year both in and out of the classroom. With the introduction of our reading program, many students learned to read and write and are now composing sentences independently. Teachers are most proud of the class for their continual desire to learn and explore their new abilities. It's not uncommon to find one of the Rabbits picking up a pencil and paper during choice time to practice new letters and words they learn each day. Many of our students enjoyed studying books by specific authors. Dr. Suess, Eric Carle, Tomie dePaola, Ezra Jack Keats, Jan Brett, and Leo Lionni were some of our favorites. The Rabbits really took an interest in the writing and artistic styles of each author and now frequently discuss titles, characters, settings, problems and solutions within the text. We also had a wonderful year exploring our math center and increasing our number sense. We discovered patterns within our classroom and had fun using our bodies to create our own repetitions. We learned to complete simple addition problems, tell time to the hour, and identify coins—the Rabbits are even counting by 5's and 10's! Each student in our class showed a special interest in both Science and Social Studies. Discussions about our bodies were filled with topics about the skeletal system and the respiratory system. The Rabbits continued to amaze their teachers by learning so much information about bones and lungs. Our Social Studies topics were heavily influenced by the Rabbit's curiosity about different parts of the world. We discussed traditions in countries such as Italy, Ireland and Africa. The Rabbits were especially interested in learning how children live in different parts of the world. Teachers are most proud of the Rabbits for the many social accomplishments that they have made over the year.



*Jordan, Liz and Esti on a MLK Peace March*



*The Blue Room in an ocean of bubbles*



*Nichelle and Liz on "Buddy Day"*

## YELLOW ROOM



It has been an exciting and fulfilling year in the Yellow Room! For many of us, it was our first school experience; together we built a community and enjoyed developing friendships, growing with and learning from each other. We became active explorers of the interesting things in our school, neighborhood and world. Some of our social studies included taking a look at buildings and vehicles in our city, as well as learning about ourselves as babies and how we have grown. Our science investigations included looking at the weather, colors, size, plants and changing properties of materials such as ice, water and food. Our unit on "Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z" led us through a close study of the alphabet, phonemic awareness, as well as challenged us to explore new foods using all of our senses. We took risks and tried new things with encouragement of our peers. And most importantly, we laughed a lot!



*The Yellow Room*

## THE ICE CREAMS



The Ice Creams spent an exciting year full of projects and hands-on learning that has enlarged and deepened our understanding of the world and how our actions make a difference. We are especially proud to



*The Ice Creams*

have been the leaders of Gillen Brewer's first Penny Harvest. Students and staff collected over \$750 in pennies—an amazing accomplishment that earned our school a \$1,000 Roundtable. During the Roundtable, our students met once a week and talked about problems that concern them, like hurt animals and children who need clothes and toys. At the end of this six-week process, they made charitable grants totaling \$1,000 to several local organizations, which sent us the plaques and certificates of appreciation on display in our lobby. Each and every one of the Ice Creams rose to the challenges of the Harvest and Roundtable. We know we will continue to grow as leaders and aware, caring citizens of the world.

## THE RED ROOM



It has been a productive and exciting year in The Red Room. The boys have come together to create a strong, caring community. Each morning they delight in seeing one another and telling each other about their latest news. Throughout the year the boys initiated units about fire trucks, woodworking, snow, planting and weather. Within each of these entities, they have become experts, sharing their knowledge with one another and with others throughout the Gillen Brewer community.



*Red Room boys in their self made tee-shirts*

## THE EAGLES



What a great year for the Eagles! Although we studied hard all year, we had fun and enjoyed ourselves as we learned. During this year we have made great friends, learned to compromise, grew more accepting of each other and learned how to solve our problems in appropriate ways. A highlight of science this year was our study of energy. We focused on four types of energy which included: electrical, light, heat and sound. We lit light bulbs, felt how the sun heated the room, charged batteries and discovered how sound travels. In social studies our year began with a study of Native American tribes indigenous to the tri-state area. We enjoyed a visit and presentation by one of the Lanape tribe members! He displayed and explained his tools, weapons, and danced a ceremonial dance. We also learned to identify and name all the continents. We made salt dough maps of the continents and sang the continent song for our parents on Parent's Visiting Day. Our memories of our China unit include the Panda Cam in which we were able to see pandas live in the D.C. Zoo, reading the Year of the Panda, inviting special guests to present our clothing, shelter and foods of China research. We also enjoyed serving our "school-made" wantons at our China Party! We learned so much in Reading this year! We learned about plot, characters, setting, and read some great books like James and The Giant Peach and the entire Mallory series. We learned about analogies, the author's tone, main idea, and practiced how to sequence a beginning, middle and end. This year we were also introduced to Saxon Math and started each morning by solving word problems, counting coins, making number sentences, telling time and reading the temperature of the day. Now many of us can say "I love Math." We took many wonderful field trips that supplemented our units of study. We loved looking at our city from the Empire State Building, going to the New York Hall of Science, and ice-skating with our friends at the annual Gillen Brewer Wolman Rink extravaganza!



## THE SUNFLOWERS



*Colors of Us*

It was amazing to watch the Sunflowers bloom as the school year progressed. The children began with an *All About Me* Unit which incorporated numerous art projects, movement activities, and read-alouds to explore each person's unique characteristics while discussing similarities and differences in the classroom. One of the favorite lessons

was focused on the book, *Colors of Us* by Karen Katz, which explores various skin tones while comparing them to delicious tasty treats. The Sunflowers did an excellent job mixing reds, yellows, browns, and whites to match their special skin color then finding a matching shade in a food, such as bagels, cupcakes, and peaches. The Sunflowers finished up the year with a *Family* Unit that paralleled an author study on Todd Parr. The children especially loved Parr's *The Family Book* because of the hilarious text and bold, bright illustrations. They enjoyed it so much that we decided to add our own versions of Parr pages, making a collage out of some of his characters and designs while adding our own original funny wording. As the summer session started, it was already clear what activity the Sunflowers enjoyed the most...



*Eli showing feelings*

Show and Tell!

Every child looked forward to their chance to stand in front of their class and share their possessions. We had everything from a broken blue crayon to a live salamander! The children did such a good job describing their objects, and asking questions or making comments. The Sunflower Team is so proud of all the blossomed flowers! It was a pleasure to watch them grow and learn each day.

## THE ROCKETS



The Rocket's had a wonderful year learning and growing. While reflecting on the year many moments come to mind.

The Rocket's worked hard to strengthen their writing and creativity through use of the writing process. This included using semantic maps to organize thoughts, creating a rough draft, editing and revising and then publishing their work by typing on the computer and creating illustrations. Toward the end of the year the Rocket's became more independent with this process. The Rocket's also worked hard on understanding the importance of character development. We discussed such traits as respect, trust, citizenship, caring and fairness. The Rockets read books, role-played and were involved in many hands on activities that helped them to understand and demonstrate these character traits. During our unit on citizenship, the Rockets had a read-a-thon to raise money for the Tropical Rainforest. The Rocket's were also interested in learning about immigration and when their own families came to the United States. This interest sparked a project in which each child researched a country that their family was from. Each child culminated their research into a poster about their country. We then held a World's Fair, where each child displayed their poster and even shared food they had made that originated in those countries. It was a spectacular project to end our year!



*The Rockets at the Library showing off books on their families home country*

*A special thanks to Bruce Upbin, father of Eli Upbin of the Sunflowers, for his help in editing and designing this newsletter.*



## GILLEN BREWER SCHOOL 2005-2006



### The Gillen Brewer School Annual Fund

July 1st-June 30th

- Fact:** The Gillen Brewer School has an annual operating budget in excess of \$4M.
- Fact:** Tuition relief from NY State covers only about 80% of our costs, leaving a balance annually which must be raised.
- Fact:** Each year we face a deficit of approximately \$14,000 per student.
- Fact:** The Annual Fund drive makes a critical difference in many key areas of our school. Specifically, this money enables GBS to attract and retain outstanding teachers and therapists and to maintain an unusually small teacher-to-student ratio.
- Fact:** Your gift will ensure that GBS can continue to be a haven where children with the most challenging and severe developmental disabilities and their families are welcomed, educated and supported.

I am making a gift of **\$1000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50** or \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
*Please indicate amount. Please make checks payable to The Gillen Brewer School.*

To be matched by \_\_\_\_\_  
*Increase your gift with a corporate match. Please enclose form e.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name (as you would like it to appear in our Annual Giving Report)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Street City State Zip Phone*

Are you a/an **current parent alumni parent grandparent** or **friend**?

Please charge my **Visa MasterCard American Express**  
 Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*We welcome gifts of appreciated stock. If you have questions or wish to receive a stock transmittal form, please contact the Development Office at 212-831-3667. All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.*