



BIG APPLE GREETER NEWS

FALL 2005

Dear Friends,



Since the organization's inception in 1992, Big Apple Greeter's volunteer Greeters have helped make visitors from all over the world feel comfortable and confident navigating the city's public transit system. That's been a

plus not only for the MTA, but for dozens of communities throughout the City's five boroughs - all of which directly benefit from the visits generated through the Greeter program. Again and again, visitors report that they might not have used public transportation at all or perhaps even ventured out of midtown Manhattan without having first done so with a Greeter. So the program is clearly having the positive - and distinctly unique - impact envisioned when it was begun.

As we look forward to the fall, I would like to thank all of Big Apple Greeter's Board of Directors, staff and volunteers for all their hard work, and thank our generous donors and event sponsors for their continued support.

Christopher Boylan
Chair, Board of Directors



As the hazy days of summer fade, I marvel at everything our small staff, wonderful volunteer Board of Directors, over 300 Greeter/office volunteers, and very important funders have been able to accomplish.

Over 62,000 visitors have met a "real New Yorker," visited neighborhoods and got the feel of our very special hometown. And they loved it! I know because I read every one of the evaluation forms that the visitors and volunteers send in after a visit. The most fulfilling part of my day is reading how we've changed forever a visitor's impression of New York. Each visitor is sure he has the best Greeter of all.

Big Apple Greeter has exceeded my wildest expectations, but we couldn't have done it alone. Our program is a success because of ongoing support from our volunteers, staff, board members, funders and, of course, our visitors. Thank you one and all.

Lynn Brooks
Executive Director

Verizon Foundation Grant Supports Access Program Internships

In February 2005, Big Apple Greeter welcomed Janina Rivera and Constance Rodriguez, two seniors from Murry Bergrtraum High School, as Access Program interns, thanks to a generous \$10,000 grant from the Verizon Foundation. The internships provided much needed support for our Access Program for travelers with disabilities while providing the students the opportunity to augment their learning base, as well as gain valuable workplace experience in a friendly and supportive atmosphere. Working under the supervision of Patricia Ryan, Big Apple Greeter's Access Coordinator and Assistant Director of Volunteers, the interns worked 10-15 hours per week through June.

Thanks to Janina and Constance, Big Apple Greeter now has documents in large print that are reader-friendly to all users. In addition, both interns improved their Microsoft Office skills. "I believe both Janina and Constance developed skills and matured during their time here and will have an advantage upon their next opportunity, whether at college or in a job," said Ryan.

Excerpts from Constance Rodriguez's final report: "My experience working at Big Apple Greeter was wonderful for me. Although the time was short, I learned a lot. I was very comfortable at Big Apple Greeter... Working here made me wake up every morning wanting to go to work."

"...I learned scanning and database entry...I've also retyped documents into the computers in large print for people who are visually impaired. I also had so much fun learning... PowerPoint with Sheila Gray, a volunteer instructor...It was a great experience for [Patricia, Janina and me]."

"I've enjoyed being around the Greeters in the office... You taught me a lot..., and at the same time I had fun. Thank you for everything."



Janina Rivera learns PowerPoint from volunteer Sheila Gray. Constance Rodriguez (at back computer) works with Patricia Ryan. Photo: Veronica Ball

Excerpts from Janina Rivera's final report: "...I experienced great things at Big Apple Greeter. ...I learned...how to scan documents [and do data entry]. I [also helped] create an Access Reference Guild, which is a resource list of agencies that help people with disabilities."

"During my last month at Big Apple Greeter, a volunteer PowerPoint instructor came to teach us how to create our own slide show. I designed a presentation on the Ten Commandments of Etiquette for Communicating with People with Disabilities. This is going to be used in Big Apple Greeter's Sensitivity Awareness sessions. I found it very interesting how you can create a different design for every slide. I also liked the different pictures taken from Clip Art we can [use] to make our slide show stand out."

"My experience at Big Apple Greeter has taught me a lot. Working here has made me realize what life is going to be like in a real work environment and all the responsibilities it comes along with."

SAVE THE DATE!

Monday, November 14, 2005 • 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM

**CELEBRATE
NEW YORK 2005
Cocktail Party and Auction**

*Honoring Commissioner Katherine Oliver
The City of New York Mayor's Office
of Film, Theatre & Broadcasting*

Celebrity Auctioneer

The Sky Club • Two Hundred Park Avenue

Our Visitors say... We wouldn't have gone to visit Roosevelt Avenue if we hadn't the chance to meet a Greeter... He un us...The walks took in aspects both for adults and for our 17 and 12 year olds... It's great to see local citizens fronting of our trip... She knew we had an interest in music so she took us to a market where they sold ethnic instruments...

Greeter of the Year Chafin Elliott

Chafin Elliott has been one of our most active Greeters since 1997. Born in Hartford, CT, he spent his early years in Harlem, later moving to Clinton Hill, Brooklyn, where he resides with his wife of 54 years. In 1995, he retired from Marubeni America Corp. (a Japanese trading company) as a Systems Analyst Programmer.



Photo: Jori Klein

Chafin joined Big Apple Greeter after listening to WINS Radio commercial describing the Big Apple Greeter experience. An announcer asked, "How would you like to take someone for a walk around your neighborhood?" Chafin realized he could make a contribution by using his considerable organizational and social skills. Initially, Chafin volunteered in the Big Apple Greeter office and later became a Greeter himself, specializing in Harlem and Brooklyn Heights.

Asked what he enjoyed the most about a visit, Chafin replied "the moment when you see in the visitor's reaction that they are good to go on their own. In their first visit, they developed the confidence to explore the city in a way that they wouldn't have thought of before."

Thank You...

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13th Anniversary Recognition Breakfast

The New York Marriott Marquis, in the heart of Times Square, was the perfect venue to celebrate Big Apple Greeter's lucky 13th Anniversary Recognition Breakfast on May 18, 2005, honoring Carl Weisbrod, the outgoing President of Alliance for Downtown New York, Inc., with the "Good Corporate Citizen Award," and Chafin Elliott as "Big Apple Greeter of the Year." Board Chair Christopher Boylan presided over a high-spirited breakfast of Big Apple Greeter sponsors and friends.

Boylan's welcoming remarks included the news that to date 60,000 visitors from all fifty states and 124 countries have experienced the diversity of New York's boroughs. "We spread the word through this very personal experience that New York is safe, friendly and accessible," Boylan said.

For morning pizzazz, attendees were treated to the premiere of a four-minute, CBS2-produced video that will be used for fundraising and promotional purposes to explain the Greeters' mission. CBS2 anchors Mario Bosquez and Shon Gables, who appeared in the video, attended the breakfast.

Benefit Co-Chairs Bruce Ratner, President and CEO of Forest City Ratner Companies, and Thomas A. Renyi, Chairman and CEO of the Bank of New York Company, Inc., praised Weisbrod, in Ratner's words, "for his consistency and leadership." In accepting the award, Weisbrod thanked Big Apple Greeter Founder and Executive Director Lynn Brooks and the organization, and emphasized the importance of enduring New York ties in his new job as a developer.

Brooks then presented Elliott with a crystal Apple from Tiffany & Co. Accepting the award, Elliott praised Brooks and the organization "for



Board Chair Christopher Boylan, Event Co-Chair Bruce Ratner, Honoree Carl Weisbrod, Executive Director Lynn Brooks, Event Co-Chair Thomas A. Renyi (L-R). Photo: Bernard Saper

what they have done and continue to do for New York City, demonstrating a passion to show the human face of the city. The strength of New York is in its great neighborhoods, and to be able to show that to visitors is truly remarkable."

In her closing remarks, Brooks recognized those Greeters present, praised Weisbrod and Elliott as outstanding ambassadors for New York, and thanked Boylan, the entire Benefit Committee and all assembled friends and supporters.

Winners of the Big Apple Greeter door prize drawings included Steve Miller of CBS2 who won airline tickets donated by United Airlines, and Janet Barbash of Manhattan Living magazine who won a ticket for Big Apple Greeter's Mazda RX-8 car raffle drawing.

Honorees

Carl Weisbrod, Good Corporate Citizen Award
Chafin Elliott, Greeter of the Year

Benefit Co-Chairs

Bruce Ratner, Forest City Ratner Companies
Thomas A. Renyi, The Bank of New York Company, Inc.

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Our Greeters say... Visited Chelsea Market to stay cool...Been in the states 8 times, but 1st trip to NY...Got a better understanding of World Financial Center, Century 21... A street musician let the visitor try out his steel drum... I think they had a different impression people... My visitors (like myself) are "foodies" so we checked out all the wonderful food retailers including the Union Sq Farmer's

actly what we were looking for and truly went out of his way to accommodate
ome to visitors in this way...He knew all the ins & outs and was the highlight
p using the subway all week...

Greeter Bits...

Greeter Mildred Chandler helped visitor Francine Brodtkin locate the apartment in the Bronx in which her father lived 60 years ago... Under the heading of Greeters help visitors with everything, Greeter Charles Hanrahan told us, "The most interesting element [of his meeting with Dutch visitors] was trying to find a cost efficient method of shipping to Rotterdam the stuffed deer's head they'd bought at a flea market" ... Greeter Loraine Heller has a new volunteer job: in September she will begin serving as a Peace Corps volunteer, training teachers of English in Ukraine...Greeter Julia Compton played "fairy godmother" to Canadian visitors Jackie Howell and Dave MacIntyre, helping to plan and serve as witness to their impromptu New York City wedding!

And the Winner is...



Executive Director Lynn Brooks pulled the winning ticket in Big Apple Greeter's first ever car raffle, July 30, 2005, at South Street Seaport. Mr. Amin Himani won the Mazda RX-8, provided by Mazda North American Operations. Photo: Bernard Saper

Thank You...

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About Big Apple Greeter...

Founded in 1992, Big Apple Greeter's mission is to enhance New York City's worldwide image while enriching the City experience for its visitors. Connecting with business and leisure travelers from all over the US and the world, Greeters bring visitors to neighborhoods in all five boroughs, promote tourism throughout the city, and help visitors discover the ease of using public transportation. More than 350 volunteer Greeters speak 22 languages and enjoy giving their time and energy back to their hometown. Since its founding, Big Apple Greeter – a free public service – has welcomed over 62,000 visitors and been featured in hundreds of newspapers, magazines, and television and radio programs all over the world, reaching an audience of over one billion potential visitors to New York City. Big Apple Greeter is proud to partner with NYC & Company and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

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s and how similar people's wants and needs are...The Museum of the American Indian,
ch Village because the area of the Village we visited was quiet and not crowded with
Chelsea Market, Murray's Chelsea & Jacques Torres Chocolate Heaven...

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____ Enclosed is my check made payable to: Big Apple Greeter, Inc., One Centre St., New York, NY 10007

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Or email: lbrooks@bigapplegreeter.org

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