



Fall 2009

ABRAHAM LINCOLN CENTRE  
Preparing People for Life Ready for Tomorrow

# CENTRE FOCUS

## Did You Know?

Child Care Evening Service may be available. The ALC is researching the need for an evening child care facility located in the Hyde Park/Kenwood area. Staffed with licensed site directors and certified teachers, the center could service parents with evening work and/or school schedules looking for quality child care.

Do you now, or will you in the near future, have a need for evening child care?

**LET US HEAR FROM YOU!**  
Contact Robin Melton at 773-285-1540 or [rmelton@abelink.org](mailto:rmelton@abelink.org)

The Annual Humanitarian Award Dinner is scheduled for October 23, 2009 at the Fairmont Hotel.  
**SAVE THE DATE!**

The ALC Theatre is available for hosting meetings, plays, and other theatrical productions. The auditorium provides a stage, 128 seats, and a large movie screen. Contact us today for hosting your next production.

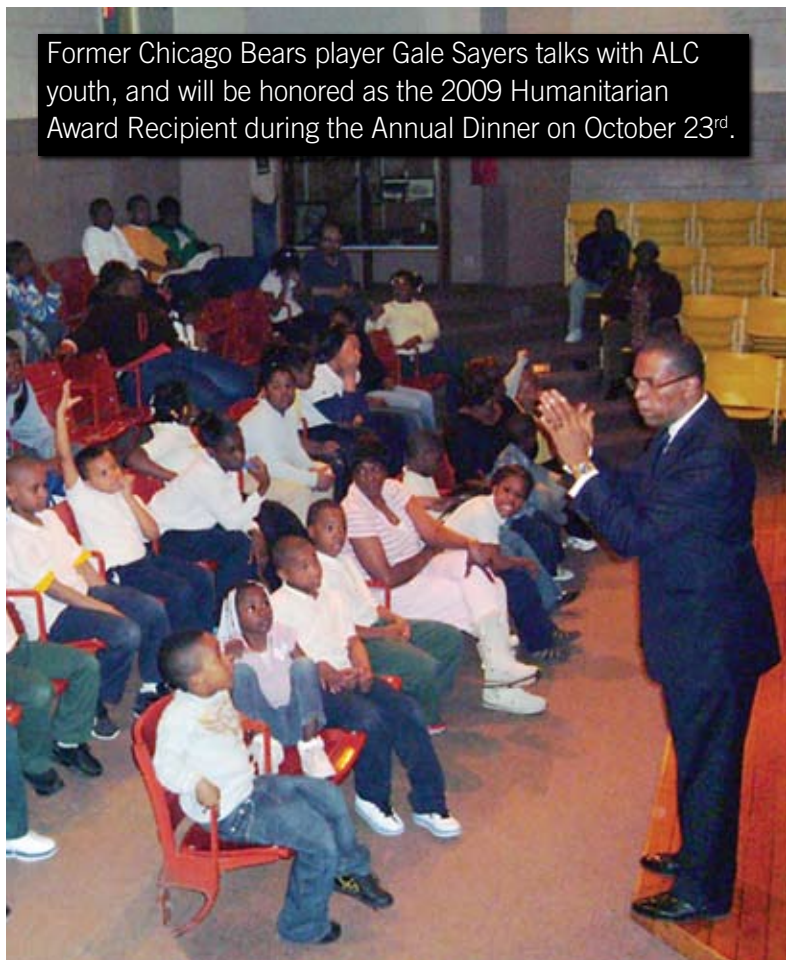
The Computer Lab offers state of the art computers, printers, and internet access for children, teens, and adults to conduct research, complete homework assignments, receive computer training, etc. During the fall, the lab is open Monday-Friday. Contact Ulysses Jefferson at (773) 373-3775 or [ujefferson@abelink.org](mailto:ujefferson@abelink.org).

## NFL Hall of Fame Legend Gale Sayers Visits As ALC Meets the Needs of Changing Community

**B**ronzeville, a community transformed by revitalization efforts, presents a unique opportunity for organizations like the Abraham Lincoln Centre. This historic district, encompassing 31st Street north to 51st Street, and State Street east to Lake Michigan, has recently witnessed an abundance of renovated buildings, newly developed retail space and condo units, new and refurbished parks, and much more. Talk of Chicago winning the bid for the 2016 Olympics has generated plans for additional large-scale development projects. With expansion comes significant change, including the needs of community residents. Urban renewal projects have attracted a multitude of newcomers from diverse backgrounds and varied income levels to the once predominantly low-income Bronzeville area. As the residents change, so does the programming at the Abraham Lincoln Centre. ALC programs have been flexible and adaptive to the changing needs of its community for 105 years.

Kids and teens from varied backgrounds often have different interests; therefore, ALC has expanded its programming to comprise a more diverse curriculum, including guidance from leaders in the community, business, creative arts, and sports—such as NFL legend Gale Sayers (pictured above). Program expansion includes culinary arts classes in our recently remodeled high-tech kitchen (donated by AARP); paid summer internships for teens interested in the performing arts; the Digital Divide program extension of additional

Former Chicago Bears player Gale Sayers talks with ALC youth, and will be honored as the 2009 Humanitarian Award Recipient during the Annual Dinner on October 23<sup>rd</sup>.



computer labs at the 42nd & Berkley and 90th & Stony Island Street facilities; and the African-Caribbean Spoken Word workshop.

Other new projects in the works include a hip hop writing and production workshop; African drum lessons; a mentoring boot camp by the Chicago Police Department; a workshop on drugs, alcohol and tobacco; and photography classes. The new programs are in

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Pre-K student receives progressive computerized lessons.

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*ALC Meets the Needs of Changing Community*

addition to the tutoring, field trips, basketball, tennis, golf, and other activities for children and teens at the Abraham Lincoln Centre. The afterschool and teen programs provide activities for children ages 6–17 from 2:00PM–6:00PM throughout the school year and full-time during the summer months.

ALC's Child Development Centers are administering a cross-cultural learning system called "Language Through Science" for Head Start children 3–5 years of age. Produced by Leap Learning Systems, this progressive curriculum helps develop students' pre-literacy and language skills through hands-on science instruction and activities, and nurtures natural inquisitiveness and vocabulary through the process of scientific exploration. In addition to the childcare facility located in Bronzeville at 43rd & Cottage Grove, ALC also has two other centers in the Roseland and Englewood neighborhoods. All three centers, servicing a total of 250 kids a year, provide quality programming and activities including computer science, motor skills, etiquette, field trips, and more. All programs are administered by certified teachers and licensed site directors.

# Staying at the Forefront of Disability Services

*Providing quality care is a continued priority for the Developmental Disabilities and Behavioral Health Services Department (DD&BHS) at the Abraham Lincoln Centre. Our consumers depend on us to deliver care that is not only first-rate, but also progressive and compliant with the latest State regulations. The dedicated team of administrators and care-givers provide that, and more, through ongoing staff training, consumer involved advocacy and interactive development activities.*



DD&BHS Consumer makes a picture-magnet for a Mother's Day gift.

In June 2009, the DD&BHS Department held its annual In-Service training for all care-givers of the mental health and developmental disabilities programs. This three-day training is mandatory for staff, and ensures the ALC team is thoroughly skilled in, and in compliance with State regulations, including First Aid, CPR, Nonviolent Crisis Intervention, and Abuse & Neglect detection and prevention.

Advocacy for consumers' rights is also a crucial component of our services. Therefore, when the State of Illinois hosted the Advisory Council meeting, the ALC sponsored a number of its consumers and staff to attend the meeting in Springfield. This past April, our delegates joined representatives from other agencies and social service providers to discuss issues, influence public policy on quality of care, and giving consumers more choice related to their programs. This opportunity allowed our clients to personally engage in the process of establishing standards of care for themselves and their peers.

ALC's standard of care includes a progressive approach to service, such as community integrated activities. ALC takes consumers from our developmental training program to play basketball once a week at our 38th & Cottage Grove Center. Additionally, this past Mother's Day, ALC sponsored a gift-making project, in which over a hundred consumers made gifts for their mothers and loved ones.



## John T. Geocaris, A Legacy of Making a Difference in the Lives of Others

John T. Geocaris is the CEO of Little Lady Foods in Elk Grove Village, IL. Following in the footsteps of his late father and uncle, Angelo and Robert Geocaris, he became involved with the Abraham Lincoln Centre almost thirty years ago. For more than a decade, John has raised thousands of dollars for the children and families served by the ALC. In 1985, he joined the Board of Trustees, extending the legacy of the Geocaris family support of the Abraham Lincoln Centre to more than 50 years. John became Chairman of the Board of Trustees in 2004, and went on to serve two terms.

While on the Board, John's vision for the Centre was to ensure that it changed along with the surrounding communities. Many of the south side neighborhoods served by ALC, including Bronzeville, the South Loop and Auburn-Gresham have experienced significant changes in housing, population and business development. John contributed significantly to ALC's strategic direction and innovation to ensure the Centre's relevance for the next 100 years of service to the community. As a result, the ALC has been able to grow and prosper.

This growth was demonstrated by the numerous accomplishments of the Centre and considerable community impact. Most notable to John are the profound enhancements made to the early childcare and disability service programming. Over the past 15–20 years, state regulations for social service agencies have changed, requiring the Centre to structure its processes at a much higher level. As a result, the many residents who were previously in state institutions and now returning to the community are able to enroll in our programs and receive state-funded assistance.

John has recently retired from the Board of Trustees. We will miss him as a major contributor; however, John and his family will continue to support ALC through his participation as a member of the board of Helping People, Inc., an organization that is a part of the ALC family focused on economic development and housing. In recognition of the contributions of the Geocaris family to the Centre's past, present, and future, our Board of Trustees dedicated the ALC Theatre to the Angelo and Irene Geocaris family.

“Always make sure you don't miss anything. When things are going well, I'm looking for what could go wrong. When things are going bad, I'm looking for the next opportunity. There are plenty of opportunities around right now.”

—JOHN T. GEOCARIS

## SPOTLIGHT



ALC's Polar Adventure outing showcased dramatic ice sculptures and much more.



Kids and adults enjoy Easter activities during Family Fun Nights in April.



Roller Skating outing was a great way to exercise while having fun.

# IN THE NEWS



Neighborhood residents clean-up a local playlot during Green & Clean Day.



Mothers, Grandmothers and Aunts are honored by children during Mother's Day Brunch.



Family Fun Nights in May provide games and more for Bronzeville residents.



**ABRAHAM LINCOLN CENTRE**  
*Over a Century Commitment to Communities*

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