

## CRDC Presents Dr. Marilyn Fahs on Healthy Aging

By Mary Dorman, CRDC District Leader

Healthy aging is an enormous public health challenge for the 21st Century, shaped by the unprecedented size of the aging population. The complex interaction of biological, clinical, social, economic and environmental factors affecting healthy aging calls for an innovative public health policy framework. Society must be able to design, deliver and evaluate the types of service programs that most effectively assist New York's seniors to enable them to age in their communities. This should be with the greatest degree of personal choice and support for communal interdependence.

CRDC is proud to present Dr. Marilyn Fahs in an informative, timely talk in which she disputes common economic myths associated with aging that affect current policy, and presents new evidence for the economic benefits of healthy urban aging in New York City.

Dr. Marianne Fahs, PhD, MPH, is the Research Director of the Brookdale Center for Healthy Aging and Longevity and Professor of Health Policy and Management at Hunter College and Professor in the Public Health and Economics Doctoral Programs of the Graduate Center, City University of New York. She has over 25 years experience in health services research, economics and policy analysis, with a focus on vulnerable older adults. Dr. Fahs pioneered the first cost-effectiveness analysis of a preventive screening program among older women, resulting in the Congressional passage of Medicare's inaugural preventing screening benefit. Dr. Fahs is internationally renowned and has served on advisory committees to the United States Congress and the National Institutes of Health regarding preventive health services for the elderly. She has published over 100

There will be no November-December General Meeting

January 20, 2011 will be the next General Meeting

7:00 PM

Hudson Guild  
441 West 26th Street  
(between 8th and 9th Aves)

It will feature a presentation by **Dr. Marianne Fahs** from the Brockdale Center for Aging and Longevity.

articles on such subjects. Currently, Dr. Fahs is Principal Investigator on a 3 year demonstration project "Bringing Evidence-based Health Care Practice to Older Adults Aging in Place in New York City", funded by the NYC Department of the Aging.

## New York Holds Off Red Tide That Swept the Nation

By Tom Shuler, CRDC District Leader

New York State was one of the few bright spots for Democrats on Election night. With victories by Andrew Cuomo and the entire statewide ticket, the red tide that swept America was halted here.

Another bright spot was the victory of David Carlucci for a vacant State Senate seat in Rockland County. This was a seat long held

by the Republicans and Carlucci's convincing victory was considered an upset. Many CRDC members were involved in this race taking part in canvassing, phone banks and donating money. The picture shows CRDC's own Tom Schuler and David Warren joining State Senator Liz Krueger in Rockland to meet voters on Davids behalf.



*Comment:*

## The Polarized Debate About Charter Schools

*By Maarten de Kadt, CRDC Vice President*

At CRDC’s recent Education forum, a parent asked the most difficult question of the evening. It went something like, “My child is not going to a good school. How do I get him into a good public school now?” The answer, unfortunately, is you cannot if there are no seats available at good schools, whether zoned or charter.

The movie “The Lottery,” shown at the forum, raises the broader question: How do we provide good education to all children? To their credit, this film and its companion just finishing a national run in theaters, “Waiting for Superman,” have sparked a long overdue debate about the quality of primary and secondary education in the U.S. Unfortunately, both films polarize that debate by posing Charter Schools as the heroes that will save us from failing public schools.

“The Lottery” shows us the elements of good education: enthusiastic teachers, concerned active parents, administrators who know their teachers well and support them and encourage them to work together, small schools whose staff know most of the students in the building, teachers (both new teachers and experienced ones) with the opportunity to reflect on their practice through professional development activities, student bodies that know they are in a special place and are proud of the school that they are in, and schools with an atmosphere of high expectations for all of their students.

But there is much the film doesn’t do, and some of what it does is just plain wrong. The filmmaker, while trying to promote Harlem’s Success Academy, was not given access to zoned public schools that work well and thus is unable to describe zoned schools that do work well. Thus the film gives a skewed view of the debate in favor of charter schools instead of calling for the elements of good education, as practiced by this one charter school, be implemented in all schools. The table below is instructive:

### 2010 Progress Reports

Grade	Charter Schools	District Schools
A	20%	26%
B	28%	35%
C	42%	35%
D	8%	4%
F	2%	Less than 1%

Only 48% of the city’s Charter Schools received As or Bs while 61% of District Schools received those ratings. Twice as many Charter Schools received F designations as did District Schools. Charter school versus zoned district school is not the appropriate criteria.

I taught at an innovative public school for 12 years: Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School in the South Bronx. The social and economic status of our school’s population was not that different from the one depicted in the film. As an indication of the school population’s economic status, more than 80% of our kids were eligible for free lunch.

The family backgrounds varied widely from incarcerated parents, families living in shelters, to middle-class families who decided our school was the right place to send their children. We work with children who came to us behind grade level. We knew it might not be possible for them to receive education similar to kids who had been in well-functioning schools most of their lives. Nevertheless, we told them from day one that we expected them to go to college. 90% of our graduates did just that.

Our staff followed the innovative philosophy of the Coalition of Essential Schools and the Performance-Based Assessment Consortium, both offering alternatives to the Department of Education’s by-rote curriculum. Our students were evaluated on the in-depth portfolios they produced. We did use testing, but we avoided high-stakes testing. We worked to form a school community of teachers and students. We strived to include parents and the nearby community.

We spent our days focusing on moving each kid forward from where he or she was at that moment. Not all our kids were compliant, and we worked with that too. Much like the philosophy stated in “The Lottery,” our attitude was (and the attitude of good teachers should be) all children are educable.

Our teachers, like so many throughout the public school system, almost always work beyond the minimal requirements of the school day. They prepare curriculum during the summer. They prepare classes at home. They grade student papers at home. Much work in the preparation of classes extends beyond the preparation

< *Source: New York Teacher, United Federation of Teachers, October 14, 2010, p. 5.*

periods afforded by the agreement between the Department of Education and the UFT.

“The Lottery” polarizes the debate about what constitutes good education by glorifying charter schools and at the same time by denigrating all inner-city public schools. The film ignores the large number of charter schools that fail; according to the New York Times, “more than a third [of the charter schools] did ‘significantly worse’” than public schools. “The Lottery” even goes so far as to imply if inner-city students go to their zoned school, they will wind up in jail. This is an outrageous implication.

Worse, “The Lottery” makes the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) into the bogymen even though evidence from Finland, with its highly respected education system, indicates unions are not the problem. Finish public schools are almost 100% unionized. According to the film, however, the UFT contract stymies administrative flexibility. But, union contracts were fought for to protect teachers from capricious administrators.

The due process protections in the contract are essential. When a student falsely accuses a teacher of improperly touching her, that teacher needs protection. This happened to a talented teacher I know. The accusation led to this teacher’s removal from her school. She had a lengthy stay in the reassignment center, was eventually exonerated and returned to her school, but because of her bad experience, she left the teaching profession. Due process protections established in the contract can be streamlined, but the must not be eliminated.

These important protections also serve to provide teachers the freedom to innovate within their classrooms. Al Sharpton said it well on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC on 10/2/10: “Don’t let the call for standards become an excuse for union busting.” And don’t permit the false hero in “The Lottery” - the charter school - to extinguish the excellent education offered by some public schools. Let’s apply the model of “good school” to all schools.

“It takes a village to raise a child.” CRDC should play a role in Chelsea’s village of schools.

## **CRDC** **Annual Pot Luck Holiday Party**

*Sunday, December 5, 2010*

*5:00–8:00 pm*

*Dusk Lounge*

*147 West 24th St; (bet. 6th & 7th Ave.)*

Bring your favorite dish for our potluck offerings.  
ALSO bring non-perishable food items to be donated to our local food pantries.

## **HUDSON GUILD** **Annual Dr. Elliott Celebration**

An evening honoring Chelsea’s community leaders for their outstanding service and celebrating the life of our founder, Dr. John Lovejoy Elliott.

*WHEN: Thursday, December 9, 2010*

*Cocktail Reception at 6:00 p.m.*

*Program & dinner begin promptly at 7 p.m.*

*WHERE: Hudson Guild Fulton Center  
119 Ninth Avenue (btwn 17th and 18th Sts.)*

*HONOREES:*

**FLORENCE DENT-HUNTER**

Senior Service Award

**FARSE OMAR**

Youth Service Award

**CHELSEA WATERSIDE PARK ASSOC.**

Dorothy Epstein Community Service Award

**Please purchase tickets by  
Wednesday December 1, 2010**



*Audience and Panel at Education Outreach Program*

PO Box 1120  
Old Chelsea Station  
New York City, NY 10113-1120

Chelsea, Madison Sq., Flatiron, Rosehill



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By Maarten de Kadat, CRDC Vice President

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