



breaking barriers

helping people with disabilities help themselves

FALL 2012

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BFL Olympics!



Oscar Pistorius.

BFL caught the Olympic spirit this past August, hosting a day-long event inspired by the London Paralympic and 2012 Olympic Games. Residents of the agency's Transitional Housing Program joined consumers from the Secret Garden DV Program for an afternoon of games, medals and empowerment for people with disabilities.

"We were so inspired this year by athletes like Oscar Pistorius and the USA's huge success in London as well as the astounding athletes at this year's Paralympic Games," said Patricia Motus, Program Manager of BFL's Occupational Therapy program which organized the event. "We set aside this day to celebrate the strength and determination of our residents and consumers in a fun, community-building way."

Pistorius, a double-amputee tagged the "Blade Runner" because he runs on carbon-fiber blades, anchored the South Africa team in the 4x400-meter relay final at the London Olympics. The inspiring athlete also prompted the Boston Marathon to announce that it would be "well-pleased" to allow runners with prosthetic legs to compete in the open division. Athletes worldwide competed at the Paralympics in events ranging from power lifting to wheelchair rugby and cycling.

BFL Olympians competed in the balloon toss, bean bag throw and trivia quiz and the day culminated with a rousing medals ceremony.



A Resident wins gold.

The 2012 Olympic Games hosted numerous athletes with disabilities.

Diver Chris Colwill from Florida, who is hearing impaired, competed in London along with South Korean archer Im Dong Hyun, who has 10 percent vision in his left eye and 20 percent in his right. Hyun set the first world record of the 2012 Games, and his team eventually won bronze. Polish table tennis player Natalia Partyka, who was born without a right hand or forearm, also competed, appearing in her second consecutive Olympic Games.

Of note historically: American gymnast George Eyser won several medals at the St. Louis, Missouri based 1904 Olympics while competing with a wooden prosthesis for a left leg. He lost his leg after being run over by a train. Eyser earned six medals in one day, including three gold and two silver and took gold in the vault, an event which then included a jump over a long horse without aid of a springboard.



BFL Team Member Goes to India



Aeilushi Mistry, a member of the Organizational Development Team, took a sojourn to her homeland of India this past August, bringing back vibrant stories and a refreshed spirit.

Tell us about your visit to India.

I went to India in the month of mid-July through mid-August and visited, Mumbai, Navsari, Surat, Valsad, and Vadodara

in Gujarat State which is located on the west of India. I was visiting my home after not going for three years. I wanted to spend quality time with my Parents, brother and his family, and my in-laws family. It was fun, tranquil and a most memorable visit.

What are some of the trip highlights?

When I arrived, the hot summer season had just wrapped up—thus the Mango season. The Monsoon season was taking shape. Mom had saved home grown fresh mangos from the garden and they were very sweet and juicy, I cherished every morsel. I enjoyed fresh coconut water and its cream almost everyday, sitafal (custard apple), chikoo, fresh dates etc. These are some of our names for a few of our seasonal fruits.

During this time, there are many festivals which take place. Every festival has special food prepared. Among the festivals celebrated there was the Rakshabandhan festival. It is a festival meant for brother and sister. The ceremony involves the tying of a rakhi (sacred thread made out of silk or cotton thread) by a sister on her brother's wrist. This symbolizes the sister's love and prayers for her brother's and his family well-being, and the brother's lifelong vow to protect her.

The second festival was a celebration of Lord Krishan's birthday. Lord Krishna was born at midnight. So the celebration takes place at night and continues through the next day. It was fun decorating the temple, baby Krishna's cradle, praying, chanting, eating sweet and fresh butter.

Anything else to add about your trip?

Beside festivals, I visited my school, met old friends, enjoyed vibrant colors everywhere, busy streets, flooded rivers and riverbanks. Though it was chaotic, it was harmonious cacophony. I enjoyed every moment it.



FIGURES & FACTS

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Number of Americans that participated in London Paralympics 2012

42

Number of states and Washington D.C. which have representatives on the 2012 U.S. Paralympic Team.



3 Number of athletes who set world records at the 2012 U.S. Paralympic Trials



11

Number of athletes with disabilities who have competed in the Olympics since 1904

Age of youngest Paralympic athlete: swimmer Colleen Young (St. Louis, Mo.), who turned 14 in June



14

4,000

TOTAL number of athletes competing in London Paralympics 2012

BFL's Mission Statement Film

BFL's Mission Statement film. Scan the QR code with your smart phone.

If you need a QR reader there are many free apps available for download.





Myra Ricard, Most Dedicated to BFL Vision winner

2012 Staff Appreciation Day Awards

Nicolyn Plummer	Best Attendance
Aida Colon	Best Attitude
Donald Logan	Best Leadership Skills
Brenda McGriff	Best Sense of humor
Accounting Team	Best Team
Childcare Worker Team	Best Team
Occupational Therapy	Best Team
Transitional Housing	Best Team
Kitchen Team	Best Team
Secret Garden	Best Team
Michelle Britton	Best Team Player
Josephine Vasquez	Best Under Pressure
Tiffany Williams	Gets Along Well w Co-Workers
David Rodriguez	Goes Beyond the Call of Duty
Jules Perkel	Integrity on the Job
Tashi Haskin	Most Creative
Myra Ricard	Most Dedicated to BFL Vision

Bocher + Co. Bring Joy To Freedom House

Staff of Bocher + Company, a NYC based digital strategy agency (boucherco.com) visited BFL's Freedom House Emergency Shelter this past August, participating in an afternoon of activities and community building with resident families.

"These events greatly help our children during their transition and can help stabilize them in their new environment," said Cynthia Amodeo, Coordinator of "Generations of Freedom" the family services department at Freedom House. "They bring laughter to their lives during this difficult time."

Yenely Gomez, Child Care/Recreation Director at Freedom House who organized the event added that it "promoted socialization among children. It was rewarding to see smiles on their faces."

The day included a variety of games and culminated with a basketball tournament drawing over a dozen participants.



Boucher Team: Jagpreet Singh, Harpreet Singh, Gerard Boucher, Sheldon Wong and Jonathan Diaz

MTA Bus Demo for BFL

The MTA paratransit division recently provided residents of BFL's Transitional Housing Program with a street-side bus demo, covering the ins and outs of how people with disabilities can best use public transportation.

Russel Schmid, Outreach & Public Information Coordinator, MTA Paratransit Division, fielded questions and covered topics about rider's rights, who to contact if a bus does not want to provide access, and safety tips.

"This gives our residents the opportunity to practice getting on and off a kneeling bus, a task that can be quiet challenging in a crowded NYC bus," said Patricia Motus, BFL's Occupational Therapy Program Manager. "This exercise will encourage residents to feel more comfortable using



public transportation and navigating in and out of their communities."

Scan the QR code to view a video of Russel Schmid's presentation.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month!

➔ **Join BFL at our Special Event!**

Lavender & Blue: A Wine & Cheese Mega-Mixer

Honoring survivors, advocates and the NYPD

Guest Star DJ ~ Awesome Raffle Prizes ~ Special Guests

October 23. 6pm-8pm

More Info & To Reserve VIP Tix: info@bflnyc.org



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