



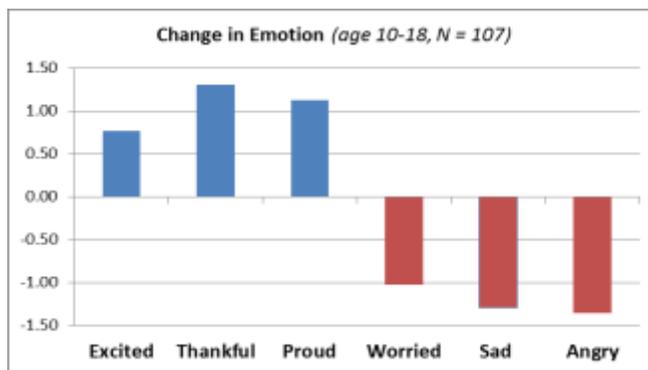
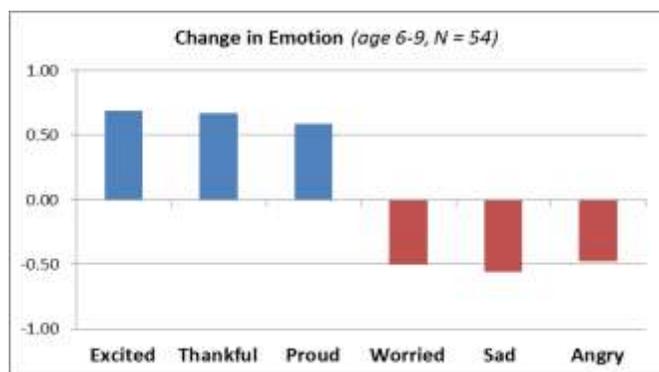
*I look forward to teaching my monthly classes at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital. Seemingly healthy children and those hooked up to IVs join the fun, some in wheelchairs all ready to dance. These are regular kids who just want to DANCE and have FUN. We (Soaringwords + Zumba) have the pleasure of delivering joy. The joy spreads and follows them back to their rooms and changes the perspective life of those present forever! - Richard Gormley, Zumba Education Specialist*

# About Soaringwords

Soaringwords' mission is to embrace hospitalized children, families and staff, encouraging positive health and healing. Soaringwords embraces ill children and their families both in person and online, providing fun, creative and educational modules based on positive psychology concepts that enhance well-being in the midst of illness.

## Empirical Research

This year, Soaringwords launched an empirical research study to measure the impact of a positive intervention on the well-being of pediatric patients. In a one-time 30-60 minute session, 220 patients received an inspirational SoaringSuperhero message and artwork (from a stranger) and then were invited to create a superhero message/artwork for someone else. Before and after, participants completed a questionnaire, compiled from reliable, accredited survey instruments, administered by hospital employees, Child Life Specialists, and hospital volunteers. For every emotion, both adolescents and children were significantly more positive and less negative after the intervention than before the intervention.



Positive interventions, such as SoaringSuperheroes, come from impacting both physical and psychological systems in a measurable way, to allow the child and his or her support system to **SOAR**. Proposed new positive psychology construct called **SOAR**.

**Somatic:** **Somatic** movement activates a biological response that fully engages patients physically and emotionally. Taking physical action engages the whole self in service for another person as the patient physically creates a superhero for someone else.

**Outcomes:** Empirically-based **outcomes**, as was done in this study, provide metrics that reflect improvements in a patient's well-being through the Soaringwords' intervention.

**Agency & Altruism:** The Soaringwords activities give patients a sense of **agency** - tremendous power as they are invited to create something **altruistic** that will have a positive impact on another person. The ideation, drawing and constructing of a personalized message gives patients a sense of strength, creativity, and control.

**Reciprocity and Resilience:** **Reciprocity** is built into all of the Soaringwords interventions as a way to allow patients to feel connected to others in deeply personal and emotional ways (Grant, 2013), even though they may never meet the recipient of their SoaringSuperhero creations. **Resilience**, the capacity to prevail in the face of difficulty, is a measure of heightened well being (Reivich & Shatte, 2003). Reciprocity and resilience strengthen patients' coping capacity for present and future challenges.

## Message from our CEO & Founder

2013 was a year of growth and expansion. It was a year where we rolled up our sleeves and focused on building a stronger foundation as we applied all of the newly found science from my Master's in Applied Positive Psychology (MAPP) degree from the University of Pennsylvania. We recalibrated all of the Soaringwords fun and therapeutic activities with positive psychology interventions to ensure that patients, their families and healthcare professionals would get the maximum impact from these "pay it forward" interventions. Patients and volunteers were invited to discover and use their individual character strengths by doing something kind and meaningful for a hospitalized child.

Soaringwords also collaborated with several positive psychology thought leaders from around the world to create videos, webinars, articles and curricula modules to help patients, their families, and healthcare professionals experience more well-being in the midst of illness and medical challenges. Some of the collaboration partners include Jane Dutton (*High Quality Connections*), Richard Tedeschi (inventor of the term post-traumatic growth), Barbara Fredrickson (*Positivity* and *Love 2.0*) and Shane Lopez (*Making Hope Happen*).

Throughout 2013, we deepened our Educational Outreach initiatives launching an intensive six-week summer session unit and then, in the fall semester kicking off a weekly, ten-month program in several inner-city schools. All of these initiatives are turn-key and replicable.

Special thanks to our vibrant Board members, employee volunteers, interns and new supporters who have joined the Soaringwords movement. This year, we led employee-engagement programs and launched powerful new global alliances with Accenture, Cigna, Johnson & Johnson and national movements with New York Life, JPMorgan Chase, BNYMellon and PT Development.

We are honored to be a global partner with Zumba® Fitness. 723 Zumba instructors have volunteered to lead free monthly Soaringwords + Zumba experiences in hospitals in 39 countries. We are piloting these classes in several markets to get the party started.

**In 2013, the organization received \$307,871 in cash and \$223,790 of in-kind donations.**

We welcome the opportunity to speak with you about the year's performance and the strategic plan for the future. Wishing you tremendous love, radiant health, empathy, gratitude and strength.

Warmly,



Lisa Honig Buksbaum,  
CEO & Founder, Soaringwords  
[lisa@soaringwords.org](mailto:lisa@soaringwords.org)  
646-674-7105



# Highlights of the Year

## Hospital Outreach initiatives



Soaringwords is the only organization that motivates ill children and their families to “pay it forward” through pro-social activities which foster altruism, reciprocity, well-being and resilience. Soaringwords invites hospitalized patients to make Soaringwords projects, based on positive psychology strategies, to give to other patients, their families or hospital staff. Creating fun and meaningful projects for someone else motivates each patient to experience a greater sense of well-being and resilience.

### Journaling for Hospitalized Children

Soaringwords filmed a 9 part Soaringwords Book Club video series based on *DIGGING DEEP A Journal for Young People Facing Health Challenges* written by Rose Offner & Sheri Brisson. Three author interview videos share personal stories and pointers to using the journal. These creative hands-on activity videos include *Life Awards You* where patients give themselves an award for being courageous, kind, or resilient; *100 Dreams and Desires*; *Good Fortunes* where patients write their own fortune cookie messages; and *Taking Out the Trash*.

[VIDEOS](#)



# Highlights of the Year

## Educational Outreach initiatives



From 2012 to 2013, Soaringwords led a 10-month weekly Educational Outreach program based on Positive Psychology interventions at **P.S.1** in lower Manhattan. Each weekly activity was designed to boost core skills (reading, writing, communication, critical thinking, creative arts) and build character strengths and virtues (resilience, gratitude, goal-setting, compassion and more). The gifts that the students created were donated to patients at The Children's Hospital at Montefiore to inspire the pediatric patients to create gifts for other patients, family members and hospital professionals.

During the summer school session, 70 students at **PS 163** participated in a Soaringwords service learning program. Weekly modules included -- SoaringSuperheroes®; SoaringConstellations; SoaringFables®; SoaringHieroglyphs from a SoaringMuseums® video at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; and SoaringMurals®.

After the successful summer program, in the fall of 2013, we launched a weekly, ten-month Soaringwords Educational Outreach program with three New York City public schools. Each week, JCC volunteers and Soaringwords team leaders had the joy of working with second graders to create fun and meaningful projects to donate to patients and families at Harlem Hospital.



# Highlights of the Year

## Soaringwords + Zumba® Fitness = Love for hospitalized children



In August, the Soaringwords team spent five days at the global Zumba® Fitness Instructor Convention in Orlando where 723 licensed Zumba instructors from around the world, representing 39 countries, signed up to lead free monthly classes in pediatric hospitals. A big thank you to the magnificent Thomas Estler for joining the Soaringwords team for the 2nd year in the row at the convention, and helping us spread our passion to bring Soaringwords and Zumba to hospitalized children. At left: David Topel, Zumba Fitness with Soaringwords team: Rachel Gorman, Lisa Buksbaum, and Thomas Estler.



We are working diligently to bring the healing power of Soaringwords activities coupled with the fun and energy of Zumba classes to hospitalized children, their families, and the healthcare professionals. (Photo left: mother and daughter team Reyna Zurita & Janice Gonzalez at Florida Hospital for Children.)

## Zumba® Fitness Fundraisers



Kass Martin, Zumba Education Specialist leads Zumba® Fitness Master Class at Alvin Ailey Theater in NYC



Zumba® Fitness Master Class in Miami orchestrated by Dr. Olga Lucia Duran.

# Highlights of the Year

## Soaringwords launches Positive Psychology Videos for patients, families and healthcare professionals



When was the last time you had a conversation that actually made you feel elevated and energized? High Quality Connections (HQC) is the ground-breaking theory of positive psychologist Jane Dutton. The HQC technique is easy to use and immediately changes the emotional trajectory of relationships allowing you to show esteem, dignity and care for others through active, constructive listening and being fully present, even from the first conversation. [VIDEO](#)



Soaringwords went behind the scenes at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) Rain Room exhibit to create the latest SoaringMuseums® video to share on Soaringwords.org. Ill children and families can make a virtual museum visit while at home or in the hospital. (Photo right: Rain Room creators Hannes Koch and Flo Ortkrass with Soaringwords' Founder Lisa Buksbaum and Rachel Gorman, Director of Hospital Outreach & Wellness Education) [VIDEO](#)



At the International Positive Psychology Association global conference in Los Angeles we caught up with Gallop senior scientist, Shane Lopez to discuss his latest book, *Making Hope Happen*. Watch the video to discover the difference between hope and wishing. [VIDEO](#)



It was a delight to interview Barbara Frederickson, the Chair of the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA) and author of *Positivity*. Barb she shares a radical new concept of love that is different from romantic love or infatuation. "Love 2.0 is defined as micro moments of connection which transform our perspective and enhance our resilience." The video includes healing and hopeful actions for patients, families and healthcare professionals. [VIDEO](#)



Scientific studies show most people recover from major life crises transformed AND even stronger than before. This phenomenon is called Post-traumatic Growth. Lisa chats with Dr. Richard Tedeschi, a leading expert in the field, who discusses how PTG is a process people go through and a place they get to when they come to recognize that they have been transformed. [VIDEO](#)

# Highlights of the Year



Soaringwords was part of **Cigna** team-building events in Belgium, NYC and Hartford.

- April: 80 management professionals in Antwerp, Belgium mentored 42 students from the local school. Together they decorated SoaringQuilts® and SoaringPillows® for hospitalized children at the Queen Paola Children's Hospital in Antwerp.

- March: 130 professionals from the Global Employer Segment team mentored 80 inner-city students at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in New York City.

- January: Soaringwords was the hands-on employee engagement activity for the Global IT Leadership Conference. 110 Cigna global IT leaders mentored 68 middle school students from the Compass Youth Collaborative group at the Burns Latino Studies Academy in Hartford, CT. Everyone participated in a team-building Zumba dance celebration to celebrate fitness and health.



*The experience was incredible and moving. Not only for providing Connecticut Children's Medical Center with tokens of warmth, but also the chance to engage students in Hartford directly in creating something great together. We as well look forward to continuing our partnership. The words I left with - Gratitude and Goodwill. Gratitude for what we have and what we can give, Goodwill in what came out as we met together. – Mark Boxer, Global IT, Cigna*

## Highlights of the Year



The Soaringwords hands-on service program was the grand finale for **Accenture's** largest global meeting. It was thrilling to feel the energy of 131 newly-minted partners as they mentored 75 high school students from the Boys & Girls Club in St. Charles, IL. Together, they decorated 100 SoaringQuilts® and 100 SoaringPillows® for children at the local Ronald McDonald House and patients at St. Alexius Medical Center. According to one executive, *"today changed the way I think about myself as I was able to take a step back from the high speed life we live in and be part of a great initiative."* Above left: Soaringwords Board member, Jeffrey Russell, Sr. Managing Director & North American Life Sciences Lead introducing the program.

## Take Your Child to Work Day



On Take Your Child to Work Day millions of children cut school to hang out at their parents' offices. In companies around the country, we shared Soaringwords community service projects with employees' children at NY Life, Cisco, Merck and Horizon Media. Since hospitalized children can't participate in the fun, we decided to bring the joy to them by donating SoaringQuilts® and SoaringPillows® decorated with inspirational messages and artwork. (Photo left: Cisco, Iselin, NJ, Photo right: New York Life, NYC)

# Highlights of the Year



Soaringwords was happy to spend few hours on the **Facebook** campus with sixth graders from Belle Haven Elementary School on 9/11, the National Day of Service. The entire day was in celebration of the life of Facebook's Executive Chef Josef Desimone who recently died. The program started with a special lunch for the students in the Facebook Cafe. Together, employee volunteers and the students decorated 100 quilts and 100 pillows with inspirational messages and artwork to donate to patients at Lucille Packard Children's Hospital and Alisa Ann Ruch Foundation that helps children who are burn victims. Three amazing Zumba instructors -- John Asenso, Alejandra Picollo and Chris Pilawski led a lively Zumba class, which was followed by a moving closing ceremony.



On 9/11 Soaringwords and **New York Life** launched a collaboration to support hospitalized and bereaved children around the country. Here in New York City a team lead by the amazing Carolin Fermin created SoaringSuperhero messages, decorated capes and masks for hospitalized children at Harlem Hospital. Employees also assembled SoaringSuperhero activity kits of the same project so that hospitalized or grieving children will be able to "get one and then give one". This activity will enable children to experience altruism and reciprocity which will enhance their well-being and inspire them to heal.

# Highlights of the Year



Once again, we had the honor of being part of **Deloitte** IMPACT day, a global day of service. In NYC, a delegation of employees volunteered with Soaringwords and mentored sixth graders at Dual Language Middle School in a three-hour community service project. The day started with an inspirational talk about leadership and altruism, followed by the decoration of SoaringQuilts® and SoaringPillows® with inspirational messages and artwork to donate to patients at The Children's Hospital at Montefiore. The entire group enjoyed a high-energy Zumba® class led by one of our favorite instructors Thomas Estler. The day ended with a closing circle and a visit to the hospital.



For the fourth year in a row, **BNY Mellon** employees headed back to schools – in Pittsburgh, PA; Los Angeles, CA; New York City, Jacksonville, FL; Everett, MA and Syracuse, NY. Seasoned Soaringwords champions and first-time volunteers came together to mentor elementary school children in a day of service learning to benefit hospitalized children at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, Mattel Children's Hospital UCLA, Montefiore Medical Center, Wolfson Children's Hospital, Shriners Hospital for Children-Boston and Ronald McDonald Charities of Central N.Y.



Grown-ups and students bonded, laughed, drew inspirational messages and artwork on the SoaringQuilts® and SoaringPillows®, enjoyed lunch while talking about what it takes to succeed in a career, and then turned up the volume with a high-energy Zumba class and performance. Teams choreographed their own dance routines to share with the entire group. The day ended with a Closing Circle and lots of hugs. After the students were dismissed, BNY Mellon volunteers stayed back to create a SoaringMural for each of the schools.

# Highlights of the Year



**Johnson & Johnson Consumer IT** team came together at a Town Hall meeting to decorate SoaringQuilts® and SoaringPillows® with inspirational messages and artwork to donate to hospitalized children at Saint Peter's University Hospital. Throughout 2014, J&J employees in this group will participate in hands-on Soaringwords initiatives at quarterly Divisional meetings and monthly initiatives to mentor opportunity youth at Franklin Park Elementary School.



This year we have shared **JPMorgan Chase** Volunteer Leadership Group employee volunteer programs in Elgin, Chicago, Fort Worth, TX and Louisville, KY. In Chicago, a team of spirited JPMorgan Chase employees under the guidance of the Women's Initiative Network (WIN) came together to embrace patients and families at Shriner's Hospital.

# Highlights of the Year



And the award for the coolest Soaringwords work station goes to **PT Development** employees! These physical therapists are bringing health and healing to patients every day. Your beautiful station and artwork is inspiring! Thank you for decorating SoaringQuilts® and SoaringPillows® for hospitalized children at Kosair Children's Medical Center in Louisville, KY and Brenner Children's Hospital in Winston-Salem, NC.



Strength and greatness is inside each child, regardless of their abilities. When special needs children are invited to make Soaringwords projects for hospitalized children it energizes them and makes them feel proud. That's why we were honored to present at the annual **Ramapo For Children** Youth Leadership Conference, along with 230 youth participants, from over 30 NYC metro-area agencies.

# Soaringwords Leadership Team

## **Lisa Honig Buksbaum, CEO & Founder**

Lisa is a passionary (a visionary driven by great passion and action). Based on her experiences talking to children and adults and sharing Soaringwords programs in pediatric hospitals, corporations, and schools she realized that people were starving to add meaning to their lives and to become part of something larger than themselves. Her personal experiences with death and illness resonate with people in deep and profound ways, which inspired her to launch Soaringwords. Soaringwords has embraced over 250,000 children and families since its inception.

Lisa has won national awards from A&E Television, Cisco, and the Points of Light Foundation and *USA Weekend*. She has been featured on ABC News, in *USA Weekend*, *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, *Fortune Small Business*, *Working Mother* and *Nickelodeon*. Lisa is a popular inspirational speaker at leading companies, including Eli Lilly and Company, Johnson & Johnson, New York Life, Accenture and American Express. Lisa has created webinars and educational videos with positive psychology thought leaders to inspire patients, families, healthcare professionals and co-workers to experience more well-being and positive outcomes (on topics such as Post-Traumatic Growth, Positivity, Hope and High-Quality Connections).

She is an honors graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and received an MBA in Marketing from Columbia University. Lisa has her Masters in Applied Positive Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania, under the direction of Dr. Martin Seligman, founder of positive psychology movement. She is also a graduate of the Columbia Graduate School of Business Institute for Non-Profit Management program and The Birthing of Giants program run by M.I.T. Prior to creating Soaringwords, Lisa founded Boxtree Communications, a successful marketing firm. Boxtree managed marketing and branding for many leading firms including NTT, Equitable, Chase, Scholastic, Colgate, and Dannon. Lisa created pro-bono campaigns for Take Our Daughters to Work Day, Boys & Girls Clubs, Sheba Medical Center, and The Dwelling Place. Lisa started her advertising career at Young & Rubicam and Lintas where she ran various accounts including Lipton Tea and Dixie. She was also the Manager for New Business, responsible for winning Macy's and Blockbuster Video.

She lives in Manhattan with her husband Jacob and two sons. She gains her energy from swimming each morning and connecting with people in meaningful ways. Lisa a licensed Zumba® instructor.

## Soaringwords Leadership Team

**Rachel N. Gorman, MA, CCLS**

**Director, Hospital Outreach and Wellness Education**

Rachel has shared her compassion and expertise working with children and families in hospitals, schools and in private practice for over 20 years. Rachel has an undergraduate degree in Human Services and Counseling and a Master in Early Childhood Education and Parent Education. As a young adult, she was interested in the value of looking at death and dying. During this time Rachel experienced the death of two grandparents, one who died suddenly and the other who experienced a beautifully supported death (thanks to Hospice) surrounded by family. After these experiences she decided to merge her passion for early childhood education, parent education and the study of illness, death and dying and happily discovered the field of Child Life. Child Life supports children and families through hospitalization and illness.

Rachel worked as a Child Life Specialist at North Shore University Hospital, as a Child Life Therapist for the Program for Children and Families (children and families infected and affected by HIV/AIDS) at St. Luke's Roosevelt and finally, as the Director of the Child Life Program at St. Vincent's Hospital. Rachel served as adjunct faculty at the Bank Street Graduate School of Education for over five years, teaching a required course for the Child Life Masters degree and mentoring those beginning their career in Child Life.

Rachel's enthusiasm is apparent. She is a strong workshop leader and trainer for children, parents, hospital staff and caregivers on subjects such as non-pharmacological pain management, coping with the stress of hospitalization, effective communication tools and many other topics that support ill children and their families.

Rachel received her Masters degree in Early Childhood Education and Parent Education from Binghamton University. She had post-graduate training in Child Life and Early Childhood Education at Yale University and Bank Street College of Education.

Rachel was first introduced to Soaringwords over ten years ago, as a hospital recipient while she was Director of the Child Life Program at St. Vincent's. Rachel is happy to now be a part of the Soaringwords team, providing information and activities to children and families which foster altruism, reciprocity, well-being and resilience. Rachel lives with her husband and son in Manhattan.

**Greta Rozensweig, Community Relations Manager**

Greta joined Soaringwords as a college intern, working 20 hours per week, during her senior year of college. In 2002, upon her graduation, Greta became Soaringwords' first full time employee. She coordinates corporate community outreach programs and manages educational outreach events for opportunity youth. Greta is the go-to person who always keeps things running smoothly at Soaringwords. Greta holds a BA in Psychology from Brooklyn College. She lives in Brooklyn.

## Board of Directors

**Graham Allan**, Vice President and Deputy General Counsel, Cisco

**Lisa Honig Buksbaum**, CEO and Founder, Soaringwords

**Patricia David**, Managing Director and the Global Head of Diversity, JPMorgan Chase.  
Soaringwords' Board Chair.

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