



NYC middle school students at IS 528 were thrilled to spend the day with super hip Viacom volunteers (who happen to work at MTV, Comedy Central and Nickelodeon). Children at the Komansky Center for Children's Health at NY-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center were delighted to receive SoaringQuilts® and SoaringPillows® filled with cheer from Sponge Bob, Dora and other well-loved characters from Nickelodeon.

# About Soaringwords

According to a 2010 study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 26% of children suffer from a long-term health problem.

Soaringwords' mission is to lessen the impact of serious illness by connecting ill children and their families to a community of compassionate volunteers who inspire them to "Never give up!" Soaringwords embraces these children and their families by providing fun, creative and educational activities both in person and online that cultivate joy, hope, laughter and healing.

*If a patient has hope, love, encouragement and support, he or she has a greater chance of a positive outcome. What is so inspiring about what you do with Soaringwords is that you are helping to remind people of the fundamental truth that they can share positive emotions with others, even in the most difficult times. It's especially important in those difficult times because it helps people rediscover their resilience and their ability to thrive, despite the suffering.*

-Dr. Barbara Fredrickson, Principal Investigator at the University of North Carolina Positive Emotions and Psychophysiology Lab, President International Positive Psychology Association, and bestselling author of *Positivity* and *Love 2.0*.

Soaringwords invites everyone – ill children and their families, healthy children and volunteers - to pay-it-forward by creating and giving healing words of encouragement and heartfelt artistic creations to others. This enhances their own feelings of meaning, purpose, health, resilience and happiness.

Soaringwords is the only organization that motivates ill children and their families to pay-it-forward because helping others in need enables them to transcend their suffering and experience a greater sense of well-being and resilience.

Soaringwords has empirical data that proves the effectiveness of its programs (Source: Soaringwords Capstone Research Study, University of Pennsylvania, Masters of Applied Positive Psychology, 2013.)





## Message from our CEO & Founder

2012 was a year where I tested my personal resilience and grit, juggling my full-time responsibilities running Soaringwords while attending a full-time Masters program in Applied Positive Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania led by Dr. Martin E. Seligman. The scientific constructs and knowledge s from my studies anchor the important work we've been doing amazing year as Soaringwords embraced hospitalized children, opportunity youth in public schools around the country, and employee volunteers. Together everyone was energized to inspire ill children and their families to "Never give up!"

Special thanks to our loyal volunteers and new friends who have joined the Soaringwords family. This year, we launched powerful new alliances with Facebook, CIGNA, CVS, William Morris Endeavor Entertainment (WME), BD, and MDC-Partners. We expanded programs in international markets with Johnson & Johnson and launched nineteen international markets with JetBlue. Soaringwords collaborated with thousands of employees in Volunteer Leadership Groups in ten cities nationwide with JPMorgan Chase, and won the Chairman's Award for our collaboration with BNYMellon employees in eight cities nationwide.

Soaringwords' best-in-class employee-engagement initiatives were expanded among several of our leading partners to include employees who traditionally have never been invited to participate in volunteer experiences, namely hourly workers, call center employees, and operations and distribution center staff.

Rachel Gorman, MA, CCLS, joined our team as Director of Hospital Outreach and Wellness Education. Rachel is working closely with our partner hospitals nationwide to expand the Soaringwords experience to ill children and families 365 days a year. In 2012, we'll be creating new Soaringwords video content and webinars for patients and their families, hospital employees, and professionals who are grappling with the challenges of serious illness.

We created more content for many of our trademarked initiatives, including SoaringMuseums®, SoaringNutrition®, and SoaringHeroes® and SoaringHeroines®. This year we also completed new videos and webinars with partners such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, best-selling experts and authors in mind-body-wellness, nutrition and healing. PI&C advertising agency donated a Public Service Advertising campaign and a social media campaign which will launch in partnership with Facebook in 2012.

Continued thanks to Cisco for being the lead technology sponsor of Soaringwords. In addition to donating our offices, this year Cisco's WebEx team hosted Soaringwords webinars for Fortune 100 companies. These webinars enable us to share valuable insights and strategies with managers, employees and families caring for ill children and loved ones. Soaringwords content and webinars help companies to support their employees grappling with serious illness.

In 2011, the organization received \$416,727 in cash and \$362,631 of in-kind donations. Most importantly, Soaringwords reached over 10,000 ill children and their families.

V  
tl *Lisa* to hear from you and hope you will continue to support or join  
ords family in 2012. Wishing you strength, great health,  
and gratitude for the simple wonders of each day.

Lisa Honig Buksbaum,



# Highlights of the Year

## JPMorgan Chase

For the second year in a row VLG teams nationwide decorated SoaringQuilts and SoaringPillows.

In Louisville, KY, JPMorgan Chase employees in 43 branches participated in a community service project to embrace children at Kosair Children's Hospital. Some employees got into the Olympic spirit and decorated sports themed quilts and pillows.

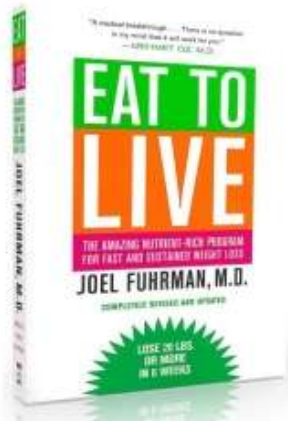


In New York City, JPMorgan Chase employees mentored students from I .S. 229 students. Together they decorated quilts and pillows and participated in the dance jam lead by one of our favorite Zumba teachers, Thomas Estler.



## Dr. Joel Fuhrman

At Soaringwords we always knew the importance of eating your greens but after meeting Dr. Joel Fuhrman we started our office veggie challenge. Dr. Fuhrman is the *New York Times* best-selling author of *Eat to Live*, *Super Immunity* and *Disease Proof Your Child*. We are thrilled to collaborate with Dr. Fuhrman to create fun, educational and interactive material as part of SoaringNutrition, which will further inspire children and adults to embrace and enjoy a healthier life. If you want to bring SoaringNutrition to your company to reduce healthcare costs or to underwrite this project to reach millions of underserved children, give us a call.





# Highlights of the Year

## Soaringwords + Zumba® Fitness = Love



Soaringwords was onsite at the Zumba® Instructor Convention in Orlando, 720 certified Zumba® Instructors signed up to teach monthly Zumba® classes to pediatric patients, Moms, Dads and nurses at children's hospitals around the world.



Mara, a fan of the Zumba® program and performer at ZUMBA® Fitness Concerts™, paid a visit to Lincoln Hospital in the Bronx where she serenaded patients, parents, nurses and doctors while four dazzling Zumba® Instructors led a class and danced along.



Thank you to the fantastic licensed Zumba® Instructors for launching classes at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital in Hollywood, FL and Shriners Hospital for Children – Chicago. Everyone – nurses, patients and parents- got into the fun! 750 licensed Zumba® Fitness instructors have volunteered to collaborate with Soaringwords and share monthly classes with hospitalized children and their families and hospital employees around the world.

# Highlights of the Year



## Caring for Yourself as a Caregiver of a Special Needs Children

In order to care for our children, it's crucial that we take time to nurture ourselves. It's very common for caregivers to harbor feelings of guilt and a sense that there's simply no time or energy left for themselves. When a family member, co-worker, or friend makes a well-intentioned but ultimately hurtful comment, people are left feeling raw. Dr. Catherine Lord, Director of the Center for Autism and the Developing Brain, joined me for a discussion which was shared with members of JCCs throughout North America, Autism Speaks, Starlight Children's Foundation, Chai Lifeline, and schools that support children with special needs. The webinar was made possible through generous support from the CVS Caremark Foundation. (Photo left: Fretta Reitzes, Director, Goldman Center for Youth and Family, 92nd Street Y; Dr. Catherine Lord; Lisa Honig Buksbaum.)

In case you missed our seminar on *Caring for Yourself as a Caregiver of a Special Needs Child* at the 92nd Street Y, you can watch the recording here: <http://www.92y.org/specialneeds>



## Soaringwords Book Club

Soaringwords launches its first book club featuring Judith Hannan, author, *Motherhood Exaggerated*, a riveting account of her daughter Nadia's journey through cancer. Today, Nadia is a dancer and healthy college student. Soaringwords is sharing the video and companion Soaringwords Book Club Discussion Guide with hospital partners for parent support groups. Contact Rachel Gorman, Director of Hospital Outreach and Wellness Education, to help us bring the Soaringwords Book Club to children and families. [WATCH VIDEO](#)



# Highlights of the Year



For the third year in a row, Soaringwords was the national non-profit partner for **JetBlues' Light Up a Life Initiative** in 60 Blue Cities across the country and the Caribbean. Thousands of JetBlue Crewmembers decorated 2,100 SoaringQuilts® and visited with hospitalized children and families to share the love.

**MDC-Partners**, a wildly enthusiastic group of creative employees enjoyed team-building activities in [NY](#) and [Toronto](#) headquarters embracing hospitalized children at [Komansky Center for Children's Health](#) at NY-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center in NYC, Mount Sinai Hospital Toronto and five patients during their treatment in the U.S. through the Global Medical Relief Fund.



MDC-Partner interns mentored 5th grade students from PS64 at their school in lower Manhattan. Together they celebrated the end of the school year and participated in Soaringwords' day of service, working together in small groups to create SoaringJokes books, flip books, SoaringSongs® and social media content, all to be shared with hospitalized children and their families. The day was fun, creative and inspirational.





# Highlights of the Year



## Hospital Outreach

Clarissa Spata, one of Australia's leading Opera stars paid a visit and performed "SoaringSongs" at Metropolitan Hospital in NYC.



Rachel Gorman, Soaringwords' new Director of Hospital Outreach & Wellness Education, led Hospital Outreach programs for hundreds of patients at Cohen Children's Medical Center of New York and The Children's Hospital at Montefiore. Activities included SoaringDreamCatchers, SoaringNamePoems and many others.





# Highlights of the Year



**Sallie Mae's** professional team mentored high school and college students from the Bottom Line at Sallie Mae's Newton, MA offices. The program revolved around a Soaringwords' Educational Outreach initiative that benefitted patients and their families at Boston Medical Center; The Ronald McDonald House of Boston; as well as homeless children and mothers residing at the Home for Little Wanderers



For the third year in a row, **BNY Mellon** employees in 7 cities teamed up with school children for Make A Difference Day. Together they decorated SoaringQuilts® and SoaringPillows® with inspirational messages and artwork to donate to hospitalized children. The students and volunteers also participated in an exhilarating Zumba® class to celebrate health and wellness. Here in New York, we had the honor of working with P.S. 1 in Chinatown.





## Highlights of the Year



For eight years, Soaringwords has been proud to provide community service projects at **Take Your Child to Work Day** events. This year Soaringwords was the highlight of Cisco's Take Your Child to Work Day celebration in New York City and Sallie Mae's event in Reston, VA. At Cisco, children were given a behind-the-scenes tour of the amazing technology and participated in community service to benefit patients at The Children's Hospital of Montefiore. At Sallie Mae, the children learned about debits and credits, and about community involvement and volunteerism by decorating quilts and pillows for the local Ronald McDonald House and Inova Fairfax Hospital.

## Soaringwords Ferries to Martha's Vineyard



Children and teens at the Chilmark Community Center paired up with students attending the Beacon Academy to share a hands-on community service initiative to benefit hospitalized children on Martha's Vineyard and at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in NYC. Everyone came together and enjoyed a Soaringwords service-learning program where volunteers decorated 100 SoaringQuilts® and SoaringPillows® with inspirational messages and artwork to donate to ill children.



# Soaringwords Leadership Team

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

Lisa is a visionary (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. The organization is implementing many national and global marketing initiatives with leading companies. Lisa is the author of *Soaringwords the Power to Heal. 10 Ways to Conquer Life's Pain and Obstacles*, which will be published in 2012. 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, Aetna, Verizon, American Express, Goldman Sachs, MetLife and Starbucks. She is an honors graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and received an MBA in Marketing from Columbia University. She is also a graduate of the Columbia Graduate School of Business Institute for Non-Profit Management program and 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.

## Soaringwords Leadership Team

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

#### **Soaringwords' 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. As a young adult, she experienced the death of two grandparents, one who died suddenly and the other one who experienced a beautifully supported family death, thanks to Hospice care. From these experiences her life was changed. Rachel then decided to merge her education and life experiences and discovered the field of Child Life, supporting 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, 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 received post-graduate training in Child Life and Early Childhood Education at Yale University and the Bank Street College of Education.

Rachel was first introduced to the healing power of Soaringwords over ten years ago, as a hospital partner while she was heading up the Child Life Program at St. Vincent's. Rachel is happy to now be a part of the Soaringwords team, providing hope and healing to children and families. Rachel lives with her husband and son in Manhattan.

### **Greta Rozensweig, Community Relations Manager**

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



## Board of Directors

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