

Love

Love inspires me greatly
Love is like rain clouds
Love comes from the bot-
tom
Of your heart

Love is always hurtful
Love always has memories
With two people

Love has a meaning a
Special meaning
Love is when two
People love each other

—Brandie Green, Age 17



Quotes

"QUEST. This is the only place that I can do my homework. My kids are running around and the staff keeps an eye on them and makes sure they are alright."
—Flavia, Age 19

"I did good in school. I got all A's"
—Z, Age 11

"I like QUEST because I like to do art, write poems and just be myself."
—Tamil, Age 16

www.questkids.net



Quest, Inc.
801 Stanley Street
Schenectady, New York 12307

Did You Know There's Good News From Hamilton Hill?

Children Are Receiving Free Meals
Children Are Leaving And Staying Out Of Gangs
Children Are Going Back To School

**Kids Are Learning To Help Themselves
And The Whole Community Is Benefitting!**

Quest, Inc. • 801 Stanley Street • Schenectady • New York • 12307 www.questkids.net

About QUEST

QUEST is a community-based organization dedicated to the most troubled youth of Hamilton Hill. QUEST provides a safe environment, free meals, counseling, art and recreation programs that keep kids in school, out of trouble and on track for better lives. There are more than 175 QUEST kids. We help the children that others turn away.

Helping the children of Hamilton Hill learn to help themselves
www.questkids.net



QUEST Makes A Difference

- Out Of Gangs—76% of QUEST kids leave gangs and stay out for good.
- Out Of Trouble—QUEST kids have a recidivism rate 62% lower than kids not in QUEST.
- In School—QUEST kids go back to school and stay in school.
- In Control—QUEST kids have lower rates of accidental pregnancies.

**Who Are QUEST Kids?
There are more than
175 children served by
QUEST. Many come
from broken homes
and are teen parents.
60% have either failed
out or dropped out of
school.
Quest helps kids realize
their self worth and
sense of pride.**



QUEST Helps The Community

- Lower Taxes: QUEST works to lower the incarceration and public assistance rates. That helps lower taxes.
- Safer Streets: QUEST helps keep drugs off the streets and helps reduce crime rates.
- A Healthier Community: QUEST programs feed children and help lower communicable disease rates.
- A Better Quality Of Life: QUEST brings dance, art and public performances to the community.

QUEST began in 1993 as an art program that served troubled youth by offering music, dance and various writing and visual activities. Recently, some of the QUEST kids wrote a book of poetry that traveled with the AIDS Quilt to Beautiful Gate, an orphanage in South Africa. Excerpts are included throughout the newsletter.

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QUEST Steps

QUEST Gives Free Dance Lessons to Hamilton Hill Children

Children taught to dance learn to bow out gracefully from dangerous situations. That's why twice a week for the past three years, baggy jeans have been traded for tights, Nikes have been swapped for slippers and the church basement at 801 Stanley Street has been transformed into a stage—all as part of the QUEST Steps Dance Program.

The initiative teaches ballet to children, free of charge. While the kids involved do learn to twirl, leap and keep rhythm, they also learn a more valuable skill: How to lead a safe, healthy life. "The kids we work with come from families with little or no parental involvement. They need to learn basic rules of behavior in public and how to control their impulses," says QUEST founder and executive director, Judy Atchinson. "Ballet is a fun way to teach them just that."

Atchinson, who has worked with dance companies for 25 years, says learning ballet builds confidence and teaches children discipline and team work—and if QUEST program results are any indication, she's right. QUEST kids, many of whom participate in the dance program, have significantly lower recidivism rates than other Hamilton Hill youth and stay in school longer. In addition, 76% of them leave and stay out of gangs.



Taking Center Stage

In the past three years, QUEST dance students have given performances at the Ronald McDonald House as well as a senior citizen assisted-living program in Albany, the Tang Museum at Skidmore College and at a local television access studio. The dancers have received rave reviews and many have even stepped up to become "Dance Captains" and serve as peer leaders. The captains help teach classes to younger students and serve as role models for children just learning to dance.

"Our kids work hard, have fun and are proud of what they've accomplished," explains Atchinson. "Choreographer and ballet enthusiast Lincoln Kirstein said: 'Ballet is about learning how to behave.' But our

program teaches kids more than that. Our kids learn they can accomplish things they never thought possible. And that gives them the confidence to want to behave, even when others around them are not."

For more information on the QUEST Steps Dance Program, or to schedule a performance, e-mail Judy Atchinson at Judy@questkids.net or Brian Tramontano at Brian@questkids.net. You can also call (518) 527-1784 or visit www.questkids.net.

QUEST On The Web www.questkids.net

Visit our Web site at www.questkids.net to find out more information on our programs, our kids or how QUEST helps the community. You can also use the site to contact us or to make a secure online donation.

Become A QUEST Kid!

There are More than 175 QUEST Kids...and the More the Merrier!

To become a QUEST kid, just come to 801 Stanley Street or call (518) 527-1784 and ask to speak with Judy Atchinson. You can also e-mail Judy at: Judy@questkids.net.

"You might not believe me, but I would rather be at QUEST than any other community center."

—Kiaja, Age 9

Help Me

What should I do?
Help Me!!!
Should I stay or should I go?
Help Me!
Should I go to the Job Corps?
Help me!!!
Should I go back to school?
Help Me!!
Should I go to Schenectady?
Help Me!

Give me a sign to see what I could do, stay in Brentwood, get a job and go back to school or

Go to Job Corps and stay in the Bronx. I don't know what to do.

—Tasha, Age 16

QUEST: Let's Eat!



QUEST Gives Balanced Meals to Kids, Free of Charge

How do you get a child to eat her vegetables? Invite 50 of her closest friends over for dinner. That's what happens year-round at the QUEST: Let's Eat! program—an initiative that feeds balanced meals to Schenectady kids, five nights a week, free of charge.

Fifty-five to 70 kids gather at each meal to feast on fruits, vegetables, lean meats, whole grains and dairy products—and, of course, to enjoy the company. Children can have seconds, thirds and even fourths or take food home for a healthy snack.

"We get about 2,700 pounds of food from the Food Bank every month," explains, QUEST executive director, Judy Atchinson. "Plus we buy extra food like milk

and other perishables as we go along. Our food program helps these kids stay healthy. In fact, it's the only balanced meal many of them eat all day."

Recipe for Learning

In addition to good nutrition, QUEST: Let's Eat! gives kids a taste of responsibility. All children who eat at QUEST must help clean up. The food is even cooked by older QUEST kids and QUEST graduates. "The kids help out, but they don't mind. In fact, a lot of them think it's fun. That's part of what makes this program great. It shows kids they can have fun while they work towards a goal," says Atchinson.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's new dietary guidelines for children recommend that kids eat diets rich in fruit, vegetables and whole grains. QUEST: Let's Eat!, which is funded in part by the New York State Department of Health, helps kids meet those standards. "We just want our kids to be happy, safe and healthy," explains Atchinson. "Our program helps make that possible and it teaches kids how to make and eat nutritious meals when they are on their own. The benefits extend far beyond mealtime."

To learn more about the QUEST: Let's Eat!, e-mail Judy Atchinson at Judy@questkids.net or Brian Tramontano at Brian@questkids.net. You can also visit www.questkids.net.



Join Our QUEST For The Holidays

visit www.questkids.net to make a secure online donation

QUEST programs make a difference for the children they serve and the community we live in. But QUEST kids need your help to continue to learn, grow and strive for a better life. QUEST programs are free to all participants and we rely on donations to stay active and effective.

To make a tax-free donation, visit our Web site or send a check to QUEST Inc. 801 Stanley Street, Schenectady, New York, 12307.

"I like QUEST because I can get healthy food and have fun."

—Tamera, Age 10

I am small

I am small
I wonder if I'm going to be tall
I hear people calling me names
I see people taller than me
I want to be taller than them all
I am small

I pretend to be big
I feel smaller than a bug
I touch the floor
I cry because I am smaller than everyone
I am small

I understand that I'm what I am
I say that I'm taller
I dream that I'm taller
I try to get taller
I hope to get taller
I am small

—Yousef, Age 8