

BRAYCE (Brazilian and American Youth Cultural Exchange) is a small, non-profit agency based in Chester, CT, with a second office in Rio de Janeiro. Founded in 2005, the organization is dedicated to providing educational opportunities for marginalized, socially excluded youngsters in Brazil as well as providing opportunities for American college-age students to perform community service in favela communities. For young people from both countries, the experience of an international cultural exchange creates an understanding, which, over time, will help to promote world friendship and peace.

#### The BRAYCE Opportunity for Young Brazilians

Children and young people in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro wake each day to the challenges of favela life: drug trafficking; violence; poverty; disease; unemployment; persecution from police and militias and an education that is fragmented, at best. Like parents everywhere, mothers and fathers dream of a better life for their children. BRAYCE recognizes that adolescence is a crucial stage in social development and a particularly critical turning point for favela youth where, with limited opportunity, will most likely succumb to a life of crime.

Brazilian BRAYCE recruits, all high school age, attend a summer Leadership Program at Camp Hazen YMCA in Chester, Connecticut. The Camp experience offers one month of intensive team building activities and leadership training balanced with outdoor and creative pursuits. They also acquire proficiency in English and make many friends from all over the world.

Hopefully, youngsters will demonstrate leadership potential and be invited to return to Camp Hazen the following year as an Assistant Counselor. Exceptional youngsters are in turn invited for the next year as full Counselors, working for the entire summer and receiving remuneration.

Empowered by their experience, and having developed self-esteem, these young people are inspired to continue their education, confident that they can build a better life and plan a future. On their return to Brazil, BRAYCE graduates from the Program resume leadership responsibilities in their respective favela projects and communities. They become role models and exert a positive, sustaining influence on their peers and younger siblings. By implementing the many new life and leadership skills they have learned the youngsters contribute to the enrichment of their community as well as advancing their own plans for the future.

BRAYCE partner in Brazil, EduMais, provides the enrollment pool for recruitment of Brazilian youth for the BRAYCE Program, in Rio de Janeiro. EduMais is an NGO (non-profit) dedicated to providing high quality education to at-risk young people in the favelas of Rio. Our two organizations share mutual goals for helping under-privileged youngsters and a genuine dedication to Human Rights.

Founder and Executive Director, Diana Nijboer, spent a week at Camp Hazen in 2017. This was a particularly valuable experience which gave Diana an understanding of the goals of the Leadership Initiative and therefore a better idea of the type of youngster who would benefit best from the BRAYCE opportunity.

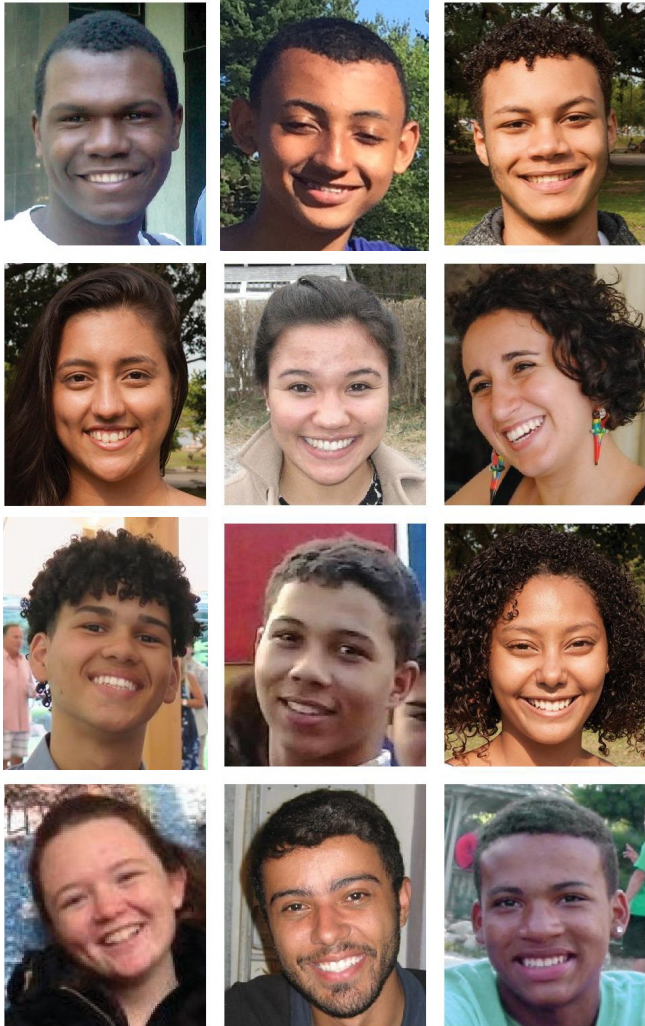
### The BRAYCE Opportunity for American Students

BRAYCE recruits college-age students to intern in supervised favela community projects. BRAYCE student coordinator, Diana Nijboer, organizes and oversees all student activity in Brazil. In Rio de Janeiro, students intern with BRAYCE partners, Vila Olimpica da Maré, Instituto Lecca and Tunnel Lab. Typical community projects include teaching English; habitat; health; education; sports and the arts. In Paraty, students intern with BRAYCE's partners, Cia. Dança e Arte, Casa Azul and ITAE (Institute for the Path to Art and Education). Typical projects include teaching English; supporting dance programs; participating in FLIP (the International Literary Festival), and after-school educational enrichment activities. In Rio and Paraty all BRAYCE recruits are encouraged to develop and implement a project reflecting their own particular skills/area of interest. Interns have the opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of marginalized, socially excluded young people while enhancing their Portuguese language skills. These experiences can open doors to graduate school, jobs, and enhance long-term career prospects. Americans return home with a perspective of life in a developing country as well as the satisfaction of having made an impact on the lives of others less fortunate than themselves.

*Unfortunately, and with deep regret, this component of the BRAYCE Program has been temporarily suspended due to increasing levels of violence in Rio de Janeiro. It is our hope that this situation will soon be resolved in Brazil and we are able to resume activities.*

***BRAYCE, change a life, make a difference, build a future, one person at a time***

## The Faces of BRAYCE



## Make a difference, change a life, build a future

To learn more about BRAYCE and the intercultural exchanges, educational and leadership opportunities we provide for the advancement of marginalized Brazilian youth, visit [www.brayce.org](http://www.brayce.org).

## Success Stories

### Life after the **BRAYCE** Cultural Experience

**Thuane Sendreti:** Empowered by her newly acquired skills from Camp Hazen and with strong English capabilities, Thuane became a role model in her hometown of Paraty becoming President of a Sailing School and working with kids after school. Thuane subsequently graduated from Law School and is now completing her studies in Rio to qualify as a Judge.

**Eddy Neto:** Initially pursuing a career in tourism because of his strong language skills, Eddy decided to pursue a career in business. He graduated from Business School in Sao Paulo and immediately considered how he might apply his newly acquired skills. His father had been crippled by a carpentry accident and the family was struggling. Eddy built two student hostels in his town to provide an income for his family and secure their independence.

**Bruno Leonardo:** Bruno worked hard to become a Graphic Designer in his favela of Brad da Pina. Subsequently he became an Entrepreneur. Having considered what type of business was needed in his community, Bruno opened his own snack bar using his graphic design skills to produce posters, menus, ads etc. The business expanded to seven locations and offered “carry-out” food. Bruno is now studying for a Law Degree in Rio.

**Pauline Batista:** Since our first meeting in 2005, Pauline’s achievements have been extraordinary from operatic training in New York, field work for a US corporation in Brazil to being honored as a torchbearer in the 2017 Olympic Games in Brazil. Pauline is currently completing a PhD in South American Studies at UConn.



## Summer Memories and Making a Difference

### BRAYCE Supporter Reflects on the Experiences of a Host Family

Several years ago, our family volunteered to host a Brazilian teenager attending leadership training at Camp Hazen as part of the BRAYCE Cultural Exchange. Becoming a host family for the BRAYCE program was a wonderful way to gain a broader perspective on the world, and to help a deserving young person along the path to a brighter future.

BRAYCE (Brazilian and American Youth Cultural Exchange) is a Chester-based non-profit organization that provides educational and leadership opportunities to young people from favelas (slums) in Brazil. Each year, BRAYCE gives several young people the opportunity to come to Camp Hazen in Chester as a camper or in a Leadership Training Program. Their last week in the US is spent with a local host family, to experience everyday American life. This program helps them gain new skills, self-assurance and improved English fluency, so they can return to Brazil as positive role models for peers and younger people in their community.



We hosted Gabriel, a bright 17-year old who grew up in City of God (a favela in Rio de Janeiro). Our own teenagers, who were a year or two older than Gabriel, enjoyed introducing him to friends, showing him what it's like to live in the US, and learning what it's like to live in Brazil. We saw the world with a new perspective through Gabriel's eyes as he marveled at things we often took for granted, like the wide selection of foods in our supermarkets, having New York City just a short train ride away, and visiting the local library where we could borrow books to read for free. Dinners were especially fun as we talked about the day's adventures and learned the Portuguese words for some of the things we had experienced together.

The week we spent with Gabriel was one of the highlights of our summer, and the source of many memories for all of us. I would highly recommend becoming a host family to anyone who wants to gain a better understanding of the world and make a real difference in the lives of others.

For more information about BRAYCE go to [www.brayce.org](http://www.brayce.org)

January 2022

Dear Friends:

Greetings to you all! As we look ahead to 2022, I hope this finds you all healthy and in good heart after a grueling 18 months of isolation, deprivation, and harrowing uncertainty! I would like to say a heartfelt “thank you” to those of you who have continued to support BRAYCE through this challenging time, even though we have been unable to continue the Cultural Exchange Program.

After two summers of international inactivity, the outlook for BRAYCE 2022 is promising! Camp Hazen will be accepting foreign students and counselors in 2022 and have set aside two places for BRAYCE students on the LEAdership track! Brazilian Coordinator Diana Nijboer, from EduMais in Rio, confirms that she has suitable, fully vaccinated applicants to apply to the Cultural Exchange Program and in addition, there are open possibilities for campers.

I will shortly be meeting with the Brazilian Ambassador in Hartford, Fernando Vidal. Before embarking on any commitment for 2022, I am anxious to hear his views on the anticipated travel restrictions for youth in 2022 and to receive a realistic summation of the Bolsonaro vaccination status.



2019 BRAYCE Recruits

The pandemic has been tough on all of us, particularly for Brazilian kids. So many disappointments, dashed hopes, dreams, and opportunities lost. However, throughout the past 18 months here in the USA we have been busy. Isabely from Edumais was able to participate in Leadership classes on-line from Camp Hazen; BRAYCE graduate Marcos Botelho has become our “Voice from Brazil” and will be reporting on News & Views in each **Newsletter**, and **regularly on the BRAYCE Website and Blog**. Another BRAYCE graduate, Allyson Clark from Essex, has assumed responsibility for the BRAYCE Facebook page and Website activity. For the second year, in conjunction with Camp Hazen,

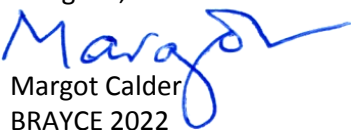
BRAYCE is running a Raffle which will benefit the businesses and stores of Chester in addition to our respective organizations. All good stuff.

While I am delighted to have the Cultural Exchange Program (hopefully) functioning once again, I am also aware of the challenges that lie ahead. Will Brazilian families be reluctant for youngsters to travel to the USA, a country with the highest COVID deathrate? Will American families be reluctant to host Brazilian youngsters? Regarding the Hosting component of the BRAYCE Program, I appeal to all of you who have families of teenagers to consider becoming a Host family. It is a really enriching family experience.

I intend to press on and meet and resolve every challenge as it comes along. Positive thinking! Any questions? Please contact Margot Calder at 860-575-8967 or [mcalder@brayce.org](mailto:mcalder@brayce.org).

Onward and upwards!

Obrigada,



Margot Calder  
BRAYCE 2022



## NEWS FROM BRAYCE - Welcome from President Margot Calder

### In this Issue

- Welcome from President
- Activity in USA and Brazil
- Updates from BRAYCE Graduates
- Board News
- Event News

### Directors

President: Margot Calder  
Fenna Calder  
Carol Cherry  
Rita Christopher  
Mary Devins  
Joe Hewitt  
Richard Nicholson  
Diana Nijboer  
Angela Nucci  
Holly Ridgway

Honorary Board Members  
Nelleke Beith  
Frank Cumiskey  
Susan Cumiskey  
Robert Gay

### Mission

BRAYCE enlists US and Brazilian resources to provide intercultural exchanges, educational and leadership opportunities for the advancement of marginalized Brazilian youth.

### USA Office

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Rio de Janeiro  
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Greetings to you all! I hope this finds you all healthy and in good heart after a grueling 18 months of isolation, deprivation, and harrowing uncertainty! I would like to say a heartfelt "thank you" to those of you who have continued to support BRAYCE through this challenging time, even though we have been unable to continue the Cultural Exchange Program.

I am thrilled to reinstate the BRAYCE Newsletter with some great news! After two years of international inactivity, Camp Hazen will be accepting foreign students and counselors in 2022. Viva-se! Two places have been set aside for BRAYCE students on the LEAdership track!

Brazilian Coordinator Diana Nijboer, from EduMais in Rio, confirms that she has suitable, fully vaccinated applicants to apply to the Cultural Exchange Program. In addition, there are open possibilities for campers. The outlook for BRAYCE 2022 is promising!

I will shortly be meeting with the Brazilian Ambassador in Hartford, Fernando Vidal. I am anxious to hear his views on the anticipated travel restrictions for youth in 2022 and to receive a realistic summation of the Bolsonaro vaccination status.

**Challenges** - While I am delighted to have the Cultural Exchange Program (hopefully) functioning once again, I am also aware of the challenges that lie ahead. Will Brazilian families be reluctant for youngsters to travel to the USA, a country with the highest COVID deathrate? Will American families be reluctant to host Brazilian youngsters? Regardless, I intend to press on to meet and resolve every challenge as it comes along. Positive thinking! Onward and upwards!

## Updates from BRAZIL - Diana Nijboer, BRAYCE Coordinator



### EDUMAIS, BRAYCE Partner in Brazil

Founded in 2016 by Diana Nijboer, EduMais offers high quality educational opportunities to underprivileged, at-risk Brazilian youngsters from favelas in Rio de Janeiro. Entirely run by volunteers, the organization provides programs that empower 400 kids to build a brighter future away from poverty, violence, and drugs.

**Diana prepares youngsters for their American Adventure** - As BRAYCE Coordinator, Diana has essential functions to perform. Having interviewed and recruited students for the Cultural Exchange Program, Diana guides youngsters and their parents through the extensive paperwork (Passport, Visa application etc.) and prepares them mentally, emotionally, and physically for the American experience. Students also receive guidance on communication; cultural awareness; time-management; responsibility and ownership for their behavior, and learning. Preparing recruits and their families for the challenge of separation is also crucial.

**EduMais and COVID** - Favela schools are closed. Undeterred, Diana introduced the 4G Program, which enabled students to access the internet to EduMais programs on mobile phones.

In conclusion BRAYCE and EduMais look forward, with confidence, to resuming our wonderful partnership in 2022 to empower and inspire at-risk, underprivileged youngsters from the favelas of Rio de Janeiro.

## Updates from USA—Kath Davies, Camp Haven, Camp Director



Most of you know CAMP HAZEN as BRAYCE's partner in the USA, as facilitator of the LEAdership Program which offers life changing opportunities for Brazilian youth.

The LEAdership curriculum is split into 3 focus areas.

**Leadership Development.** LEAs participate in seminars designed to work on individual leadership styles. Examples of these include public speaking; conflict resolution; goal setting; time & stress management; communication skills; equality & inclusion.

**Camp Logistics.** LEAs learn to contribute to the Camp Community by helping with tasks in the office, camp store, kitchen, and health lodge

**Working with children.** LEAs participate in workshops on camper management, lesson-planning, and gender roles. They also spend time observing and assisting in program classes.

The Camp Hazen/BRAYCE partnership adds an enriching dimension to both the American and Brazilian camper experience. By participation in carefully designed seminars and courses youngsters are encouraged to step outside their comfort zone to grow and develop as individuals, taking on responsibility and gaining confidence along the way. With this confidence, these kids are inspired to continue with their education and plan a future.

## UPDATE from BRAYCE Graduates - Where are they now?



### News and Views from Brazil

The BRAYCE voice from Brazil, Marcos Vinicios Botelho (BRAYCE 2018, 2019), a freshman at the University of Brasilia, reports: It is with great pride that I announce the launch of "News & Views from Brazil", a reporting platform where I will share significant updates on topics from Politics/Current Affairs; the Arts; Human Interest to BRAYCE-related topics.

**The Pandemic** - This continues to have a catastrophic impact in Brazil. Currently, we have registered 556,437 deaths caused by the disease. When it comes to immunization, we only have 19% of the population fully vaccinated, but 47% have received at least one dose. This is a situation which could and should be improved when we consider the success of former immunization campaigns carried out by SUS (our Universal Health System). The Ministry of Health states that although Brazil has the capacity to vaccinate 2.4 million people per day, we are currently only vaccinating around 1 million people per day against the coronavirus. Brazil has already registered at least 247 cases and four deaths from the Delta variant of the new coronavirus, which is more transmissible.

**Government Corruption** continues under President, Jair Bolsonaro e.g., Bribery of public officials. Syphoning of funds from state-owned corporations is rife as are pay offs that government officials use to support their political campaigns and for personal enrichment. Another issue is that government officials were accused of asking for a bribe of \$1 for each vaccine to be purchased from an intermediary supplier, Davarti. Fortunately, the purchase did not happen so the bribe did not materialize. However, the government's attempt to manipulate the lives of the Brazilian people is very disappointing and sad.

**Global Warming** - It has snowed in Brazil! Hard to believe when you consider that Brazil is a tropical country. Every year it is common for some frosty days and perhaps a little snow in the southern regions of the country during the winter. However, on the news we hear that in recent days there has been a great deal of snow in the State of Santa Catarina in the South of Brazil. Conversely, the climate is getting hotter and hotter in the north. The Greenhouse effect of excess carbon dioxide and methane emissions now account for 3% of the annual world total. The intensive repetition of this phenomenon must draw our attention to global warming. Time to pay attention to this situation and take better care of the planet before it's too late. All for now.

## BRAYCE BOARD NEWS - New members



We are happy to welcome Richard Nicholson to the BRAYCE Board of Directors. Richard has a background in law and government service and has been a lawyer for 35

years. As part of government service, he held executive positions at the Revenue Services Department including that of Commissioner. He subsequently retired from the practice of law to focus on assisting nonprofits. In addition to BRAYCE, Richard is coordinating volunteers for *The House of Bread*, an organization that provides urban ministry to the poor in the Hartford area. The primary focus of Richard's involvement has been their food kitchen. Richard has also been Board President and Fundraiser for the Wood Library in South Windsor and has served in elected and appointed positions in South Windsor government. For the last 19 years he has resided in Glastonbury.



We are delighted to welcome Joe Hewitt to our BRAYCE Board of Directors. Joe comes to us with a long history of commitment to the youth of Brazil, and we are excited to have his ex-

pertise and energy on our Board. For the past 10 years Joe has worked with at-risk Brazilian youth. In 2014 he co-founded a program called SCUB (Street Child United Brazil) Safe Space. Safe Space is a soccer program for youth in Rio's favelas. In 2019 he founded The Sports Creative which designs sports and arts programs in Brazil, Mexico, the Dominican Republic and the U.S. supporting over 2,000 youth per week. Joe is internationally well-known and a frequent public speaker on the power of sport, youth leadership and community development. He lives in New York City with his wife and new child.



BRAYCE is excited to welcome Angela Nucci to our Board of Directors. Angela has been a long-time friend of BRAYCE and brings to her new role on the Board an enthusiasm for the

program and a commitment to our students. Over the years Angela has supported BRAYCE in many ways. She has hosted our Brazilian students at her home after their summer experience at Camp Hazen. Since Angela is also Brazilian she was able to give her visiting BRAYCE students an exciting week filled with American adventures with a Brazilian flair! Angela is an accomplished chef and has hosted two successful Brazilian BRAYCE fundraising dinners at her home. Angela lives with her husband and two daughters in Deep River. Her new restaurant featuring classic American fare is called the "Rusty Rail Tavern" and recently opened in Deep River.

## EVENT NEWS



Thank you!

BRAYCE and Camp Hazen YMCA were delighted to sponsor the Second Annual Community Raffle, "Chester Chances", a fundraising initiative to benefit not only our own non-profits but our wonderful Chester Community. From both of us to all of you a heartfelt thank you for supporting our efforts and raising over \$8000.00.