

Program laid the groundwork for them

BY HEIDI EVANS
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WHEN NICOLE George thinks of all she has accomplished in her life, she knows it all began at the St. Aloysius Education Clinic on W. 132nd St. in Harlem.

For George, 34, now a lawyer, getting into prestigious Trinity School for high school and attending an Ivy League college would not have happened without everything she learned in the academic enrichment program.

"St. Aloysius' program really laid the groundwork for everything I did going forward," said George, an entertainment lawyer at ASCAP near Lincoln Center.

"It prepared me to attend great schools that opened so many doors for me."

George was a seventh-grader at a Bronx Catholic school when her mother realized she needed a more rigorous education if she wanted to get ahead in life.

A friend told her about Beth Pettit's nonsense academic enrichment program — and she signed young Nicole right up.

"I remember working very hard, and also having a lot of fun," said George.

Another alum, Christina Celuzza, 25, who grew up in Harlem, said the program was a life-changer for her as well.

She went every summer from second

through fifth grade, and then volunteered as a counselor.

Today, she can boast of her economics degree from the University of Pennsylvania, and a newly created vintage clothing business in Harlem called Dame.

"I was a reluctant reader when I was little, and my mother felt that was unacceptable," said Celuzza.

"After those summers, my scores went up and up. You rarely find people that are as passionate about educating children as Miss Pettit. It would be horrible if the city didn't find a home for her summer program."

MJL