



community center
of northern westchester
neighbors helping neighbors

news

from the center

Sponsoring organizations

Antioch Baptist Church, Bedford Hills
Bedford Presbyterian Church
Church of St. Joseph, Croton Falls
First Congregational Church, Chappaqua
First Presbyterian Church of Katonah
The Harvey School
Jewish Family Congregation, South Salem
Katonah United Methodist Church
Katonah Village Improvement Society
Mount Kisco Rotary Club
Mount Kisco United Methodist Church
Northeast Westchester Rotary Club
Pound Ridge Community Church
Purdys United Methodist Church
Rippowam Cisqua School
St. James Episcopal Church, North Salem
St. John's Episcopal Church, South Salem
St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Katonah
St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Mount Kisco
St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church, Katonah
St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Bedford
St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Bedford
South Salem Presbyterian Church
Temple Bet Torah, Mount Kisco
Temple Beth El of Northern Westchester, Chappaqua
Temple Shaaray Tefila, Bedford Corners

New Name, New Logo, Same Great Work

In August, 2007, the Community Center Board voted to change the Center's name from The Community Center to the Community Center of Northern Westchester. "For so long," said Laura Kaplan, Center Co-president, "folks have referred to the Center as the Katonah Community Center or the Katonah Food Pantry. We wondered if some in the community thought we just served Katonah families. Here was an opportunity to tweak our name to reflect what we do and whom we really serve – families in need throughout Northern Westchester."

Floyd Rappy, President of Rappy and Co., a boutique design firm in New York City and a member of the Katonah Village Im-

provement Society, donated his company's services to design the Center's new look. An open door into a teal heart became the Center's symbol. "It captures the essence of what goes on day in and day out at the Center – opening our door and hearts to help those in need in Northern Westchester – as we say, neighbors helping neighbors," affirmed Eileen Piker, Co-President.

Floyd Rappy and his company are also working with the Center's Board to redesign the Center's signs and its website. "We hope to have the new web site up and running very soon," said Mr. Rappy. "Our goal is to create a dynamic, user-friendly site that will become a true working tool for the Center and its various constituencies." The new website – and the current one until the new one is launched – can be found at www.communitycenternw.org.



Food Market volunteers Janet Waldemar, left, and Pat Muldoon, right, load our shelves with bakery goods donated by local supermarkets.



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**84 Bedford Road
Katonah, NY 10536
914-232-6572 Tel
914-232-6574 Fax
www.communitycenternw.org**

**Hours of Operation:
Tuesday – Friday 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Saturday 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.**

**Donations gratefully accepted:
Tuesday – Friday
10:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Saturday 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.**

**Executive Director:
Sherry Wolf**

**Assistant Director for
Client Services:
Noya Guerrero**

**Assistant Director for
Operations:
Deisy Monroy**



Sherry Wolf, Executive Director

From the Executive Director

What an exciting and eventful year it has been at the Community Center of Northern Westchester! Last summer, Polly Goodwin, the Center's Director since 2000, and Bob Mastis, Assistant Director since 2002, both retired. Deisy Monroy (see *Deisy's Dream*, next page) took Bob's place, and I, after eight years as Board President, took on the job of Executive Director. Now that I am a member of the Center's staff, my admiration for Polly and Bob grows daily, as Deisy, Noya Guerrero, and I do our best to live up to the high standards they set.

While we help those who come to us for food and clothing, we are constantly seeking ways to help our clients achieve or return to self-sufficiency. We are very proud of our Literacy Program, which uses a terrific new curriculum, *U.S. Civics for Immigrants*. (See article *Center Literacy and Civics Program a Success*, next page.) Helping our clients make their own way, by helping them gain new skills—whether in language, civics, or on the computer -- is among the most gratifying aspects of our job.

You may have heard that the Town of Bedford has set a goal of reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 20% by the year 2020. We at the Center take quite seriously our role as a model for good Green practices.

Last fall, I attended the Town of Bedford's Energy Summit. This winter, the Center had its first Energy Audit through the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). The Center now uses a full array of Energy Star CFL light bulbs and new programmable thermostats on energy-smart settings. We continue to look for ways to set a good example for all who come

through our doors – volunteers, donors, and clients. What's next? Our goal is to review all aspects of the Center's operations and make them as green as they can be: consistent with our larger goal of making our community and our world the best it can be -- one step at a time. ■

Generosity in a Can

Not everyone notices the teal-and-white canisters made from coffee cans that sit near the cash registers of ten local businesses (The Bagel Shoppe, NoKa, Katonah Pharmacy, Kelloggs & Lawrence, Scoops, Perks, and Weinstein's Pharmacy, in Katonah; Food for Healthy Living, in Bedford Hills; and Villarina's Pasta and Cameron's 24/7, in Cross River). But enough generous-hearted customers do notice, and deposit their spare change in them, to make those canisters an important source of funds for the Community Center. Indeed, last year alone, those contributions added up to a hefty \$6,115.

Collecting, machine-counting, and depositing all those coins in the bank, designing and presenting certificates of appreciation, and ensuring that the canisters are all in good order, is one of those small but vital volunteer jobs that keep the Community Center humming. For the past five years, that job has been handled by Matthew Bernhard, who started when he was 13, had to hand-count-and-roll the coins, and needed a picture ID card to reassure shop-owners and bank tellers that he was on a legitimate mission. (For the first three years, he also had help in the driving department from his mother, Center vice president Sheryl Bernhard). Today, Matthew, a senior at The Harvey School, fits in his collecting duties with a full academic and sports schedule, while making plans to attend Lafayette College in Pennsylvania in the fall, when he will hand over the job to a successor.



Matt Bernhard maintains the Center's coin collection canisters at local retail outlets throughout the community.



Shop owners Jennifer Cook (left) of NoKa and Tom Leggio (right) of The Bagel Shoppe, both in Katonah, are among ten local business owners who support the Community Center of Northern Westchester with coin canisters in their stores.



Matthew has donated over 200 hours over the five years he has been in charge of canister collections, and those canister coins have totaled more than \$18,000 for the Center. Looking back, Matthew is particularly appreciative of his two biggest contributors, Jennifer Cook, of NoKa, the current leader, whose collections average around \$200

per month, and Tom Leggio, of The Bagel Shoppe, a longtime supporter, with the largest cumulative total of over \$10,000. "That definitely shows how spare change can add up," says Matthew. Before departing the job, he has completed another task: replacing all the canisters with new ones that have redesigned covers bearing our snazzy new logo. ■

Deisy's Dream

Deisy (call her Daisy) Monroy, the Community Center's Assistant Director of Operations, is living a classic American story. At 26, she has two jobs, a three-year-old daughter, a husband, boundless energy, a goal, and a remarkable story to tell.

Born in Guatemala, she was left with an aunt when she was a toddler while her mother emigrated to the United States to seek a better life, starting with cleaning houses. When Deisy was 15, her mother brought her to the U.S., and Deisy enrolled in 10th grade at Westlake High School in Thornwood—without knowing a word of English. The first few months were "very tough," she recalls, but she listened carefully to how words were pronounced, and looked them up in a dictionary. After three months, her teachers judged her ready to do homework; after six months, she felt confident in English.

She soon had a job as well, as a busgirl at Peppino's Restaurant in Katonah, where she still works four nights a week as a waitress. After high school, she attended Westchester Community College for a semester, but dropped out to take a series of day jobs, as a check-out clerk at ShopRite, an office manager, and, for three-and-a-half years, as a legal assistant, before she applied for her present position in 2007. She topped a list of 29 applicants.

Somehow, she also fits in time with her husband William, a corporate accountant, and her daughter Isabella. "Sometimes clients ask 'How do you do it?'" she says. "I tell them 'If you want to, you can do it.'" She would like to help with the Center's literacy classes, but she also has bigger dreams, starting with going back to college." The smart money says she'll make it. ■

Center Literacy and Civics Program a Success

On a brilliantly sunny Sunday afternoon in April, a group of proud adult students and equally proud teachers beamed, shook hands and traded hugs, as twenty-one Sundays of hard work learning English and civics came to a satisfying and successful conclusion. Last fall, the Center was awarded a \$14,400 grant by the Westchester Community Foundation to support its new language and civics classes, using the *U.S. Civics for Immigrants: From Native Language to English Literacy* curriculum. This cutting-edge curriculum was developed by Literacy Volunteers of Westchester, Inc., for non-native low literacy adult learners. Earlier in 2007, volunteers from the Community Center ran a pilot program using this curriculum, to enthusiastic response. This past winter, with the generous support of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Mount Kisco, to which we offer our profound thanks, the Community Center held a series of three-hour classes in Mount Kisco on twenty-one Sunday afternoons at the church. The trained faculty for these classes included both Center staff and volunteers. Connie Kamerman, who heads the Center's weekly English language classes, served as the lead teacher for the *Civics for Immigrants* series.



Deisy Monroy, Assistant Director for Operations.

Sherry Wolf, the Center's Executive Director, pointed out, "For many of our clients, low literacy, as well as their lack of familiarity with American culture, values, social structures, and government, block their path to self-sufficiency. Our goal was to help adults with low literacy get ready to learn the essentials of English language, and simultaneously introduce them to the culture in which they now live." Test results for this year's students and feedback from our graduates suggest that we successfully met that goal. ■



U. S. Civics for Immigrants *students write and enact a mock traffic accident trial before the judge, attorney volunteer Howard Fifer, seated at far left.*

Presidents' Message

Warm greetings from the Board of the Community Center of Northern Westchester. We are honored and humbled to lead the organization as Co-presidents of the Board. It took two of us to fill the very large shoes, worn for almost nine years, by our former Board President, Sherry Wolf, who is now our Executive Director.

Our Board consists of representatives from 26 sponsoring organizations throughout Northern Westchester. Over the past year, we welcomed some new faces to the Community Center Board and said farewell to others.

Lauren Cohen replaced Sherry Wolf as Board representative for Temple Shaaray Tefila and Alison Giglio, a Center volunteer, took the place of Ginger Jones in representing St. John's Episcopal Church in South Salem. We thank Shirani Ponnambalam, who retired from the Board after representing Bedford Presbyterian Church for four years. St. Joseph's Church in Croton Falls, a long-time supporter of the Center, became one of our sponsors this year, and we are pleased that Shirley Buontempo, who spent three years on the Center's staff, will be sharing its Board position with Barbara Murphy. Temple Beth El of Northern Westchester in Chappaqua also became a sponsor this year;

Cliff Ray is its Board representative.

Last but not least, Ellen Devey, our secretary for fourteen years, has retired. Ellen has been a mainstay on our Board and her minutes have been impeccable. In a farewell tribute to Ellen, vice president Fran Dowling noted, "Ellen always put the needs of the client first." We will all miss her, but we are thrilled that Ellen's daughter, MaryEllen McLoughlin, will continue the Devey

tradition and take her mother's place as the Board representative for St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church in Katonah. Terri McNair has assumed the role of secretary; Sally Beckett, our treasurer, Sheryl Bernhard, vice president, and Fran Dowling, vice president in charge of fundraising, round out our Executive Board.

Laura Kaplan & Eileen Piker
Co-presidents



The Community Center Board honors Ellen Devey for 14 years of tireless service: (l to r) Co-president Laura Kaplan, Ellen Devey, Executive Director Sherry Wolf, and Co-president Eileen Piker.

Community Center of Northern Westchester

OUR SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

Food Market

Clients receive monthly supplemental food.

Clothing Boutique

Clients choose clothing, shoes, and linens.

Career Counseling

Help with job searches, resume writing and interview skills.

Classes:

English Language Conversation

Tutoring in English language skills on Wednesday and Saturday mornings.

Computer Training

Computer skills training on Tuesday afternoons.

Literacy Program

Course uses the innovative *U.S. Civics for Immigrants* curriculum, which combines civics and practical skills with literacy for low-literacy adult learners.

Spanish Language for Volunteers

Volunteers learn Spanish to better communicate with our Hispanic clients.

Infant Massage

Course teaches new parents techniques and benefits of massage as they bond with their babies.

Furniture Exchange

Offers of donated furniture are matched with requests from clients for similar items.

Holiday Share and Share the Warmth

Holiday drives that provide clients with additional and special food items and fleece clothing for client children.

School Supplies

Donations of new school supplies and a reading book fill client children's backpacks each September.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

The Community Center of Northern Westchester depends on the generosity of donors and volunteers to help us help our neighbors in need.

Donate Food We Need the Most

- Dried black and pinto beans
- Cold cereal
- Tuna
- Canned beef stew
- Fruit juice
- Spaghetti sauce
- Baby food
- Diapers

Become a volunteer

Volunteers are the life-blood of the Center and make everything we do possible. All are welcome – students, retirees, and families. Our volunteers:

- Help sort and distribute donated food and clothing.
- Help clients learn and practice English.
- Help keep our building and grounds in shape.
- Volunteer weekly, seasonally, or just occasionally.

To find out more, contact the Center at 914-232-6572 or by email at communitycenter@optonline.net.

Help our School Supply Drive

Each fall, the Community Center of Northern Westchester provides hundreds of students with basic school supplies. This eases the financial burden faced by many families at the beginning of the school year, and helps students get off to a great start in school. We gratefully accept donations of these new items to assemble school packets for students ages 3 to 18.

A donation of \$25 provides one student with basic school supplies and a new reading book. For more information about our School Supplies Drive, please contact the Center by phone at 232-6572 or by email at communitycenter@optonline.net.

Crayola Thin Tip Markers

Crayola box of 24 Crayons

Glue Sticks

#2 Pencils in Packages of 12

Blue or Black Pens in Packs of 12

Plastic Folders (not paper, please)

Marble Composition Books

Colored Pencils in Packs of 12

Loose Leaf Lined Paper

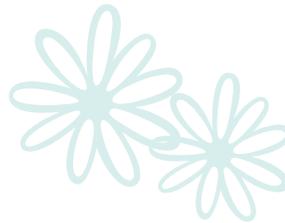
Subject Dividers

Construction Paper

Toddler Crayons

Crayola Broad Tip Markers

Scotch Tape



community center
of northern westchester
neighbors helping neighbors

Our mission:

To improve the well-being of our neighbors in need by providing food, clothing and access to other resources.

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
WHITE PLAINS, NY
PERMIT NO. 36125