



community center  
of northern westchester  
*neighbors helping neighbors*

news  
from the center

#### Sponsoring Organizations

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

### Center Helps Guide Neighbors toward Success

As the nation struggles to recover from the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, the Community Center of Northern Westchester has been providing the essentials of living to an unprecedented number of our neighbors. More families than ever before are coming to the Center for food and clothing; for help in finding employment; for help in navigating the social service system; and sometimes, for a shoulder to lean on. Yet as we all look for glimmers of hope that a recovery will take hold, and that work may emerge for more of our

neighbors, the Center and its volunteers continue to come up with ways to help our neighbors get back on their feet.

Fueled by the vision and effort of compassionate volunteers, the Center hosted new programs this year that gave our clients both skills and hope for climbing the ladder of economic opportunity. This newsletter chronicles some of those wide-ranging and exciting programs. For example, devoted volunteers teach English language and conversation classes weekday and Saturday mornings; in many of these classes, lessons are tailored to the requirements of specific jobs. Other classes focus on the basics of Spanish literacy to prepare our clients for English literacy. The Center is planning to revive its pioneer-

*(continued on next page)*



Roaring Brook Elementary School students sort and shelve food they collected for the Community Center.

## 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.

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](mailto:communitycenter@optonline.net). We gratefully accept donations of these new items to assemble school packets for students ages 3 to 18.

**Crayola Thin Tip Markers**  
**Crayola Box of 24 Crayons**  
**Elmer's Glue**  
**#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**



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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.

## PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

#### Food Pantry

Clients receive monthly supplemental food.

#### Clothing Boutique

Clients choose clothing, shoes, and linens.

#### Career Counseling

Help with job searches, resumé writing and interview skills.

#### Classes:

##### *Basic Concepts of Construction*

Reading blueprints and other construction skills.

##### *Computer Training*

##### *English Language Conversation*

##### *English Literacy and Civics*

Uses *U.S. Civics for Immigrants* curriculum.

##### *Hands of Love Infant Massage*

Techniques and benefits of infant massage.

##### *Spanish Language for Volunteers*

##### *Spanish Literacy*

Prepares students for English literacy.

##### *Table Manners for Success*

Formal table setting and serving.

#### Dowling Educational Scholarship

Awards in honor of Jim and Fran Dowling.

#### Furniture Exchange

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

#### Health Outreach Programs

Northern Westchester Hospital and Open Door provide health screenings and flu shots.

#### Holiday Share and Share the Warmth

Holiday food and new warm sleepwear for children.

#### Lenscrafters' OneSight Foundation

Free eye exams and eyeglasses.

#### Prom Clothes Closet

Prom and graduation attire for local students.

#### School Supplies

New supplies and books fill children's backpacks.

#### School and Summer Camp Scholarships

As available at certain schools and camps.

## 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

- Canned fruit and vegetables
- Tuna and canned meat
- Cans of soup, beef stew and chili
- Pasta, rice and spaghetti sauce
- Peanut butter and jelly
- Dried and canned beans
- Fruit juice
- Hot and cold cereal
- Baby food and diapers

#### Donate Clean, Seasonal clothing

We welcome donations of clean, gently used, seasonal clothing, shoes and linens. We accept warm weather clothing April through August, and cold weather clothing September through March. Unfortunately, we cannot accept undergarments, bathing suits, books, toys or stuffed animals.

#### Become a volunteer

Volunteers are the life-blood of the Center and make everything we do possible. All are welcome. Our volunteers perform a variety of tasks. They:

- Sort and distribute donated food and clothing.
- Help clients learn English and other skills.
- Keep our building and grounds in shape.
- Help raise funds for the Center.

#### Make a Monetary Donation

Your tax-deductible donation supports our goal of helping our less fortunate neighbors. We are grateful for all donations, large and small. You can now donate on our website. Every dollar counts!



Bedford Community Church members spruced up the Center's gardens as part of a spring service project.



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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 a.m.—3:45 p.m.  
Saturday 10 a.m.—12:45 p.m.

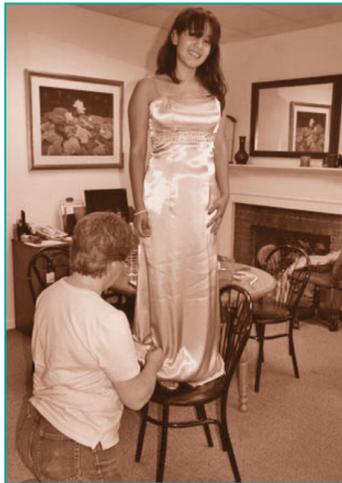
**Executive Director:**  
Sherry Wolf

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

**Assistant Director for  
Operations:**  
Clare Murray



Sherry Wolf, Executive Director



Volunteer Brenda Abisch, left, alters a prom dress. Donated party dresses and men's formal wear are collected and offered to local high school students.

ing and successful program, *U.S. Civics for Immigrants*, which provides both English language skills and the basics of civic responsibility and participation.

Since its earliest days, the Center has provided assistance with job searches, resumé writing, and interview skills. Now, our computer classes have become an extension of that assistance: in addition to teaching the basics of computer literacy, including word processing and spreadsheets, our volunteer computer experts teach our clients how to navigate the

Internet, search for employment opportunities, respond to online advertisements, and set up their own email addresses and mailboxes.

In a series of courses launched this year, local architect Nelson Guerrero teaches basics of construction skills, including reading blueprints and using engineering and architectural tools. In another, volunteer Nancy Cabrera teaches the art of setting and serving a formal table to clients seeking hospitality jobs, and Ursula Wertz teaches those clients the art of flower arrangement.

Our Assistant Director Noya Guerrero continues to offer our *Hands of Love* baby massage classes to new parents and grandparents. In one class this spring, pregnant mothers and fathers-to-be attended a dual class: *Hands of Love* baby massage and pre- and post-natal care as taught by local parenting expert Erica Charpentier.

As exciting and innovative as these programs are, what makes them really special, to my mind, is the personal touch and palpable sense of caring all our volunteers impart in these classes, and the equally palpable sense of gratitude our clients convey in return. At the heart of all these efforts is the core value the Center has cultivated since its inception in offering the essentials of living: the importance of encouraging neighbors to reach out to one another and to bring them together — neighbors helping neighbors. ■

## 2009 At a Glance

Thanks to our generous Northern Westchester neighbors who:

- Volunteered at the Community Center: over 300 volunteers of all ages.
- Donated 100,915 pounds of food.
- Donated 150,799 pounds of clothing, shoes, and linens.

The Community Center of Northern Westchester was able to:

- Help 2,020 households in need of supplemental food and clothing.
- Distribute food to an average of 550 households every month.
- Distribute clothing to an average of 700 households every month.
- Give 538 children new sleepwear and 450 students school supplies.
- Teach hundreds of students in English, computer and other skills classes.

**Our Classes Guide Center Clients Toward Self-Sufficiency**

*A Center English class takes a field trip to the Katonah Village Library.*

*Nancy Cabrera, center, demonstrates serving techniques in a skills course she developed for the Center. The course, Table Manners for Success, covers the basics of formal table setting, serving, and fine manners for students seeking hospitality jobs.*

*Local architect Nelson Guerrero, right, teaches students to read blueprints and other construction trade skills in his course, Basic Concepts of Construction.*

*Volunteer Michelle Boniello, left, teaches essential computer and internet skills to clients seeking employment.*

*English students learn key vocabulary for their current employment.*

## A Generous Community Responded To Growing Needs

### A MESSAGE FROM THE CO-PRESIDENTS

In this, our 18th year of operation, the Community Center of Northern Westchester has responded to an unparalleled level of need in our community! Despite our country's slow economic recovery, we feel so grateful for the myriad ways that members

of the Northern Westchester community continue to give back with their time and their resources to the Center. Since 2009, in addition to working closely with our 28 sponsoring organizations, we enjoyed the opportunity to collaborate with over 15

other community-based groups.

In the past year, the Center has experienced several changes in its executive board. Co-President Eileen Piker was relocated to San Francisco with Chase Bank. Eileen had served on the board for 12 years in the

capacity of treasurer, vice president and co-president. Her keen insight, financial background and calm practical approach helped guide the Center through many transitions. Sheryl Bernhard stepped into Eileen's shoes in July, and Lauren Cohen became vice-president. Barbara Murphy has replaced Suzanne Sunday as secretary.

Other board member changes include Re Hagele's replacement of Pat Ploss, representing the Northeast Westchester Rotary. Cliff Ray retired from the board, and Nancy Grundman now represents Temple Beth El of Northern Westchester. Phil Franz replaced Michal Winter representing the Mt. Kisco Rotary. Phil enthusiastically agreed to also represent the Bedford Presbyterian Church. Melva Pitts joined the board, replacing Inday Day from the Katonah United Methodist Church. Deborah Sherwood-St. John joined the board as the new representative from St. James Episcopal Church, North Salem replacing Ellen Purdy. Deborah Cerar will represent Congregation B'nai Yisrael, from Armonk, our 28th sponsor.

This past year, we honored Alexia Jurschak and Ralph Van Sicklin, two extraordinary individuals who, 11 years ago, led the transformation of the King House into the current Community Center home. On October 23rd, we will honor Katonah residents Bart and Diana Tyler at the Center's Cocktail Party and Silent Auction. Bart was a founding father of the Center and Diana worked on our fundraising committee for many years.

In June, we recognized the many contributions of Ella Saunders at our volunteer luncheon. We also presented the first Dowling Educational Scholarship to Martha Ibarra at our June board meeting.

As the Center begins its 19th year of service, the board will begin a comprehensive strategic planning process. The consulting firm of Goodworks Advisory Group, LLC will assist us as we examine our board and administrative structure to ensure that we continue to fulfill the

achievement of the Center's mission, programs and services.

We are most fortunate to work alongside a compassionate, motivated and visionary staff. Our volunteers continue to amaze us with their gifts and talents, which they energetically share with us at the Center daily. We look forward to combining all of our efforts as we embark upon another year of neighbors helping neighbors!

*Sheryl Bernhard and Laura Kaplan*

## For Clare Murray, Working at the Center is a Joy, Not a Job

After giving up a job in the private sector to join the staff of the Community Center as Assistant Director for Operations, it did not take long for Clare Murray to discover so much of what makes the Center a special place. The biggest surprise, she says, is "how joyful" it is to work at the Center. "I feel as if I have been welcomed into a family full of warmth and kindness, smiles and laughter." From comments such as that one, it's obvious that Clare and the Center are a perfect fit.

After six months in her new position,

Clare said it was impossible to identify one particular moment as a highlight. "Each day is full of rewarding moments," she said. "What is most rewarding is that at the end of each day, I feel as if I have had a positive influence on the lives of others."

Clare says that feeling comes from the reaction of the Center's three constituencies, saying she sees "how grateful the clients are for our assistance, how gracious the volunteers are in providing the service and how generous the donors and the community at large are in supporting the Center."

Coordinating the work of the Center's volunteers is one of Clare's major responsibilities. Over the next year, Clare said, she hopes to develop an improved system of information sharing for volunteers through an orientation program, ongoing training and support. She also wants to continue making improvements to the work spaces in the donation room and the boutique to provide greater comfort and efficiency of operations for both clients and volunteers.

As she looks back over the first months of her tenure and ahead to the challenges ahead, Clare expressed appreciation to Executive Director Sherry Wolf and Noya Guerrero, Assistant Director for Client Services. She thanked them for "guiding me, supporting me and embracing me in my new role," adding "it is a pleasure and a privilege to work alongside such extraordinary women!"

Clare is a native of England, where she earned a degree in physiotherapy. She worked as a physiotherapist in Great Britain and Canada before relocating to the United States and settling in Bedford Hills. She managed a local company which imports clothing and accessories to support artisans and women's co-operatives around the world before making the move to the Center. ■



Clare Murray, Assistant Director for Operations