

Network



The Aging Network Newsletter
is a publication of the Westchester County
Department of Senior Programs & Services
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Andrew J. Spano, Westchester County Executive

Mae Carpenter, Commissioner, Dept. of Senior Programs & Services

From the Commissioner



Livable Communities – Full Speed Ahead

The new year is filled with exciting opportunities and special challenges, and we are moving forward with great enthusiasm to advance them all.

Momentum has been steadily building on our overarching project - the multiyear initiative on “Livable Communities – a Vision for All Ages Bringing People and Places Together.”

As many of you know, livable communities are places where its residents can grow up and grow old with dignity and independence and remain involved in community life.

Dependable, accessible transportation and affordable housing choices are just some factors that create such an environment.

Our Millennium Aging Project – which involved talking to more than 3,000 people - underscored such needs, as did findings of our Pre-White House Conference on Aging. In fact, our resolution on the need for livable communities was among the top 10 resolutions in the White House’s final report.

Late last year we began the rigorous research needed to do inventories on what formal assets and resources municipalities have and what they need.

For example, does every municipality have a multi-purpose senior citizens center? Is transportation available for shopping? We are now preparing to learn what informal assets are available and what additional services would seniors and families like to see their service and civic organizations offer. We were proud to learn that Westchester was named a “best practices” model by Robert McNulty, president and chief executive of Partners for Livable Communities, which is spearheading much of the work on the national level.

There is no time to waste.

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MEDICARE Help needed with Medicare

The Department of Senior Programs and Services continues to receive calls from seniors with problems with Medicare, Part D, the plan’s prescription drug coverage.

County Executive Andy Spano said seniors having the most problems are those who neither received nor understood the information their insurance provider mailed to them last year about changes in costs and benefits in their Part D coverage that kicked in Jan. 1.

“Seniors in such situations are doing the right thing when they call the county’s senior department,” Spano said. “As always, we want to help as many as we can.”

Spano said that at the end of last year, DSPS processed more than 750 calls from seniors and their caregivers for the open enrollment period that ended Dec. 31

DSPS Commissioner Mae Carpenter said seniors who did not receive or understand the Plan D information, may now be facing long lines and frustration when they visit their local pharmacies to renew their prescriptions. Their 2007 plan may no longer cover their medications or they may cost considerably more. Also, their premiums may have increased.

Those seniors are fortunate if they were among the enrollees who were not notified by their providers by Nov. 15 about changes in their 2007 plans. The federal government has extended the enrollment period for those beneficiaries through Feb. 14 to give them time to evaluate their existing plan’s changes for this year and switch to another provider, if desired.

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Livable Communities – Full Speed Ahead

Westchester is dealing with a major demographic shift as the population ages.

The first Baby Boomers turned 60 last year, and 18 percent of our population is 60 or older. And the largest segment of the 60 – plus population moving out of the county is between the ages of 60 and 64.

To keep Westchester the desirable place it is to live and work we must reverse that trend to maintain our tax base and commerce.

We joined County Executive Andy Spano last month in a meeting with key business leaders in Westchester to discuss the initiative and its importance.

We told the leaders that we need affordable housing first and that everything will come to a standstill if it is not built. When seniors say they want to remain in their homes they also mean they want to stay in their communities and continue enjoyable day-to-day contacts with people in their neighborhood.

And just last week we met with religious leaders from all parts of Westchester to learn their perspectives and ask them to join us. They know

their communities well and will also be an outstanding source of knowledge in our work.

We need to be creative to find solutions. What about building affordable housing above the one- and two-level retail stores in many of our downtown areas. That would give seniors a convenient place to shop without driving and the merchants would be guaranteed a built-in customer base.

Also, how can we help the seniors who can drive during the day but not at night, which means they cannot take evening courses offered by our many colleges. Perhaps a community service organization would be willing to step in and provide that void in service.

Livable communities, however, is one of many programs our department is developing. We welcome you to read about some of the others in this newsletter, and look forward to updating you on our progress in coming months.

Mae Carpenter

Commissioner

Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services

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MEDICARE

Help needed with Medicare

Seniors who are eligible for the extended enrollment time will receive letters from their insurance providers.

But seniors who did receive notice of changes before Nov. 15 are locked into their current plan until 2008.

Carpenter said seniors who are not sure if their plan still covers their medications this year should call DSPS and it will check their coverage through its computers.

“If the medication has been dropped seniors should contact their doctors and ask for their preferences for alternative medications,” Carpenter said. “We can then check to see which ones the plan covers before the doctor writes the prescription.” Carpenter also suggests seniors contact their pharmacist to see what help he or she can provide.

The DSPS Medicare Information Line is 914-813-6100. Additional help is available from the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services at 1-800-MEDICARE.

Network In The News



MetroCard

MetroCard coming April 1 for Bee-Line bus riders

Here's important news affecting seniors who ride Westchester's Bee-Line buses -- MetroCard is coming to Westchester April 1, 2007.

Bee-Line riders 65 years or older can sign up for a Reduced-Fare MetroCard or they can continue to use coins to pay for their ride. However, they will no longer be able to use dollar bills in the new fare boxes which accept coins or MetroCards only.

If coins are used, the Bee-Line fare for eligible seniors is still 85 cents a ride and 10 cents for a transfer. With the seniors' Reduced-Fare MetroCard, it costs \$1 a ride and includes a free transfer to a Bee-Line bus or to a NYC subway or bus. Seniors have a choice of getting a fixed number of rides or unlimited rides for a specific time period, both at deeper discounts.

MetroCard offers Westchester residents the convenience and same discounts that are being enjoyed by millions of people in the New York City metropolitan area. For those who travel into

the city on the Bee-Line's Westchester-Manhattan Express (BxM4C) bus, the fare is going down from \$3.50 to \$2.50 for people with disabilities and for seniors, whether they use coins or a Reduced-Fare MetroCard.

To apply for the Reduced-Fare MetroCard (that can also serve as a senior ID), seniors will need to complete an application.

Applications are available now by calling 1-800-METROCARD or by going online at www.mta.info.

Seniors can also apply in person on the MetroCard Bus, which will make scheduled visits to locations throughout Westchester. They will need to bring with them a completed application and a photo ID. For the MetroCard Bus schedule, call the Bee-Line at (914) 813-7777.

The MetroCard will be discussed at DSPS' Aging Network meeting on Feb. 2 at the County Center in White Plains, starting at 9 a.m. For more information call (914) 813-6300.

Generators

Power Packs help seniors if outages occur

In an initiative started last fall, 100 small generators were delivered to eligible homebound seniors for them to use in the event of power outages. Another 100 are on order.

The 320-watt, battery-powered units provide seven hours of power when a lamp or radio is

plugged into them.

Their purpose is to reduce stress by providing seniors with some comfort and support until help arrives or the power returns, County Executive Andy Spano said in announcing the program.

The generators were given at no charge to eligible seniors who receive services through DSPS' home-care programs or its home-delivered meal program.

Priority went to seniors who are low-income, isolated, homebound with poor mobility, have no caregiver living nearby or need the power for medical equipment, among other criteria.



Laura Bolotsky Day

A laurel for Laura

Laura Bolotsky, the Medicare expert extraordinaire, was honored for her 25 years of service to the Department of Senior Programs and Services, by Westchester County when it named Dec. 12 as "Laura Bolotsky Day" in her honor.

"Throughout the years, Laura has given generously of her time,

Network In The News

talent and energy” said the proclamation issued by the county’s Board of Legislators.

Bolotsky’s official title is “director of operations” and, indeed, she has been involved over the years in virtually every program and service DSPS offers.

But as a young woman, she never considered a career helping seniors. Rather, what triggered her passion for the elderly began with a phone call she took when she worked for a plumbing and heating company. But more on that later.

First just a few of the long list of reasons the county recognized her achievements.

Bolotsky has been administrator of DSPS’s Information and Referral Unit, its HEAP program – which helps eligible county residents with their heating bills – and worked with DSPS Commissioner Mae Carpenter to create and implement the Senior Outreach to Seniors program.

She also was administrator of DSPS’s Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program, and implemented an outreach program for individuals receiving Supplemental Security Income in partnership with the Social Security Administration and the county’s Department of Social Services.

Teaming up with AARP, Bolotsky developed a Medicare and Medicaid counseling assistance program, and in recent years she has worked with the

Medicare Rights Center to introduce its Seniors Out Speaking on Medicare program.

One of her contributions was national in scope – the creation of the Eldercare Locator hotline (at 1-800-677-1116 and www.eldercare.gov).

People who call the hotline can learn about resources for seniors in any community in the United States. It is administered by the National Association of Area Agencies in partnership with the National Association of State Units of Aging.

Now, back to that long-ago phone call.

It came from the county’s social services department in the days before HEAP, and they wanted to know if Bolotsky’s employer could help a woman in Hartsdale – an elderly homeowner who had no heat or water and probably could not pay.

“I sent a worker anyway, and was told she had no heat because she had no oil,” Bolotsky said. “I learned that the oil company would not deliver the oil as she owed them some money and DSS could not pay for the oil.”

“So I paid for the oil, sent the plumber who turned on her heat and stayed to make sure the pipes were not broken and she would have water and all was well.”

As a result of this experience, Bolotsky went on to earn a master’s degree in gerontology at the New School for Social Research,

and found her life’s work.

She said she was surprised but thrilled by the county recognition with her own special day. “I find it hard to believe that having a job that I look forward to every day – as I do – assisting people and making a difference in their lives, deserved such an honor,” she said.

Ann Darcy

New nutrition head named

Ann Darcy, a registered dietitian, who has been with DSPS for 20 years, has been promoted to coordinator of its nutrition unit.

In this position, she has overall responsibility for overseeing the planning, administration and coordination of the division and the more than 3,000 meals it provides every day through senior nutrition sites and the home-delivered meals program.

Darcy also plans and coordinates a comprehensive nutrition service and education program for the elderly. Among her many other overall responsibilities is to monitor and evaluate the program’s day-to-day operation to ensure it complies with the goals set forth by the New York State Office for the Aging.

Long-Term Care

Insurance, Long-Term Care

Long-term care insurance and long-term care are complex issues, but it is essential to understand what they’re about.



That's why DSPS is continuing its outreach programs throughout Westchester in coming months to provide basic information to help Baby Boomers and older persons become educated that they can make informed choices about these crucial concerns.

The date and locations of the programs will be announced. For more information call (914) 813-6400.

The Long-Term Care Insurance Education and Outreach programs will feature discussions on what long-term care insurance and long-term care are, the chances of a person needing them and how to receive help to pay for the care.

Special focus will be on the New York State Partnership for Long-Term Care. People who buy at least three years of coverage through the partnership can receive help for Medicaid to pay for their long-term care without having to draw down their assets when their insurance coverage runs out.

DSPS formed the education and outreach program in response to a 2006 federal law that changed how asset transfers are considered when applying for Medicaid and for the "look-back" or penalty period, that follows from such transfers.

Single point-of-entry

It will be easier and faster for consumers, caregivers and profes-

sionals to find information on long-term care in about six months.

That will become possible through the new "single point-of-entry" plan now being developed where they can call one telephone number to access the information they need.

Currently, people must often call two or even three agencies to have their questions answered, a process which can sometimes be time-consuming and frustrating.

NYCONNECTS: Westchester Choices for Long-Term Care Services is the name of the streamlined program.

The initiative came out of a 2004 report from the Governor's Health Care Reform Workgroup to change the design and delivery of state and Medicaid-funded long-term care programs. Each county in the state is mandated to set up a network.

Eventually the project will create a single data base of county-wide sources. It will also establish a long-term care council to provide advice and to research and report on community needs.

The single point-of-entry telephone number will be announced shortly before the service begins.

Nursing Home Quality

The expanded New York State Nursing Home Profile now highlights 19 key nursing home quality measures on its Web site, such

as the percent of residents with pressure sores and the percent receiving flu shots during the influenza season.

This information empowers people who need nursing home care and their families to make informed decisions based on up-to-date information.

Likewise for up-to-date details on nursing home inspection reports and complaint investigation history and recent enforcement actions taken by the health department.

The new information on the Web site of the New York State Department of Health easily permits searches for nursing homes by name, region, county and how far they are from a specific zip code. It has details as well on nursing homes that provide special services such as adult day care, respite care and services to children in need of long-term care.

For more information, visit the state health department Web site at www.nyhealth.gov and scroll down to "nursing home profile."

Stanley Schear

New award to honor memory of Stanley Schear

The Senior Housing and Services Coalition will honor the late Stanley Schear - its chairman and guiding spirit for many years - with an award given in his name at its first annual

Network Program Round-up

Stanley Schear Legislative Breakfast on April 20.

Shear, a strong advocate for affordable housing and a long-time community activist, passed away last year at age 77.

Through his work with DSPS he helped to bring more services and activities – and in some cases, senior service coordinators – to senior apartment buildings.

Shear also championed the needs of the homeless and fought to ban racial discrimination in housing. He founded and directed the Bridge Fund of Westchester which helped families at risk of becoming homeless to remain in their homes.

He was director of the LIFE Program (Living Independently for the Frail Elderly) at Family Services of Westchester at the time of his death.

The awards breakfast will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at the Woodlands in Ardsley. Elected officials are invited, and the coalition will propose legislation regarding affordable housing and senior housing services..

The Stanley Schear Award will include a plaque and a monetary component, and can be presented to an individual or organization. Nominees must have exhibited vision and action that has produced a measurable outcome in one or more of six areas.

They are advocacy for people in need, skill building to assist in greater independence, service

coordination in linking people to community resources, respectful and compassionate quality of service delivery, philanthropic achievement and coalition building.

To receive a nomination form, contact the Housing Action Council at 332-4144. They must be returned by March 15.

Rose Noonan of the Housing Action Council is chairwoman of the breakfast and Linda Forman from the United Hebrew Geriatric Center in New Rochelle heads the awards committee. Other breakfast co-sponsors along with DSPS are the Westchester Non-Profit Housing Coalition, Family Services of Westchester and Woodlands Senior Housing.

Depression Screening

A partnership between DSPS and a nationally recognized hospital continues to successfully screen homebound seniors in the department's Home-Delivered Meal Program for depression, and provide help for those in need.

The goal of the collaboration between DSPS and the Weill Cornell Institute for Geriatric Psychiatry at New York Presbyterian Hospital's Westchester Division is to develop innovative ways to assess mental health needs of seniors in the county. Homebound seniors were selected for the study because they are at greater risk of developing depression than other seniors

because of their limited mobility and social isolation.

The partnership, now in its third year, is supported by a four-year \$1.5 million grant awarded by the National Institute of Mental Health. Since the screenings began, more than 400 individuals have been assessed, About 12 percent met the criteria for clinical depression and were referred for care.

The grant will also permit the Geriatric Mental Health Coalition to have a conference at a date to be announced this spring where it can unveil some of its findings.

Silver Industries Career Fair

The Westchester Alliance of Academic Institutions for Aging-Related Studies and Workforce Development struck gold this fall with its first-ever career fair on the "silver industries."

The theme was "Where are the Jobs? Where's the Money? Strictly Business in the Age of Aging," and it spotlighted the many job and business opportunities in the sector that serves the rapidly growing number of older Americans.

Some 230 people attended the career fair at Manhattanville College in Purchase, and plans are under way for an even bigger turnout for the second annual fair this year.

The event targeted college students and professionals who may be considering a second or third career by giving them an eye-opening look at the wide variety of jobs in the aging arena. Among them are opportunities in public policy, social work, elderlaw, marketing, management, financial services and architecture.

Apparently, the career fair bore fruit. A post-program survey found that half of the students who had not previously thought about a career in aging services said they now consider it an option.

End-of-Life Conference

“Can We Talk?,” Westchester’s first regional conference that approached end-of-life issues from many perspectives in late October, will take place again this fall at Marymount College of Fordham University in Tarrytown.

Speakers from different disciplines and faiths took part in the conference, which was geared toward professionals, caregivers and families and drew more than 250 people.

Some key points that emerged from the event were that care of the dying must become part of mainstream medical care. The importance of living wills to give the dying some peace of mind and guidance to their overwhelmed families was also stressed.

Attendees indicated on evaluation forms that among the most valuable information they learned was what hospice care is and how it works and the importance of the entire family being involved in end-of-life decisions when a loved one faces death.

The event was co-sponsored by DSPS and more than 30 organizations and agencies from the public and private sectors.

William Colby, an attorney and author of “Unplugged: Reclaiming Our Right to Die in America,” was a keynote speaker as was Dr. Russell K. Portenoy, chairman of the department of pain medicine and palliative care and holder of the Gerald J. & Dorothy H. Friedman chair in palliative care at Beth Israel Hospital Center.

The program featured panel discussions on “Crossing Boundaries, Evolving Dialogue: Compassion, Care, Culture, Collaboration” and “Religion & Spirituality: Walking in the Valley of the Shadow of Death.”

Elder Abuse Coalition

Following the success of its November breakfast seminar on “Financial Exploitation of the Elderly: What Can Banks Do?,” the DSPS Elder Abuse Coalition is expanding its outreach to increase awareness of this growing crime and ways to curb it.

Attending the seminar were staff from 12 banks, bank regulators, law enforcement officials, judges and social service organizations.

Banks already train their employees to look for signs of financial abuse of older customers. A case in point would be a person who accompanies a senior to the bank and encourages him or her to withdraw a large amount of money.

DSPS’ goal was to support that training and highlight the increase in the problem, which accounts for more than half of the elder-abuse cases reported in New York State.

Attendees saw a short training video and received an “Exploitation Prevention Tool Kit” developed by the Elder Abuse Coalition. The kit included the video, a manual with reporting protocols and local contacts, a laminated card with “tips for tellers” and a “fraud alert” card listing ways bank customers can protect themselves.

Janet DeFiore, Westchester’s district attorney, spoke at the breakfast as did individuals from the Westchester County Bankers Association, the White Plains Department of Public Safety and the New York State Banking Department.

The program was taped and the video will be posted on the DSPS

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Web site at www.westchestergov.com/aging. To receive a kit call DSPS at 914-813-6188.

Caregivers

DSPS' Family Caregiver Support Program will publish its first "Practical Health Guide" this spring.

The 33-page guide provides information to help caregivers cope with the responsibility of caring for a loved one and addresses the many challenges they face. It suggests when it is time to get help, balancing work and home life, safety tips and what to do if your loved one resists care. It also has a glossary.

Also new this year from the Family Caregiver Support Program will be the first Baby Boomer/Caregiver Expo planned for this fall at the County Center. The Expo is a project of the support program's 2007 initiative on "Reaching Out to Caregivers."

Last year, the program reached more than 2,000 caregivers through events at libraries, hospitals and other sites. These events will continue and expand.

The Family Caregiver Support Program also will expand its one-on-one counseling sessions for caregivers who can meet with trained professionals to discuss topics such as how to assess services and how to cope with stress.

In addition, DSPS offers literature and videos related to caregiv-

ing at 12 libraries in Westchester County. About 12,000 brochures were distributed through those libraries in 2006. For more information, call the DSPS in Mount Vernon at (914) 813-6300 or in Yorktown Heights at (914) 245-9167.

Senior Law Days

The Senior Law Day program at the County Center in White Plains in October drew a record 350 people – its largest number of attendees since the free programs began.

Identity theft, Medicare, legal issues for grandparents, wills and estate planning, long-term care insurance, predatory lending, scams and choosing a financial planner were among the workshop topics..

Smaller Law Day programs were held in the following weeks in Rye, Yonkers and Port Chester.

Some of these free programs featured "firsts" such as an entire program in Spanish as opposed to one or two workshops, hands-on help in preparing the New York State Health Care Proxy forms, and 15-minute consultations with attorneys on estate planning and elder law.

Future Senior Law Days will take place at Heritage Hills in Somers on April 27 and at the County Center in White Plains on October 4.

Services Outstationed To Seniors (S.O.S.)

Through a new program slated to start early this year, a variety of clinical and health education services will be offered to up to 5,355 seniors who live in or near 11 apartment buildings served by DSPS' Services Outstationed to Seniors Program.

Those services will range from blood pressure tests and glucose screenings to information on topics such as diet, mental health and wellness.

They will be provided by professionals from Family Services of Westchester, the Visiting Nurse Association of the Hudson Valley and the CMO Care Management Company, an affiliate of Montifiore Medical Center.

The three providers offer the clinical and educational services as a goodwill gesture to "give back" to the community. There is no charge to the county.

The S.O.S Program brings health and wellness programs, art and cultural events, exercise classes, emergency preparedness training, and hobby development to the senior apartment buildings.

S.O.S. also coordinates community trips such as a recent one to go apple-picking at a nearby orchard, group transportation, a "telephone pal" program, "ask the nurse" sessions and College Outreach to Seniors, which brings seniors and students together for special projects.

Urban League

The Urban League of Westchester will operate DSPS' Senior Community Service Employment Program under part of a Title V grant that the department received from the New York State Office for the Aging. Under the grant, the Urban League will provide intensive employment counseling, job placement and related services to 48 low-income Westchester seniors. It will also be an advocate for older people on issues such as government benefits, housing, health, consumer problems, elder abuse, crime victims and transportation.

Grandparents Coalition

There are 4,740 grandparents in Westchester County who have sole responsibility for raising their grandchildren, usually with little or no subsidies.

Since it began in 1997, DSPS' Grandparents Coalition has helped them to cope through caregiver support programs, individual counseling, advocacy and some help for back-to-school supplies, clothes and Christmas gifts.

Last year, with assistance from private individuals and organizations, the coalition helped grandparents obtain clothes and school supplies for 85 children and teenagers and year-end holiday gifts for 110 children and teens.

The group meets every other month, and brings together grandparents on the "front lines" of raising their grandchildren with agency professionals. For more information or to join the coalition, call (914) 813-6393.

Hispanic Coalition

The Coalition on Hispanic Aging has helped community members and organizations represent the needs of the growing number of Spanish-speaking seniors in the county since it began in 1989.

The coalition offers seniors information on services, benefits and entitlements in Spanish such as help with enrolling in Part D – Medicare's prescription drug plan.

Recreational activities are also part of its program, as are events with other organizations to enable the seniors to better integrate into their local communities.

The coalition publishes the "Generaciones Hispanas de Westchester" newsletter three times a year with articles of special interest to the community.

Spanish-speaking seniors age 60 and over can register to receive this free newsletter by calling (914) 813-6393. Individuals can also call that number to join the coalition or to represent an agency or organization.

Hall Of Fame

The 24th annual Senior Citizen Hall of Fame luncheon and induction ceremony honored the contributions of 41 people at the Westchester Marriot Hotel in Tarrytown in December.

County Executive Andy Spano presented the top honors award to George Raymond, an architect and city planner from Irvington, for his long-time advocacy of affordable housing and good urban planning.

Seniors receiving "special recognition" at the festive event were Anmarie Dippolt of Yonkers; Rhoda W. Fidler, Rye Brook; Arthur Pulley, New Rochelle; William Sharman, Briarcliff Manor and Frances Wynn, Mount Vernon.

Other inductees were recognized for their contributions to the Aging Network and various organizations, senior clubs and centers and nutrition program sites.

Next year will be the 25th Hall of Fame program, and plans are already underway for the Silver Anniversary celebration.

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Network Program Round-up

Salute To Seniors

The theme of last year's Salute to Seniors was "2006 Get Into the Mix," and more than 3,000 seniors did just that.

The annual event, which packed the County Center, featured more than 70 booths at a business and services expo, a health and wellness component, an arts and crafts fair and ballroom dance lessons.

New last year was "Going Your Way," which DSPS presented in cooperation with the county's Department of Transportation to attract and show seniors how to safely use the Bee-Line bus system.

About 450 seniors learned how to pay when boarding, how to read a bus schedule and how to signal to get off the bus. This year's "Salute" will take place at the County Center on May 2.

Golden Harvest Awards

The 15th annual 2006 Golden Harvest Awards were presented in October by the nonprofit Westchester Public/Private Partnership for Aging Services.

The purpose of the awards is to highlight corporate and individual contributions to seniors and to encourage others in the community to follow their lead..

The Golden Harvest Jim Curran Leadership Award went to Joshua F. Greenberg, an attorney

and professor, for his outstanding contributions to the community. Greenberg has served on the partnership's board since 2003. He was active in the Open Book Reading Aloud's Ageless program, and is a volunteer at Blythedale Children's Hospital.

The Humanitarian Award was presented to Jane and Donald Cecil, who as sponsors of the "I Have a Dream" program adopted a Mount Vernon elementary school class and helped those who graduated with college.

The Corporate Award went to Hudson Valley Bank, the largest independently owned bank in Westchester. Daniel Reingold, president and chief executive officer of The Hebrew Home for the Aged at Riverdale was presented with the Distinguished Service Award in honor of the partnership's 15th anniversary.

A special award went to Rita Weingarten, a founding member of the partnership, who is stepping down after serving as coordinator of the awards luncheon since it began. Her efforts over the years helped to raise more than \$3 million for seniors.

In addition to the luncheon, more than 1,000 seniors attended the Golden Harvest Ball, which was also held that afternoon at the County Center. Attendees enjoyed lunch, socialized, danced to live music and watched or participated in the senior's annual talent show.

HEAP

Seniors, the disabled and Supplemental Security Income recipients having trouble paying their heating bills this winter, could be eligible for help through the Home Energy Assistance Program, also known as HEAP.

To apply for help, call DSPS at (914) 813-6300. How much assistance households receive depends on the type of fuel they use and whether heat is included in their rent.

Flu Shots

Even though its early February, it's not too late to get a flu shot if you did not have one.

The flu can be life-threatening, and people 65 and older are among the groups with the highest risk of severe complications.

Westchester County's clinics offering subsidized flu shots ended in late November. But the shots are still widely available from health-care providers and community health care centers. They are usually covered in full or in part by Medicaid and most insurance companies.

To reach us:

Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services
9 South First Avenue, 10th floor
Mount Vernon, N.Y. 10550

(914) 813-6300

Our Northern Westchester office is at: 1974 Commerce St., 3rd floor
Yorktown Heights, N.Y. 10598
(914) 245-9167

Network Special Reports

White House Conference on Aging/the Older Americans Act

The final report from the 2005 White House Conference on Aging was released this fall, and is posted on the Internet at www.whcoa.gov.

DSPS played a pivotal role in this national report. The 10 resolutions developed at its Pre-White House Conference on Aging - with extensive help from many agencies and individuals in the public and private sectors - were voted as the top 10 resolutions by delegates to the national conference.

Among those resolutions were to develop a coordinated and comprehensive long-term care strategy, ensure that older Americans have transportation options to retain their mobility and independence and strengthen Medicare and the Medicaid Program for seniors.

The first resolution adopted at the White House Conference on Aging has already been accomplished: reauthorization of the Older Americans Act. President Bush did so last fall.

Key provisions of the Older Americans Act are to:

- strengthen health and nutrition programs for seniors

- provide more opportunities for them to become involved in their communities
- promote choices to help seniors avoid institutional care, and
- enhance access to benefit programs for seniors with limited income by creating a National Center on Senior Benefits Outreach & Enrollment.
- To learn more about the act, visit the Administration on Aging Web site at www.aoa.gov and click on the link for "OAA Amendments of 2006."

Millennium Aging Project

Findings of the six-year Millennium Aging Project, which identified needs and issues related to aging in Westchester County for seniors and caregivers, have been published in a booklet.

In MAP's first phase, the Westchester County Public/Private Partnership for Aging Services engaged the Hebrew Home for the Aged at Riverdale, which analyzed the data provided by 3,000 county residents of all ages to identify key areas of concern to seniors and caregivers.

Seven key areas were identified as essential: accessible transportation, affordable housing, caregiver

concerns, long-term care, legal and financial issues, health and wellness and employment.

For the second phase, the partnership worked with Fordham University's Ravazzin Center on Aging to probe more concerns.

The 60 people in the focus groups reaffirmed findings of the earlier study and also uncovered deeper emotional concerns, such as the fear of aging and being dependent, isolation and loneliness, social well-being and safety.

For a copy of the complete MAP report call Betty Barker at the Department of Senior Programs and Services at 914-813-6406 or send her an email at bab6@westchestergov.com.

WANTED: Violinists, Violists

The Westchester String Orchestra needs violinists and violists. There is no membership fee, and rehearsals are held Tuesdays from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the County Center in White Plains. Parking is free for members. Those interested should contact Noel Hart, the conductor, at 914-462-1542 or nah3@westchestergov.com.

Network Calendar of Events

February

- 2** Aging Network Meeting, 9 a.m.
County Center, White Plains.
- 15** Westchester Alliance, 9 a.m.
site to be announced.

March

- 7-10** American Society on Aging/National Council on Aging, Chicago
- 9-16** Bring Your Grandparents to School/ Work Week, throughout Westchester
- 20** Senior "Grassroots" Advocacy Day
Albany, N.Y.

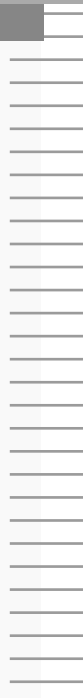
- 23** Livable Communities: Aging Network Service Showcase, 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.
County Center, White Plains

April

- 17** Seniors Go To College Day,
Manhattanville College, Purchase.
- 27** Senior Law Day, 9 a.m. – noon.
Heritage Hills, Somers.

May

- 2** Salute to Seniors, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
County Center, White Plains
- 24** Southern N.Y. Regional Aging Network
8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m., Fordham University
at Lincoln Center, Manhattan



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