

**Hampton**

1975 Ferguson Road
Allison Park, PA 15101
412-487-6316, option 1

Millvale

Millvale Community Center, 2nd Floor
416 Lincoln Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15209
412-487-6316, option 2

North Boroughs

Allegheny General Hospital,
Suburban Campus (*Bellevue*)
100 South Jackson Avenue, 2 South
Pittsburgh, PA 15202
412-307-0069

O'Hara

Lighthouse Pointe
500 Chapel Harbor Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15238
412-449-0151

Pine (Community Auto)

11490 Perry Hwy., Suite 7
Wexford, PA 15090
724-443-8300

Office Hours

Monday through Friday, 9 AM - 4 PM
(*Other times by appointment*)

email: help@nhco.org

website: www.nhco.org

Mission: North Hills Community Outreach is an interfaith organization addressing the needs of people in crisis, hardship and poverty.

Vision: Northern Allegheny County is a sharing community where no one is cold, hungry or alone.

Fay Morgan, *Executive Director*
fpmorgan@nhco.org

The Connector is published three times per year and mailed to 13,500 local addresses. You can **help us save postage and printing costs** by signing up to receive the newsletter electronically by emailing help@nhco.org.



AWARD FOR
EXCELLENCE

United Way of Allegheny County

The C.O.N.N.E.C.T.O.R

Compassionate Help for Elderly Neighbors in Need Continues to Grow

NHCO is working to ensure that every vulnerable senior in Allegheny County who needs a caring volunteer has one. Thanks to funding from **United Way of Allegheny County**, we've been able to expand our volunteer recruitment efforts through a collaboration with **Family Services of Western PA** called *Open Your Heart to a Senior*. In a recent 18-month time period, 681 volunteers have been recruited and 1,400 seniors have been helped!

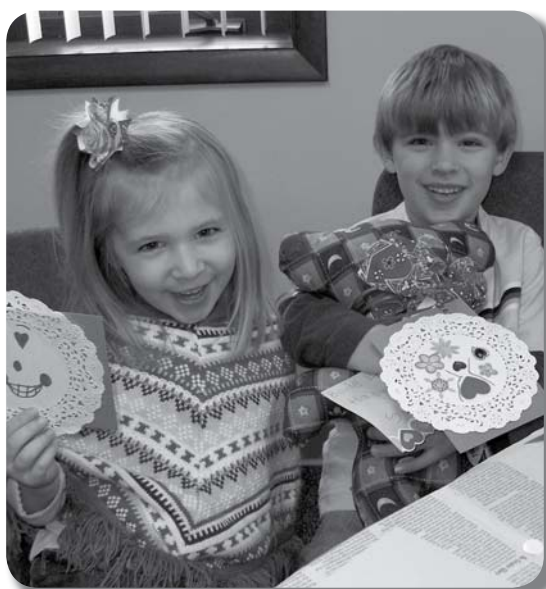
In addition to matching volunteers and older adults day in and day out, on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, we organized three service projects to help senior citizens.

FedEx employees teamed up with **Urban Youth Action** teens to visit senior citizens living in high rises in Blawnox and Sharpsburg. This intergenerational project aimed to alleviate loneliness for the seniors and provided them the opportunity to share their wisdom and stories with younger generations.

Duquesne Light employees attended a *Safety for Seniors* training at our Millvale Satellite and then conducted home safety checks for seniors in the area. In addition to checking for safety hazards, volunteers can install smoke alarms, nightlights, bathtub mats and flashlights.

And lastly, teaching the next generation to care, we organized a Valentine's Day card-making event for 30 kids of all ages to design handmade cards, which will be delivered with stuffed animals the week before Valentine's Day to approximately 65 seniors.

For more information about helping a senior in your community remain safe and independent, visit www.openyourhearttoasenior.org or call 412-307-0071.



Savannah and Ryan Strader of Franklin Park had fun making Valentine's Day cards for senior neighbors in need.

"I deeply appreciate the door-to-door bus service more than words could express. Also, please thank the wonderful person who took the time to make scarves for so many of us who ride the bus. What a blessing to receive such a gift, even a choice of colors!"—A Blawnox senior citizen who utilizes our Free Rides for Seniors shuttle bus

Contact:

Jennifer Drayton
412-487-6316
Option 2, x3210
jmdrayton@nhco.org

Volunteer Orientations

Please join us for an overview of our services and volunteer opportunities. If you'd like to volunteer but can't attend one of these sessions, please contact Jennifer.

- February 10, 10 AM, Millvale
- March 10, 10 AM, Allison Park
- April 7, 1:30 PM, North Boroughs
- May 12, 10 AM, Allison Park

A Sampling of Volunteer Opportunities

- February 10-13: Staff NHCO's booth at the **Auto Show** at the convention center, where we'll promote NHCO and our Community Auto program. Includes free admission to the show before or after your shift.
- March 4-7: Unload, sort and deliver fruit for the annual **Citrus Sale**.
- April 12-13: Help us raise much needed funds by assisting with the spring appeal **bulk mailing**.
- May 14-15: **Pittsburgh Marathon** packet pick-up and race day (we need runners too!)
- **Millvale pasta dinner** planning and organization
- **Data Entry Assistants** for homelessness prevention program
- **Receptionists** at Millvale and North Boroughs locations
- **Help older adults** remain safe and independent in their own homes (see cover story). Snow shovelers especially needed!
- Volunteer for our **organic community garden**, which will be in full swing this spring - finally!



Two Struggling Families Benefit From Too Big for the Stocking Car Giveaway

For the second consecutive year, we held a *Too Big for the Stocking* car giveaway through our Community Auto program. This year, we received so many compelling applications (and enough donated vehicles) that we gave cars to **two families** in need. The donated cars were inspected, repaired, detailed, filled to the brim with presents, and given to the families on **KDKA's Pittsburgh Today Live** on Christmas Eve.

Bryan lost his job as an electrical inspector and then his van was repossessed because he couldn't afford the payments. He desperately needed a reliable vehicle to work as a self-employed electrician and to take care of his family. His wife is wheelchair-bound, and his 15-year-old son is a two-time cancer survivor who needs follow-up care in Philadelphia. Bryan and his family were given a 1999 white Chevy Suburban.

Jacquetta is a single mother of three children ages 6 months to 15 years; the youngest is medically fragile and requires special care that includes many doctors' appointments. Having escaped an abusive situation, Jacquetta and her family are living in transitional housing. The good news is that Jacquetta has found a full-time job and will be able to get there thanks to her new-to-her 1999 Chrysler Town & Country Minivan.

To donate your car and receive the maximum tax deduction possible, visit www.communityauto.org or call 724-443-8300.

Generosity Makes Seasonal Sharing Projects Successful

We appreciate every gift and hour of time and wish we had room to name every donor and volunteer!

Free Winter Coat Shops

1,550 individuals received a free coat or two of their choosing under the direction of volunteers **Jo Stone** and **Jean Fitzgerald**

"Above and Beyond" Donors:

- Bradfordwoods Elementary
- Carson Middle
- Cub Scout Pack #157
- Curves - McCandless
- Memorial Park Presbyterian
- North Allegheny Intermediate
- North Allegheny/North Hills Cheerleaders
- Shaler Area High

Turkey on Every Table

723 families received a complete Thanksgiving dinner under the leadership of volunteers **Jean Kirk** and **Nancy French**

"Above and Beyond" Donors:

- Assumption Church
- Del Monte
- Fox Chapel High
- Marshall Middle
- Muslim Neighbors of the North Hills
- St. John Neumann
- St. Paul's UMC

Sharing Holiday Warmth

500 families received grocery certificates and/or credits on their utility bills under volunteer **Sandy Cessar**

"Above and Beyond" Donors:

- Eichenlaub
- Sylvia and Martin Snow Charitable Foundation
- Villa of North Park residents

Holiday Toy Shops & Adopt-a-Family

911 children received toys, games and other gifts through three holiday toy shops headed up by volunteer **Karen Boujoukos**; another 122 families were "adopted" by caring donors

"Above and Beyond" Donors:

- Todd Berkey
- THE CHAMBER of Commerce
- Choice Chiropractic and Wellness
- Pine-Richland Middle
- Shaler Area High
- Spirit of Christmas
- Stein Mart
- Jason Yeckel



Volunteers from the North Hills office of **Prudential Preferred Realty** helped families select their Thanksgiving food at one of our distributions. Lead volunteer **Nancy French** is on the left.



Eagle Scout candidate **Ryan Grzyb** (right) of Troop #344 collected 120 sports items as well as gift cards for our holiday toy shops. Assisting him in unloading the \$2,600 collection are Boy Scouts **Brendan Grzyb** (center) and **Luke Gintner** (left).

"The donations for my 3-year-old son and the gift cards were such a blessing. The Thomas train and winter coat nearly brought tears to my eyes. The gifts were perfect to open on Christmas morning."—A grateful Millvale mom

Hang This on Your Fridge!

If you'd like an NHCO magnet, please stop by our Allison Park office and pick one up!

NHCO's Food Pantry Items of the Month*

JANUARY

Soup

FEBRUARY

Canned tuna

Meal-in-a-Box

Tuna/hamburger helper

MARCH

Crackers - all kinds!

APRIL

Canned fruit

MAY

Fruit juice

JUNE

Canned pasta
(ravioli, spaghetti-o's, etc.)

JULY

Pasta (1 lb. preferred)

Spaghetti sauce

AUGUST

Peanut butter and jelly

School snacks

SEPTEMBER

Cereal

OCTOBER

Instant stuffing & mashed potatoes

Cranberry sauce

NOVEMBER

Pie crust & easy pumpkin pie mix

DECEMBER

Rice & rice mixes

*These are only suggestions; we will take anything at any time! Also, we can always use toilet paper, toothpaste and other toiletries. And in the summer months, you can donate extra produce from your garden!

Bonus! All food and financial donations designated for the food pantry received in March and April help us earn money from the **Feinstein Foundation's** annual \$1 Million Giveaway. So consider organizing a food drive with your school, congregation or civic group today! Questions? Call Brandi at 412-487-6316, option 1.

A Hungry Person is Rarely Just Hungry

The first time we met "Jim" and "Sally" was during a food pantry distribution when we learned they had been living in their car for the last couple of weeks. Living in a car is unhealthy under the best of circumstances, but Jim had serious health issues that made it downright dangerous, and it was cold!

We provided Jim and Sally with a lot of easy to prepare foods and put them up in a local motel while we worked with other agencies to help them further. We were able to get them medical care, new Social Security cards, food stamp cards and housing in a long-term shelter.

NHCO utilizes a holistic, comprehensive approach to helping our neighbors in need. Rare is the case that a hungry person is just hungry. There is almost always more to the story, and we are here to listen and walk alongside people in crisis, hardship and poverty.



Hampton High English class students collected food for a school project.



Peebles Elementary Daisy Troop #50453 toured the food pantry when they dropped off a donation.

Helping a Bellevue Mom Get Back on Her Feet

“Janine” is a victim of domestic violence who recently separated from her husband. She has full custody of her two children, one of whom is autistic. When she first came for help, her biggest concern was surviving financially without her husband’s income. Due to the level of care her autistic son required, Janine was only working part-time at a low paying job. Her husband was paying the mortgage and other bills until a court order was granted for child support, at which point her financial support from him actually decreased.

We provided Janine with a voucher to get free professional clothes for an upcoming job interview. She got the job, which is during her son’s school hours, and was able to keep her other part-time job as well, where she takes him with her. These two jobs allow her to pay her bills.

Through a partnership with St. Vincent de Paul, NHCO provided Janine with a much needed new stove and dryer, saving her money for other family needs. NHCO also helped her enroll in Duquesne Light’s Customer Assistance Program, and provided backpacks and clothing for her children, winter coats, Thanksgiving dinner, Christmas gifts and food.

Taking our holistic approach one step further, we contacted a local photographer about Janine’s inability to pay for her daughter’s senior picture. The photographer, already an NHCO supporter, generously offered to provide this service at no cost.

We are able to help Janine and her family and others like them thanks to the generosity of others who give their time, talent and funds to help their neighbors in need. If you can help, please use the donation form on the back of this newsletter.

“It has been a pleasure working with everyone there in 2010 and I’m sure my kids have learned a lot about life just being involved with NHCO. I have three kids who are approaching the point of leaving the nest, and like any parent I pray that I’ve prepared them for the world out there. Contact me any time you need help.” —Milt Bauer, a dedicated go-to volunteer from Hampton



Congratulations to **Althea Worthy** (left), who received the Golden Eagle Award from the Dollar Energy Fund for "soaring above and beyond" in helping people in need. Althea volunteers four full days a week at our North Boroughs office.

Figuring Out the Utility Maze

Because applying for utility assistance can be so confusing and complicated, one of the major roles our utility assistance program plays is helping people navigate the twists and turns that happen every year within the utility field.

This past fall we helped “Jeff,” a married father of three who lives in Sharpsburg. Jeff’s father, who had lived with them, had recently died. All of the utility bills had been in his father’s name, and they had not been paid on time or in full for a while, bringing the total amount due to about \$3,000.

The utility company gave Jeff two weeks to pay the balance, but he was unable to gather enough funds to prevent termination with his limited social security disability income. He and his family were forced to live without electricity for a few months.

NHCO contacted three utility companies and assistance funds to advocate on Jeff’s behalf, as he originally was turned down by all three (they all wanted to give the *last amount of money* needed by Jeff). We were able to negotiate \$1,900 in grants, Jeff paid \$700, and the rest of the balance has been frozen as long as Jeff continues to pay his reduced balance every month.

For more information about NHCO’s utility assistance, visit www.nhco.org/emergency.

Thumbs Up to People Helping People!

Here are just a few of the ways people recently have made a difference for their neighbors in need. We're sorry we don't have room to mention every gift! Feel free to borrow these ideas for yourself or your group.

- Grand openings galore! **Fidelity Bank** at McCandless Crossing collected \$500 in food; the Shaler **Giant Eagle** donated \$500; and **Allegheny Valley Bank** on McKnight Road collected \$2,750 in food and donated an amazing \$9,000. We are grateful for our community partners!
- **Hampton Banquet Hall** hosted their third annual holiday party for 175 of our families in need.
- "A Visit to Bethlehem" at **St. John's Lutheran of Highland** raised \$2,100 for NHCO.
- The **Special Friends Ministry** at **Memorial Park Church** collected 80 tubes of toothpaste and 45 toothbrushes for our food pantries.
- Denim Day resulted in a \$520 donation from faculty and staff at **Shaler Area High**. **Crate & Barrel** employees also had a denim day (as well as a bake sale) that raised \$434.
- **Amy Scafuri** of Shaler held a karaoke party and collected \$300 in food donations.
- Students at **Bellevue Elementary** collected \$755.16 in loose change and donated it to NHCO (in the form of a check, thankfully!).
- **Robb Montgomery's** annual haunted cemetery brought in \$566 and \$750 in food.
- 103 donors gave a combined \$16,080 during **The Pittsburgh Foundation's Day of Giving**, resulting in \$3,216 in matching funds from the foundation.
- **PPG Industries** on Corporate Drive donated \$200 in food plus \$459 in grocery store gift cards.
- **St. Alexis Parish** members provided gifts for 52 elderly neighbors in need; **KnitHOPE** provided handmade scarves. The gifts were delivered at Christmas by volunteers from **United Jewish Federation**.
- Representatives from **Avon District #4390** under District Sales Manager **Terry Magdich** raised \$452 by donating profits from their December fundraiser.
- A candy cane fundraiser at **Marshall Middle** brought in \$250 for our food pantries.
- 165 volunteers raised \$5,444 by ringing bells (NHCO is a service unit of the Salvation Army) and wrapping gifts! Big thanks to lead volunteer **Joan Baxter** and to **L.L. Bean, Shoppes at Northway, Borders, Barnes & Noble** and Ingomar **Kuhn's** for serving as volunteer sites for NHCO.



Central Elementary's Kids Care Club assembled and donated 75 first aid kits, which were given to families who use our food pantries.



Chelsea Zhang and **Erin McMahon** organized a Bowl-a-Thon in December for their NAI leadership project; 50 bowlers participated and collected 325 food items.



Members of **Girl Scout Troop #55** wrapped gifts for donations to our food pantries on Christmas Eve at L.L. Bean.

New Furnace for Diligent Saver

Maria of Ross Township enrolled in our Family Savings Accounts (FSA) program in October 2009 with an asset goal of home repair. Sadly, her husband died shortly thereafter, making her financial situation even more difficult. But she threw herself into the program, all the while adjusting to life as a single mother to her son who would be graduating from high school the following spring.

To help Maria, we matched her with one of our volunteer coaches, **Glenn Smith**. He helped Maria track her expenses and find ways to save, such as changing her car insurance to the same carrier as her homeowner's insurance. Glenn also suggested that Maria consider using her savings and matching funds (provided by the **PA Department of Community and Economic Development**) to purchase a new furnace as hers was very old and not energy efficient.

Maria met her savings goal in just 13 months (savers have up to three years) and had her furnace installed in time to receive a weatherization rebate.



Volunteer coach **Glenn** works with **Maria** on budgeting skills.

There are still 75 slots left in the FSA program; this is likely to be the last cycle of funding. We also need additional volunteers to mentor a handful of savers currently without coaches. Contact Harriet Gibbs at 412-487-6316, option 2, x3217, or hgzibbs@nhco.org.

Fun & Easy Ways to Help Your Neighbors in Need!

Super Delicious Citrus Sale

- Temple oranges, ruby red grapefruit, tangerines and sampler boxes that include navel oranges, grapefruits and pears
- Prices range from \$20-28 per box
- **Deadline is February 10!**
- 412-487-6316, option 2, x3210

Spadafora's Restaurant

- 10% of food sales on February 27 and March 1 will go to NHCO
- 3932 Wm Flynn Hwy, www.spadaforas.net
- Dine in or take out

Spring Share Donations Requested

- Pre-assembled baskets, baskets with plastic grass, candy, snack-size treats and granola bars, small toys and stuffed animals (new), store gift cards and financial contributions are requested
- Donations accepted from March 7-April 16
- Contact Vicki at 412-487-6316, option 1, x3143

Millvale Satellite Pasta Dinner

- April 15, 4-7 PM, Millvale Community Center
- Tickets are \$7 in advance, \$9 day of the event
- Dine in or take out
- 412-487-6316, option 2

Mini-Masters Miniature Golf Tournament

- May 12, 5:30 PM, RMU Island Sports Center
- Tickets include round of mini-golf, buffet dinner and silent auction
- Emcee Vince Sims from WPXI returns for third year!
- 412-307-0069

Pittsburgh Marathon

- May 15 - NHCO is a first-time charity affiliate and we need 30 runners, at least 10 volunteers and \$7,000 in donations!
- www.nhco.org/fundraisers

Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community

- May 21 - If walking is more your speed, consider walking for NHCO at this family-friendly event!
- Online registration is underway
- www.nhco.org/fundraisers

Dessert Theatre at St. Paul's UMC

- Details coming soon to our website, but you can save the date(s) now: June 15-16.

More information about all of these events can be found at www.nhco.org. Also, find us on Facebook and be among the first to know the latest news!

NORTH HILLS COMMUNITY OUTREACH

1975 Ferguson Road
Allison Park, PA 15101-3235

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Pittsburgh, PA
Permit #952

Scholarships Surpass \$100K

The NHCO College Scholarship Program for nontraditional adults began in the fall of 2000 when former board member Alicia Dal Lago of **Alicia Photography** generously donated \$3,000.

Since then, 57 students (53 women) have received **\$106,040 in scholarships** for post-secondary education. Thirty-five recipients have either graduated or completed necessary coursework to obtain a professional certificate or diploma; seven are still receiving assistance and working towards their educational goals.

Donations from the local community are the sole source of funding for the scholarships, which can be used not only for tuition, but also for books, computers, child care, transportation and other related costs. Recent donors have included **North Hills Monthly Magazine, Sweetgum Foundation** and **Zonta Three Rivers North** (as a beneficiary of their Glass Slipper Ball, this year taking place on March 5th; visit www.zonta.org).

Donors who contribute \$1,000 or more are invited to name their scholarship. One of our most recent scholarship gifts is from Richard Hays, who chose to honor the memory of his wife with a \$10,000 gift to establish the **Julia M. Hays Memorial Scholarship**. Thanks to his generosity, two women are enrolled in CCAC's nursing program, another is a student in CCAC's business management program, and a local man in need is studying at ITT Tech.

To discuss scholarship gifts and/or opportunities, please contact Harriet Gibbs at 412-487-6316, option 2, x3217, or hrgibbs@nhco.org.

Wish List Priority Items

- Brochure holders (see website for specifics)
- Spring Share donations (see page 7)
- Lowes/Home Depot gift cards for maintenance items at our five sites

To donate, contact Cheryl English at 412-487-6316, option 1, x3111, or clenglish@nhco.org. Find the complete wish list at www.nhco.org.

Yes, I Want to Help!

Many employers have **matching gift programs**; please check with your human resources department to obtain the necessary forms. You can also make a secure credit card donation with PayPal, Visa, Mastercard, Discover or AMEX at www.nhco.org.

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone (in case of questions) _____

Gift Amount/Payment

\$35 \$50 \$100 \$250 Other \$ _____

Check enclosed.

Mastercard # _____

Visa # _____

Expires _____ 3-digit security code _____

Signature _____

Optional

- Save postage! Please don't send a thank you letter.
- I wish to remain anonymous.
- Please contact me about volunteering (be sure to include your phone number above).
- Please contact me about including NHCO in my will and/or other planned giving opportunities.

This gift is:

in honor of in memory of in thanksgiving for

Please notify about my commemorative gift:

NHCO is an IRS-approved 501(c)3 organization.
Your donation qualifies as a charitable deduction.