



Members of the 2008 class of "My Money, My Life" proudly display their graduation certificates that they earned by becoming financially literate.

## Teens Learn Important Lessons

In July, NHCO partnered with **NeighborWorks Western Pennsylvania** and **National City Bank** to offer *My Money, My Life*, a financial literacy program for youth ages 16 to 19. The program was held at the Millvale Community Center and took a holistic approach to financial matters.

Twenty-two teens attended and completed this 30-hour program. All "graduates" received \$100 in a fee-free student savings account at National City Bank. Special thanks to County Councilman **Jim Burn** for giving the graduation speech.

The classes covered goal setting, budgeting, banking terms and products, saving, credit, insurance, investments and predatory lending, and were taught by **Emily Keebler** and **Courtney George** of **NeighborWorks Financial Education Initiative** and **Sandra Collins** and **George Fausold** of **National City Bank**. Participants also learned about the high cost of smoking thanks to NHCO's partnership with **Tobacco Free Allegheny**.

Participants completed a survey at the end of camp; all indicated an increase in their financial knowledge and confidence in their ability to make future financial decisions.

To learn more about upcoming financial literacy workshops for teens and adults, contact Harriet Gibbs at 412-487-6316, option 2, x3217, or [h zgibbs@nhco.org](mailto:h zgibbs@nhco.org).

## NHCO Helps Keep the Lights On for Families in Need

The top two reasons people come to NHCO for assistance are for food and utility help. The prices of electricity and gas (and food!) continue to rise, and this is not good news for local families in hardship and crisis.

Even if utility usage remains stable, bills are increasing as are service terminations (as of July, one electric company's terminations were up 29%, gas was up 17%, and water was up 21%).

When service is terminated, the customer must pay all or a portion of the bill as well as a \$50 reconnection fee.

Due to the increasing cost of energy and the growing number of families in need, our assistance dollars do not stretch as far. (You can help! Turn to page three for information on our Sharing Holiday Warmth program.)

### Here is an example of our utility assistance program (and holistic approach) at work:

"Linda's" electricity service was terminated the day before a job interview. She needed to print out her résumé and iron her interview outfit. NHCO made a one-time payment of \$138 and advocated on her behalf to have her electricity turned on the morning of her interview. We also made arrangements to have her résumé printed and made back-up plans to ensure that her attire was clean and professional. Linda, a resident of Blawnox, was able to secure the job and can now pay her bills on time and in full.

In addition to making payments directly to utility companies to prevent shut-offs or have service restored, NHCO also enrolls eligible individuals in utility Customer Assistance Programs and \$1 Energy (with the help of many dedicated volunteers!).

To learn more about NHCO's utility assistance programs, contact Joshua Wertheim at 412-487-6316, option 2, x3223, or [jlwertheim@nhco.org](mailto:jlwertheim@nhco.org).

# The Connector

*The Connector* is published three times per year and mailed to 14,000 local addresses.

You can **help us save** postage and printing costs by signing up to receive the newsletter electronically. Also, please let us know if you are receiving more than one copy.

Send any address corrections or other comments regarding *The Connector* to [help@nhco.org](mailto:help@nhco.org).

## Main Office

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

## Millvale Satellite

416 Lincoln Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15209  
412-487-6316, option 2

## North Boroughs Satellite

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

## Office Hours

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

email: [help@nhco.org](mailto:help@nhco.org)

website: [www.nhco.org](http://www.nhco.org)

Mission: North Hills Community Outreach addresses the spiritual, emotional, physical and material needs of local individuals and families in crisis, hardship and poverty.

Vision: Northern Allegheny County is a community where everyone shares with their neighbors in hardship and no one is cold, hungry or forgotten.

**Fay Morgan, Executive Director**  
[fpmorgan@nhco.org](mailto:fpmorgan@nhco.org)

**Wendy Gordon, Editor**  
[wbgordon@nhco.org](mailto:wbgordon@nhco.org)



This summer's talented and eager youth philanthropists were **Kate Pfrommer**, Senior Intern, 2007 North Hills graduate and sophomore at Allegheny College; **Justin Taylor**, 2008 North Allegheny graduate attending Penn State; **Alexandra Zabierek**, 2008 North Allegheny graduate attending the University of Pennsylvania; and **Stephen Freehling**, 2008 Pine Richland graduate attending Virginia Military Institute.

## Youth Philanthropists Award \$25,000 in Grants to Six Local Organizations

For the third consecutive summer, NHCO hired recent high school graduates to serve as project leaders and youth philanthropists. The project is funded by **The Heinz Endowments**.

In addition to working directly with one of NHCO's programs that help people in need, the youth also designed a Request For Proposals, received and reviewed 21 applications, and awarded \$25,000 to six local organizations. The "Bridge to Tomorrow" grants were awarded to programs in line with NHCO's mission that promote positive mentoring relationships, build self-esteem, promote an active lifestyle and encourage a sense of purpose in every child.

The following grants were awarded:

- \$1,800 to **Catholic Youth Association's R Camp** to fund eight 2009 summer camperships at Laurel Run State Park for low-income children
- \$5,000 to **Community Human Services Corporation's Career Mentoring** program, which provides working professional adults as mentors for children in distressed neighborhoods
- \$3,200 to **Earthen Vessels Outreach's After-School program**, which matches CMU work-study students with low-income program participants
- \$5,000 to **HEARTH's Moms as Mentors**, which provides training for previously homeless mothers to become positive role models for their own children
- \$5,000 to **New Dawn Beginnings Outreach Ministries' Winner in You**, which encourages youth to develop appropriate social skills and behaviors
- \$5,000 to **New Sun Rising** (Millvale Library) to support its Buddy Read program

For more information about future youth philanthropy opportunities, contact Susan Rohm at 412-487-6316, option 1, x3120, or [shroh@nhco.org](mailto:shroh@nhco.org).

## Seasonal Sharing Projects Depend on People Helping People

**Free Winter Coat Shop** - NHCO is collecting new and gently worn coats to be distributed to low-income families. This year, we will hold three separate coat shops: October 11 at St. Paul's UMC, October 25 at the Millvale Community Center, and November 15 at the Dorseyville Fire Hall. Coats may be dropped off at our Allison Park and Millvale locations. Children's and adult extra-large sizes are especially needed. For the St. Paul's location, contact Judy Murchak at 412-487-6316, option 1. For Millvale and Dorseyville, contact Helen Michael at the same number, option 2.

**Turkey on Every Table** - Beginning in October, NHCO collects grocery store certificates, nonperishable food and financial donations to provide a complete, nourishing Thanksgiving dinner to local families who need one. Please consider donating one (or all!) of the items listed in the box so that 500 local families in hardship can have a wonderful holiday. Donations may be dropped off at our Allison Park, Millvale or North Boroughs sites weekdays from 9:00-4:00, preferably by November 7. To make alternate arrangements, contact Judy at the number above.

**Sharing Holiday Warmth** - Through Sharing Holiday Warmth, each eligible family receives certificates (as funds allow) to apply to their gas, electric and food bills. Knowing that they are receiving this help, the families are then able to purchase their own gifts for their children and other loved ones. This program relieves a great burden while helping to keep the families' dignity intact. Please send donations to NHCO, 1975 Ferguson Road, Allison Park, PA

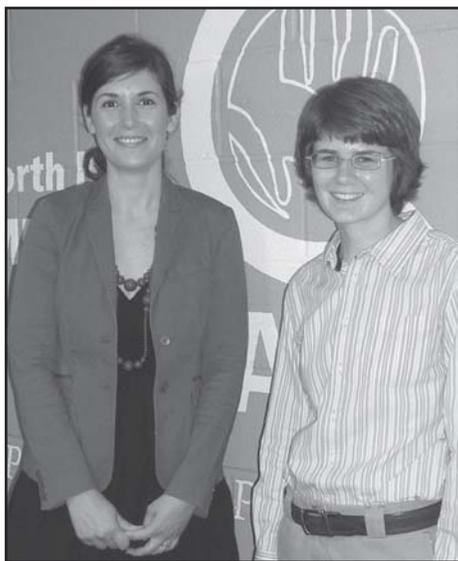
*Shopping List for a*

### Complete Thanksgiving Dinner

- Grocery store certificate for \$10 or more (to purchase a turkey, etc.)
- Large box of stuffing mix
- Large box of instant mashed potatoes
- Can of cranberry sauce
- Two cans of vegetables
- Pie crust mix
- Can of "easy" pumpkin pie mix
- Can of evaporated milk
- Muffin mix
- Turkey gravy mix
- Napkins

15101, and mark "Sharing Holiday Warmth" on the subject line. All donations qualify for a tax deduction. Special thanks to the **Snow Foundation** for making a \$10,000 seed gift for the project this year! Another \$10,000 is needed from the general community if we are to meet all requests for help.

**Holiday Sports Share** - For the second year, NHCO is collecting donations of new sporting and physical activity equipment and games to be distributed to youth from local low-income families. Donations may be dropped off between November 1 and December 8 at NHCO's Millvale Satellite. For more information, contact Helen Michael at 412-487-6316, option 2, x3211, or [hemichael@nhco.org](mailto:hemichael@nhco.org).



**Abigail Middleton** and **Bridget O'Brien** will be working with our volunteer and Faith in Action programs, respectively. They will receive a federal stipend for their year of volunteer service.

## Two New AmeriCorps\*VISTAs Join NHCO for a Year of Community Service

### **Abigail Middleton**

"I have lived in Pittsburgh for the past three years and recently completed my masters in Library and Information Science at the University of Pittsburgh. I was not ready to begin a professional position in my field of study and instead took an interest in serving communities in need, spurred on by my involvement in a community support project."

### **Bridget O'Brien**

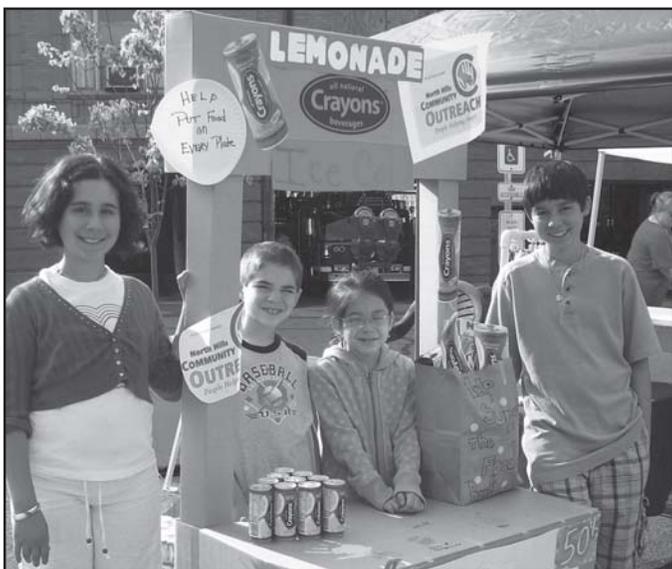
"I graduated this summer with a masters in social work with a certificate in gerontology. I recently moved to the North Hills area and wanted to volunteer at NHCO to be part of an organization that helps strengthen ties between members of the community, encouraging every person to embrace a neighbor who might otherwise be forgotten."

Jennifer Drayton, a 2007-08 VISTA, was hired as NHCO's full-time volunteer coordinator. To consider a year of VISTA service with NHCO in 2009-10, contact Nancy Jones at 412-307-0069 or [nljones@nhco.org](mailto:nljones@nhco.org).

## Thumbs Up for Special Efforts!

We appreciate every single gift! Here are some very special donor and volunteer efforts in recent months:

- The **Greater Pittsburgh Automobile Dealers Association** donated \$10,000 to NHCO. Special thanks to **Mick Wolcott** of Mick's Chrysler Jeep for selecting our organization to be the beneficiary of these much needed and appreciated funds.
- For his Eagle Scout project, **Wade Cupcheck** of Kilbuck cleared donated land in Bellevue to be used as a future community garden for our food pantries.
- Newlyweds **Kristin & Brian Romanowski** collected \$200 worth of nonperishable food items for NHCO's food pantry at their wedding reception in June.
- **Theresa Schneider** served as the lead volunteer for the summer Salvation Army bellringing campaign. She capably organized the efforts of 20 volunteers, who rang bells at **Shoppers' Choice** and raised \$1,214. As a service unit of the Salvation Army, NHCO receives 90 percent of what is collected in our kettles.
- For their **St. Sebastian's** Confirmation project, **Matt Buccigrossi**, **Natalie DiBucci** and **Ashley Sciulli** collected and donated a wagon full of food for our pantries.
- Eight-year-old **Amanda Gross** of Sewickley asked her friends to donate to the food pantry in lieu of gifts for her birthday party.
- **Mulley's Auto Repair** in Blawnox generously provided free repairs on our Free Rides for Seniors shuttle.



The **Ungarino** family of Avalon entered a contest to sell lemonade to benefit NHCO. They were selected as the winner by the lemonade company and sold enough of the summertime beverage to raise \$89.50. Pictured here with their lemonade stand are siblings **Gina** (age 10), **Nick** (9), **Anna** (7) and **Andy** (12).



Helping to organize back-to-school donations are Pittsburgh Central Catholic sophomore **Donald Kline, Jr.**, CAPA sophomore **Kayla Clem**, and North Allegheny freshman **Spencer King**.

## A Record 708 Children Receive Back-to-School Help

NHCO has been helping kids return to school with new backpacks and supplies for ten years. Thanks to the generosity of many donors, this year a record 708 children (pre-school through college) benefitted from our Back-to-School Sharing Project.

Special thanks to longtime lead volunteer **Rosemary Prager**; 14-year-olds **Kacie Vuono** and **Allison Bostedo** who organized fantastic collections in their McCandless neighborhoods; **Orchard Hill Church**, **Dutilh UMC** and **Memorial Park** for their outstanding collections; and to new donor **Mitsubishi Electric Power Products** for their great effort.

**Linda Menton** of Bradfordwoods, one of our many wonderful volunteers, delivered school supplies to a family in need who was unable to make it to our offices to pick them up. After returning, she sent us this email:

"The children were thrilled. I wish you could have been there to see how happy they were. They loved the backpacks and thankfully were so pleased

with what I had picked out for them. They went through all of their supplies and kept saying, 'Look at these folders, look at these pencils!' and so on. Believe me, these children acted like it was Christmas. They don't often get new things so this was very special for them."

*"Thank you so very much for the school supplies. Being a single mom, you have made my life a little less stressful knowing that my daughter will be prepared for school. It means a lot to us!"—Etna*

## Volunteer Orientations

Please join us for a one-hour volunteer orientation session to learn about NHCO's programs and how you can be part of our organization of People Helping People. To attend, contact Abigail Middleton at 412-487-6316, option 2, x3208, or [asmiddleton@nhco.org](mailto:asmiddleton@nhco.org).

- October 7, 10 AM, North Boroughs
- November 13, 1 PM, Allison Park
- January 8, 10 AM, Allison Park
- January 22, 7 PM, Millvale

## Volunteer Opportunities

Contact Abigail Middleton at 412-487-6316, option 2, x3208, or [asmiddleton@nhco.org](mailto:asmiddleton@nhco.org) to learn more about any of the following volunteer opportunities.

- **Winter Coat Shops** - Personal shoppers are needed to assist families with selecting their coats. We also need help with assembling and dismantling the shops (see page three for dates and locations).
- **Holiday Help** - It's hard to believe, but the holidays are right around the corner! Volunteers are needed for our Gift Wrap and Salvation Army bellringing fundraisers in November and December.
- **Fall Phone Campaign** - Callers and mailers are needed to help with this vital fundraiser. We promise that there is no cold calling; donors are notified in advance about the phone call! This is a great opportunity for adults who work during the day and are looking for a way to help out in the evenings. Volunteers are needed November 17-20 from 5-9 PM. Training (and dinner!) is provided.

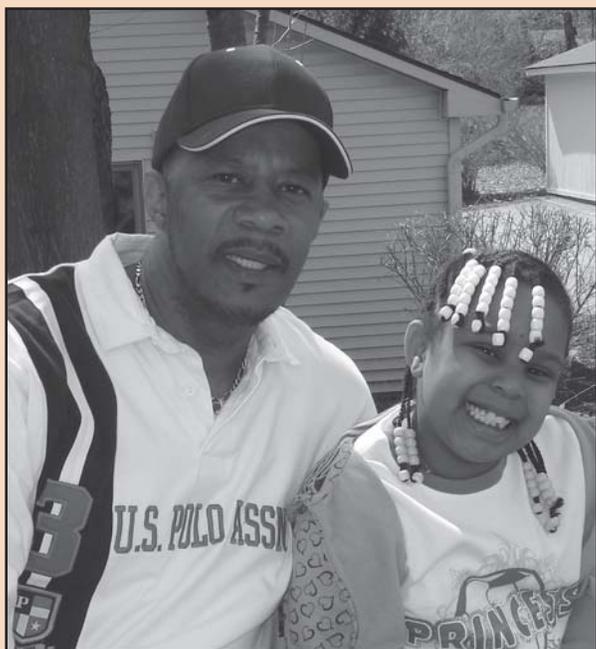


Youth volunteer **Carol Kotermanski** of McCandless serves coffee as the audience eagerly waits for the play to begin.

## Full House for Dessert Theatre

**The St. Paul's Players** donated two full house performances of their production of *Lend Me a Tenor* for NHCO's annual Dessert Theatre. This year's proceeds of \$10,800 brings the 16-year total raised from this event to almost \$98,800!

Special thanks to the **Players**; to our friends at **St. Paul's UMC** for their endless support; to **Thrivent Financial for Lutherans** for providing volunteers and matching funds; and to volunteers **Jean Muth, Mary Riethmiller, Ruth Graham, Jan Peischl, Gwen Spahr** and **Susie Holmes** for their special efforts before, during and after the event.



Wesley shares a moment with his number one girl.

## Self-Sufficiency Award is Just Icing on the Cake for Bellevue Dad

Each year, the **Community Action Association of Pennsylvania** recognizes the significant accomplishments of individuals who move themselves toward economic self-sufficiency with the assistance of community programs such as North Hills Community Outreach.

Since 2000, we have nominated six case management program participants for the self-sufficiency award; Wesley is our sixth winner. You may remember the story in our winter newsletter about this single father who worked hard to improve his life for himself and his daughter. To read more about Wesley and other families helped at NHCO, visit [www.nhco.org/success.htm](http://www.nhco.org/success.htm).

Wesley will travel to Harrisburg in October to accept his well-deserved award.



Lucille and Charles on the deck of their newly-sided home.

## Millvale Man Saves for Home Improvement Project

Charles is 71 years young, has been married for 51 years and has four children and 11 grandchildren. He's retired but still works part-time as a security guard.

After learning about NHCO's Family Savings Accounts program from a friend, Charles opened his FSA account in March 2007 with the asset goal of home repair. He completed all of the requirements and received his matching funds (\$2,000) in just 13 months! His home now has new siding (adding insulation and increasing its value), something he would not have had the means to do without the FSA program.

Once a saver has graduated from the program, a second household member is allowed to enroll (but with a different asset goal). Now Charles' wife is participating with the goal of purchasing a car. If Lucille is anything like her husband, she'll have that new car in no time!

The FSA program is administered by NHCO but funded largely by the **PA Dept. of Community and Economic Development**. NHCO currently has 22 openings in the program for low-income individuals who wish to save toward home ownership or repair, car purchase, education, or small business start-up. If you or someone you know might qualify for the program (income guidelines can be viewed on our website), contact Harriet Gibbs at 412-487-6316, option 2, x3217, or [h zgibbs@nhco.org](mailto:h zgibbs@nhco.org).

## Help Someone Like Charles Reach His Savings Goal!

When a person is already on a tight budget, the thought of saving \$10-20 a week can be daunting, but the success of our 71 graduates from the Family Savings Accounts program proves that it can be done! And with your help, the program can be even more beneficial.

Volunteer mentors (or savings coaches) are needed to provide one-on-one financial counseling and guidance to NHCO's Family Savings Account savers. This is a great opportunity for retired professionals or individuals with a few hours a month to help someone in need accomplish an important goal.

Prospective volunteers should have:

- Good money management skills; work experience in finance field helpful!
- Life experience in one or more of the FSA asset goals: home purchase, home repair, car purchase, small business start-up, post-secondary education.
- Desire to listen and build a rapport with an FSA saver in an effort to answer the saver's questions and help keep him/her motivated.

Savings coaches will support and monitor FSA savers in fulfilling all of the necessary requirements, serving as a mentor, resource and cheerleader throughout the process. Prospective volunteers will learn everything they need to know at a training session on **October 18**, 9:30-2:00 at NHCO's Millvale Satellite. Lunch will be provided. For more information, contact Harriet Gibbs at 412-487-6316, option 2, x3217, or [h zgibbs@nhco.org](mailto:h zgibbs@nhco.org).

## Old Cell Phones Wanted

Help people in need by donating your old cell phone. Phones may be dropped off for recycling at any NHCO location. Call Helen Michael at 412-487-6316, option 2, x3211, or [h emichael@nhco.org](mailto:h emichael@nhco.org) for information on organizing a collection with your congregation, workplace or neighborhood.

### United Way and CFC Codes

We hope you will consider donating all or part of your United Way or Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) pledge to NHCO and/or Community Auto.

Here are our codes:

NHCO United Way General: 2357

NHCO Food Pantries: 9140

NHCO Employment Services: 3806

NHCO CFC: 53330

Community Auto United Way: 1528691

Community Auto CFC: 25187



Roberta from Pittsburgh needed a car to get to work and to take care of her daughter. With funds from the PA Dept. of Welfare, she purchased a 1993 Grand Marquis from Community Auto for \$2,000.

## Free AAA Memberships and Car Seats for Community Auto Families

Community Auto, NHCO's partner organization, was awarded a grant by **Women of Southwestern PA** to cover the costs of one-year AAA memberships for single, working women who purchase a Community Auto car (*all* buyers receive a free AAA membership).

Through a new partnership with **Team Educators for Child Safety** (TECHS), all Community Auto buyers with young children are now eligible to receive free car seats for every child in the family who needs one. The proper installation of the child seat is ensured; the manager of Community Auto is now a certified technician through the National Child Passenger Safety Program.

To donate an unwanted car (great tax benefits!) or to see if you qualify to purchase one, contact Randy Murchak at 724-443-8300 or [rjmurchak@nhco.org](mailto:rjmurchak@nhco.org).

## A Frighteningly Good Time

**Robb Montgomery**, the technical wizard behind St. Paul's annual summer theatre, has hosted a haunted cemetery at his house for eleven years. The "Montgomery Cemetery," a Halloween display and guided tour, will run Monday, October 27, from 7-9 PM and on Halloween night, from 6-9 PM, at 9008 Hampshire Court in Bennington Woods (intersection of Thompson Run and McIntyre Roads in Ross Township).

Admission to tour the "cemetery" is a financial donation and/or non-perishable food items for NHCO's two food pantries. A great activity for your family or group!

If you'd like to volunteer or for more information, contact Jennifer Drayton at 412-487-6316, option 2, x3210, or [jmdrayton@nhco.org](mailto:jmdrayton@nhco.org).

## "Smile Day" Brings Joy to Many Local Senior Citizens

"I really like doing this; remember to call me next year!" are the words spoken by more than one volunteer for the annual Smile Day delivery. Every July, Teleflora sponsors this nationwide event, designed to put a smile on the faces of elderly individuals by delivering a bouquet of daisies in a whimsical "smiley face" mug.

This is the second year in a row that NHCO's Faith in Action program has participated. Eight volunteers (and their spouses, friends and siblings) delivered bouquets and smiles

*"God bless you. The beautiful bouquet arrived when I was in some discomfort with my back. It brightened my day. People extending kindness to others makes for a much better place."—McCandless*

to 99 elderly individuals in our Faith in Action program. Additionally, volunteers took 25 bouquets to **St. Alexis** for them to distribute.

FIA volunteers are needed year-round to help local seniors remain safe and independent in their homes. To learn more about our Faith in Action program, through which caring volunteers provide nonmedical assistance such as transportation to the doctor and friendly home visits, contact Cathy Pschirer at 412-307-0069 or [clpschirer@nhco.org](mailto:clpschirer@nhco.org). You can also find a schedule of training sessions at [www.nhco.org](http://www.nhco.org).



Mrs. Dvzonick of O'Hara Township happily accepts her Smile Day bouquet from young volunteer **Ronan Mulhern** of Shaler.

## YES, I WANT TO HELP!

Make your gift work twice as hard! Many employers have **matching gift programs**; please check with your human resources department to obtain the necessary forms.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (in case of questions) \_\_\_\_\_

## GIFT AMOUNT & PAYMENT METHOD

\$35  \$50  \$100  \$250  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed.

MasterCard # \_\_\_\_\_

Visa # \_\_\_\_\_

Expires \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## OPTIONAL

- Save postage! Please don't send a thank you letter.
- This is my first financial gift to NHCO.
- Please contact me about volunteering (be sure to include your phone number above).
- Please contact me about including NHCO in my will and other planned giving opportunities.

This gift is:

in honor of  in memory of  in celebration of

\_\_\_\_\_

Please notify:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

F08NEWS

## Wish List Priorities

### NHCO

- Wall-mounted cabinet for bathroom storage
- Ten metal folding chairs for North Boroughs Food Pantry
- Grocery store gift cards

### Community Auto

- Gas cards
- Storage containers for auto parts
- Paper shredder
- Carpet/upholstery cleaner

To donate, contact Vicki Burstynowicz at 412-487-6316, option 1, x3111, or [vdburst@nhco.org](mailto:vdburst@nhco.org).

For a complete wish list, visit [www.nhco.org](http://www.nhco.org).

## Sponsorship Opportunities

An NHCO sponsorship is a great way to show the community that your business cares about our neighbors in need. For more information, contact Wendy Gordon at 412-487-6316, option 1, x3112, or [wbgordon@nhco.org](mailto:wbgordon@nhco.org).

- **Van** - Our van travels daily all over the greater North Hills area, picking up and delivering food and other items. It is also used to transport senior citizens to shopping and medical appointments. Your logo will be on the back of the van.
- **Signature Event** - Your company can be the major sponsor of one of our fundraising events, such as the Spaghetti Dinner, Mini-Masters Golf Tournament and Dessert Theatre.
- **Newsletter** - *The Connector* is mailed to 14,000 local addresses three times a year and is also on our website. Your logo will be prominently displayed.
- **Annual Report** - This publication is mailed to 5,000 donors in December and is also posted on our website. Your logo will be prominently displayed.
- **Website** - Our website, [www.nhco.org](http://www.nhco.org), receives upwards of 8,000 visits each month. Your name/logo will appear on every single page with a link to your website.

## NORTH HILLS COMMUNITY OUTREACH

1975 Ferguson Road  
Allison Park, PA 15101-3235

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