



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

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

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 community where everyone shares with their neighbors in hardship and no one is cold, hungry or forgotten.

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

Wendy Gordon, *Editor*
wbgordon@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. Also, please let us know if you are receiving more than one copy by sending an email to help@nhco.org.

Young Mother and Child Receive Assistance During Cancer Treatment



Amy and Kasandra are receiving assistance through NHCO's Extreme Adversity Fund.

Several years ago, North Hills Community Outreach developed an **Extreme Adversity Fund** to help individuals or families whose situations go beyond a "typical" crisis. We are currently helping a single mother whose child is being treated for a rare form of cancer.

Amy & Kasandra's Story:

Amy is the mother of 1½-year-old Kasandra, who was born with neuroblastoma, a form of cancer. Kasandra has had bone marrow biopsies, blood transfusions and has undergone

many months of chemotherapy to shrink several tumors in her abdomen. The hope is that the chemotherapy will reduce her tumors enough so that doctors can perform surgery to remove them.

How NHCO is Helping: Amy, a single mom since Kasandra's father left nine months ago, is a dental assistant and unable to work at this time because of her daughter's treatment regimen. The little girl cannot attend daycare because of her compromised immune system. Amy is hopeful that she can return to work once chemotherapy and surgery are completed.

In order to help Amy through this period of hardship, North Hills Community Outreach has paid her rent for several months. We have also paid for car repairs, gas cards to get to the hospital, a phone bill so that she can be in contact with doctors and emergency personnel, and a gas bill. Thanks to the generosity of **Shoppers' Choice** and others, she has also received diapers, cleaning supplies and clothing.

Want to Help? To help Amy and Kasandra and others like them, please mail a check to 1975 Ferguson Road, Allison Park, PA 15101. Please make check payable to NHCO with "Extreme Adversity" on the memo line.

You can also make a secure credit card donation online at www.nhco.org. All contributions are tax-deductible. Thank you!



Kasandra enjoyed being the center of attention at NHCO's Millvale Spaghetti Dinner after undergoing chemotherapy earlier in the day.

Contact:

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

Volunteer Orientations

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

- June 11, 10 AM, North Boroughs
- July 7, 10 AM, Millvale
- August 13, 10 AM, Allison Park
- September 10, 6:30 PM, Allison Park
- September 17, 10 AM, Millvale

Volunteer Opportunities

- "Christmas in July" **bellringing** at Shoppers' Choice; great for families and groups
- Green thumbs for yard work, community garden and grounds upkeep at Allison Park site
- **Faith in Action** volunteer caregivers are needed to provide nonmedical assistance for older adults and those with physical disabilities. **Free Rides for Seniors** drivers and dispatchers needed. FIA and FRFS trainings are offered every month; for a schedule, visit www.nhco.org.
- Family Savings Accounts coaches
- Employment coaches
- Receptionists for Millvale and North Boroughs satellites

The New View!

To sign up to receive the new and improved monthly e-newsletter, *The Volunteer View*, send Jennifer an email at jmdrayton@nhco.org.

Wonderful Volunteer Will Be Missed



Our condolences to the family and friends of volunteer **Ed Schonbachler**, who passed away on March 30 after a battle with cancer.

Ed began volunteering at NHCO in 2007 upon retiring from Mellon Bank. He helped out in the food pantry but was perhaps more "famous" for his volunteer efforts on the Free Rides for Seniors shuttle, which operates along Freeport Road between Blawnox and

Sharpsburg and is run entirely by volunteer drivers and on-board dispatchers.

Ed was a dedicated and reliable driver on Wednesday afternoons. His quick wit and positive outlook made him a favorite among the riders and fellow volunteers.

We are truly grateful that Ed and his family chose NHCO's Free Rides for Seniors program to be the sole beneficiary of memorial donations in his name; 46 donors have given \$1,605, which will be used to make sure that local seniors have free, door-to-door transportation on the shuttle, which operates in partnership with the **St. Margaret Foundation**.

A Champion Indeed!



Congratulations to NHCO volunteer **Jim Loscar** of McCandless, who was named a Community Champion by the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. An endless stack of data entry greets Jim three full days a week as he comes to donate his time and skill to forward the work of NHCO.

Jim is crucial to our mission, recording all gifts received, both financial and in-kind. He treats the donation of one can of food with the same conscientious care as a truck-load. In the six years he has been a volunteer, Jim has become a fixture in our volunteer workroom, giving 100 hours a month.

Thanks to Jim and other operations volunteers (we have no paid clerical staff), NHCO is able to produce timely thank you letters for donations, maintain clear and correct data for grants, and successfully send mailings like this one to our supporters.



Eden Christian Academy students happily assembled baskets for Spring Share.

Spring has Sprung for Hundreds of Local Families in Need

Through Spring Share, we collect grocery store gift cards, baskets, candy and other items to be distributed to low-income families. This year, 406 families received gift cards and 655 children were given beautiful baskets. In addition, 15 children on the pediatric ward at Allegheny General Hospital, Suburban Campus also received special baskets. In all, more than \$8,300 in gift cards and baskets was distributed.

Special thanks to lead volunteer **Jean Muth** and her assistant **Dottie Edwards** for their hard work on this project. Many individuals and groups donated to this project and/or volunteered to assemble baskets. Here are a few extra special efforts:

- **Girl Scout Troop 1278** made baskets and donated \$55
- **St. Bonaventure's Women's Social Club** donated 58 full baskets
- **Girl Scout Troop 1267** donated and assembled more than a dozen baskets
- **Oxford Athletic Club** collected items from its members for an entire month, resulting in \$250 worth of Spring Share items
- **First Commonwealth Bank** in Wexford donated \$630 in small toys for the baskets
- **St. Paul's UMC** hosted a ham dinner complete with an egg hunt, games and a puppet show for more than 150 low-income families served by NHCO

"I can never thank you enough for all that you have done. You have given me an opportunity to start my life over for the first time in 20 years. I can sleep at night and feel good about myself in the morning." –Bellevue

Computer Lab Up and Running in Millvale

Job seekers now have another great resource at NHCO. In addition to having skilled employment coaches available to help with résumés, interview skills and job leads, those seeking employment help can now utilize our brand new computer lab, located at the Millvale Satellite.

The lab is equipped with five computers with Office 2007. Users can access on-line tutorials to learn Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint and Publisher. They can also practice using these applications to strengthen their skills for employment interviews and testing. They can search for affordable housing and job openings as well.

Many thanks to volunteers **Edie Haughton**, **Tod Morrow** and **Ron Geyer** for setting up the lab.

Thanks to the **Eden Hall Foundation** and the **Allegheny County Department of Economic Development**; their support has made this computer lab possible. Thanks also to **Coldwell Banker** for donating office chairs.

To learn more about becoming a volunteer employment coach, contact Maria Christina at 412-487-6316, option 2, x3209 or mschristina@nhco.org.



Volunteer employment coach **Nadine Nethen** (right) helps Tina work on her résumé in the computer lab.

A Great Achievement for West Deer Mom



FSA graduate Bernadette sent us this photo along with a note: "I want to share the wonderful blessing that your help and the FSA program made it possible to purchase this beautiful car! My daughter and I just love it! Thank you so much for taking the time and concern to help us get through hard times."

Bernadette is a 36-year-old single mother of one daughter. A resident of West Deer, she first came to our Millvale Satellite due to financial hardship.

Addressing her needs in a holistic manner, we helped her with a rental payment when she moved into a new apartment, signed her up for a utility CAP (Customer Assistance Program) and \$1 Energy assistance, and enrolled her in the food pantry.

In 2006, Bernadette signed up for a Family Savings Account (FSA) with the goal of buying her first home. At the time she was working part-time as a Certified Nursing Assistant and was attending nursing school. In addition to learning how to improve her money management skills and the steps for buying a home, she participated in NHCO's Tobacco Free North smoking cessation program and successfully quit in June 2007.

Soon thereafter Bernadette had to undergo surgery, which necessitated a medical leave from work and school. NHCO helped her through this hardship by providing school supplies and holiday gifts for her daughter through the Sports Share project.

All the while she kept in close contact with her FSA case manager to make sure she was fulfilling the program requirements. Eventually she was able to get back to work part-time but found that her car was not going to hold up much longer. She opted to change her asset goal from home purchase to car purchase as what she most needed now. Her request was approved, and on April 16th Bernadette purchased a 1996 Ford Fusion.

Through the FSA program, participants save up to \$2,000 over three years for pre-approved goals; those savings are then matched dollar for dollar with funding provided by the **PA Department of Community and Economic Development**. If you or someone you know might qualify for the program (income and asset goal restrictions apply), contact Harriet Gibbs at 412-487-6316, option 2, x3217 or hgzibbs@nhco.org.

Helping Local Teens Become Quitters

Tobacco use is a serious health issue as well as an economic one. NHCO has operated a tobacco use cessation and prevention program called Tobacco Free North (TFN) since 2004, funded by **Tobacco Free Allegheny** and the **Pennsylvania Department of Health**.

During the past school year, we conducted teen cessation groups at **North Hills High** and **North Allegheny Senior High**.

In addition, we held "Alternative to Suspension" classes at **North Allegheny Intermediate**, **Shaler Area High** and **A.W. Beattie Career Center** for students who violated the schools' tobacco policy.

Students at NAI who violated policy were required to attend three weekly sessions of Alternative to Suspension and were given the opportunity to continue attending after the three sessions. Thirteen students were mandated to attend the program, and **every single one of them attended more than just the required three sessions**. Some students attended as many as 15 sessions, and at least half of the students reduced their tobacco use, some significantly.

If your school is interested in these programs for the upcoming school year, please contact Nicole Davis at 412-487-6316, option 2, x3213 or nmdavis@nhco.org.



Each summer, older adults in our Faith in Action program receive a special treat when flowers are delivered by caring volunteers on **Teleflora's "Make Someone Smile Day."** On July 21-22, volunteers are needed to make the floral arrangements (nothing complicated!), deliver the bouquets to seniors in their homes and make deliveries to nursing homes. Special thanks to **McCandless Floral** for their work on this project, which brought smiles to 80 older adults in our program last year. To help, contact Cathy Pschirer at 412-307-0069 or clpschirer@nhco.org.



Above: **David Raitt, Tom Cameron and Mike Henry**, leaders of **Cub Scout Pack 329** at Memorial Park, unload the \$3,500 worth of food the boys collected during Scouting for Food. Tom's 6-year-old Cub Scout son **Ryan** collected donations at Giant Eagle for 10 hours in one weekend!



Left: Our Allison Park site received some tender loving care this spring from two great groups of volunteers. **Hampton Presbyterian** members helped out, as did **Patrick Hesidence** and his friends and family during *Hands on Pittsburgh Day*. Pictured here are **Elise McGonigle** and **Tanner Rice**.

Right: **Bill Toms & Hard Rain** performed a benefit concert at **Moondog's** in Blawnox; \$300 was raised for NHCO's scholarship program. Pictured here is guitarist **Jason Truckenbrod** from opening band **The Surf Zombies**. **WDVE's Sean McDowell** emceed the event.



Thumbs Up!

So many individuals and groups do wonderful things to help their neighbors in need through NHCO. Here are just a few of the unique ways people have made a difference.

- Employees of **Vincentian Regency** donated \$214 from their Ash Wednesday meager meal.
- In exchange for food donations during the month of December, customers of **Pelcz Positive Image Beauty Salon** receive a discount on services received. In the past three years, nearly \$500 in food has been donated.
- **Carson Middle School** Family and Consumer Sciences students turned old t-shirts into reusable shopping bags for families who use our food pantries.
- A beautiful quilt honoring major capital campaign donors hangs in the "new" Millvale Satellite. Fabric was donated by **Bishop's**; **Anything Sews** donated the embroidery; and quilters **Darlene Brown, Donna Costa, Mary Riethmiller, Trudy Russell** and **Esther Tarbi** donated their talent to turn it into a work of art.
- Every week, members of the **Islamic Center of North Pittsburgh** deliver baked goods to our food pantry, donated by **Panera** in Wexford.

- The **National Association of Letter Carriers'** annual Stamp Out Hunger project brought in \$27,990 in food from postal workers and residents in 15101.
- Active and retired teachers in the **North Allegheny Federation of Teachers** raised and donated \$2,435 plus \$830 in food to help their neighbors in need.
- The **Shepherd's Door** gift shop, which operates out of **Bellevue Christian Church**, has selected NHCO twice to receive a portion of their monthly proceeds; \$364 has been donated.
- At their company party, employees of **The Chadwick** and **Fresco's** donated \$175 in proceeds from their silent auction. The amount was generously matched by the company.
- Longtime Faith in Action volunteer **Joe Schneider** spoke at a volunteer orientation to share his perspective and experience as an NHCO volunteer.
- Board members **Nancy Naragon** and **Trish Thornton** hosted parties for their husbands' retirement and birthday, respectively. In lieu of gifts, their guests donated a combined \$1,500 to NHCO.

Community Auto Moves to Fantastic Wexford Location

Community Auto, NHCO's partner organization that accepts and repairs donated vehicles then sells them at well below fair market value to people in need, has moved from its Richland location. The organization's new facility is located at 11490 Perry Highway in Wexford, next to Hub Cap City.

The new location with proximity to auto-related businesses offers greater opportunities for efficient service and expanded programming, which will result in more low-income families having access to affordable and reliable transportation. Special thanks to **Ed Holdcroft**, owner of Hub Cap City, for donating his expertise to help get donated cars roadworthy quickly.

Paris's Story

Paris lives in Hazelwood with her nine-year-old daughter. She had been enrolled in college when her brother died of leukemia. Devastated, Paris dropped out of school and quit her job.

After working through her grief, Paris enrolled in the EARN program through the Department of Public Welfare. There she took classes in résumé writing, interview skills and job searching to prepare for employment.

She secured a job at the Oakland Qdoba and after eight months transferred to the Shadyside location. After purchasing a 2001 Pontiac Grand Am from Community Auto with a Welfare grant, Paris was promoted to shift supervisor due to her ability to take on more responsibility of opening the store. She and her daughter are also able to visit their family in Wexford more easily now.

To donate a car or to see if you qualify to purchase one, contact Community Auto manager Jennifer Carr (yes, that's really her name!) at 724-443-8300 or jacarr@nhco.org.



Paris was promoted to shift supervisor after securing reliable transportation from Community Auto.

“Thank you for working with me to achieve my goals, in finding work, transportation and guidance. I am now employed and able to make it back and forth to work. I was in jeopardy of losing my home but now that's not the case. I'm able to afford my rent and the future looks brighter. Thanks so very much.” –Millvale

Back-to-School Collection

Most people probably don't want to think about school right now with summer just beginning. However, it takes a lot of organization to make our Back-to-School sharing project a success every year, so we need to start early!

We are in need of new backpacks for all ages (especially larger ones for the older kids), as well as new school supplies such as pencils, highlighters, notebooks, binders and scissors. This is a great project for congregations, civic groups, businesses and neighborhood associations. Every year more than 500 children from low-income families benefit from this program.

Donations may be dropped off at any NHCO location during regular business hours.

Our Commitment to Excellence in Operations

NHCO is committed to the highest standards in ethics and accountability in our operations and has these policies in place to ensure this commitment:

- Board ethics policy including conflict of interest
- Staff standards of conduct and conflict of interest policies
- Donor privacy policy: We will never sell or give donors' names or any other information to another organization.
- Whistleblowing policy: Any concerns about the possible misuse of NHCO resources should be reported to the executive director, board president or the chair of the audit committee. Contact information can be found at www.nhco.org/policies.htm.

Fruit, Pasta and Golf: A Winning Trio!

This year's **Citrus Sale** raised more than \$11,300 to help our neighbors in need. In addition to the funds raised, 130 boxes of fresh fruit were donated to our food pantries. A special thank you to **Bill Ammer** and **Boy Scout Troops 17, 157, 173** and **195** for their tireless efforts unloading the delivery trucks and organizing all of the fruit. Thanks also to longtime citrus supporter **Arlene Frances** for coordinating the deliveries to large groups.

The third annual **Millvale Spaghetti Dinner** took place on April 17th at the Millvale Community Center with 325 delicious dinners served. Thanks to volunteer **Karen Donnelly** for her leadership; **Pastor George Mendis** of Christ Lutheran for his talents in the kitchen; and the **Kings Restaurant Frownie** for making a cameo appearance.

On May 14th, the eighth annual **Mini-Masters Miniature Golf Tournament** took place at the RMU Islands Sports Center on Neville Island. Special thanks to WPXI's **Vince Sims** for serving as the event's emcee and to **Althea** and **Oscar Worthy, Jo Stone, Nancy Verbos, Elaine Hatfield, Chuck Rosenberg** and **Paul Cusick** for their outstanding contributions. The *Doris A. Richert Mini-Masters Volunteer Award* was presented to committee member **Oscar Worthy** for his tremendous support of the event over the years. To see who won the tournament, visit www.nhco.org/news.htm.



Top: Volunteer **Alexis Kaltreider**, a first-grader at Marzolf Elementary, carries a box of tangerines to a supporter.

Bottom: **Pastor George Mendis** cooks up a batch of pasta at the spaghetti dinner.

High School Students Grow as Leaders

NHCO welcomes five youth Leadership Coordinators, hired part-time thanks to a grant from **The Grable Foundation**.

Ryan McRoberts will be a senior at Quaker Valley in the fall; **Mollie Lewis, Antonia Finizio** and **Cara Tovissi** will all be seniors at North Hills; and **Sean Norris** just graduated from Vincentian Academy and plans to attend the University of Miami in the fall.

They are all hard workers and have made a big difference at our citrus sale, with the Dignity U Wear distribution (see back cover) and Spring Share.

For other youth leadership opportunities at NHCO, contact Helen Michael at 412-487-6316, option 2, x3211, or hemichael@nhco.org.

Many Fun Ways to Support our Mission

More information on all of these events that benefit NHCO's mission can be found at www.nhco.org/fundraisers.htm. Our apologies if this newsletter reaches you too late for some of the earlier events.

Guiding Star Productions presents an **Indian Cultural Extravaganza/Grand Recital** on **June 6**, 3 PM, at Ingomar Middle School. Tickets are \$10 (free for children under seven) or \$30 for VIP seating, and can be purchased at NHCO or www.proartstickets.org.

The North Pittsburgh Corvette Club is sponsoring the **7th Annual Chevrolet Charity Cruise** on **June 14**, 11-5, at Baierl Chevrolet in Wexford. Free and open to the public; rain or shine.

The St. Paul's Players will present Neil Simon's *The Odd Couple (Female Version)* on **June 17-18** for our annual Dessert Theatre Benefit. Tickets are \$22 each and include a fun evening of entertainment and fellowship; a buffet of delicious desserts and homemade ice cream donated by **Sweet Licks**; and a silent auction that includes a week-long stay at the Sheraton Vistana Resort in Orlando. The play takes place at St. Paul's UMC, 1965 Ferguson Road in Allison Park, and the evening begins at 6:30 PM. To purchase tickets, contact Vicki Burstynowicz at 412-487-6316, option 1, x3111, or download an order form on our website.

Join us at **Bruster's** on the corner of Perry Highway and W. Ingomar for **SummerFest** on **July 26**, 12-5 PM. There will be an ice cream eating contest, live music, games and fun for the whole family!

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

\$30,000 in New Clothes Distributed

Other than gently worn winter coats for our annual Free Winter Coat Shops, NHCO generally does not accept donations of used clothing. There are more appropriate organizations (e.g., Treasure House Fashions, Goodwill, etc.) for those donations.

However, we are excited about a new program that allows us to provide *brand new clothing* to low-income individuals and families.

Through this unique program called **Dignity U Wear**, new clothing items are collected from manufacturers and retailers, warehoused and distributed to select nonprofit organizations in **Stein Mart** communities. Stein Mart stores participate in fundraising activities to support the program's operating costs.

Recently, 104 individuals received clothing and accessories valued at \$30,386 through NHCO from Dignity U Wear. We are able to take advantage of this program three times per year.

A woman from Cheswick wrote to us, "Thank you all very, very much for the clothing for my family. It's a true blessing for us at such a time of need."



NHCO Youth Leadership Coordinator **Sean Norris** sorts new clothing for the first **Dignity U Wear** distribution.

Wish List Priorities

- Donated excavation and plumbing services for community garden
- Vacuum cleaner in good working order
- Energy-efficient light bulbs

Community Auto

- Bulletin board
- Doormat
- Vehicles suitable for use by low-income workers to get to their jobs

For a complete wish list, visit www.nhco.org. To donate, contact Vicki Burstynowicz at 412-487-6316, option 1, x3111, or vdburst@nhco.org.

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

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

Check enclosed.

MasterCard # _____

Visa # _____

Expires _____

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.