



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

Community Garden Will Feed Hungry Families

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 only)

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 14,000 local addresses. You can **help us save postage and printing costs** by signing up to receive the newsletter electronically by emailing help@nhco.org.

Our organic community garden in Bellevue has been planted with bell peppers, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, cucumbers, beans and more! All of the produce grown at the volunteer-run garden will be given to the 400-500 families who utilize our two food pantries every month.

The plot of land was donated by **Teresa Amelio**, and we have been working hard to get the property ready for planting. Ms. Amelio had a vision for this garden, named the **Rosalinda Sauro Sirianni Memorial Garden** in honor of her mother, that the fruits and vegetables grown there would be given to pantry families, complementing the nonperishable items they already receive.

You won't see the typical straight rows in our garden; the in-ground beds were plowed using the contour of the land to help prevent soil erosion and runoff. Two raised beds were built to let all ages and abilities help this garden grow.

Big thanks to nearly 100 volunteers who have pitched in to build various structures and plant vegetables at the garden, with a special mention to **Chris Hackimer, George Becker, Justin Lindsey** and members of **Korean Central Church of Pittsburgh**.

Thank you to the **Borough of Bellevue**, especially **Doug Sample, Katie Hale** and **Tony Barbarino** for providing water; **The Grable Foundation** and **Comcast Foundation** for financial support; **Allegheny Grows** and **Pittsburgh Grows** for their technical assistance; and the **Western PA Conservancy's Gardens and Greenspace** staff.

We are looking for volunteers to weed, water, harvest, cut grass and deliver the food to our pantries now through October. To help, contact Rosie Wise at 412-307-0069 or rmwise@nhco.org.

Please join us for the ceremonial ribbon cutting on **Sunday, June 26**, at 1:30 PM. After the ribbon cutting, head over to the James Porch Gazebo/Bayne Library (34 N. Balph) for a Garden/Tea Party from 2-6 PM. The event is free and open to the public; donations will fund the garden.



Volunteers **Justin Lindsey** and **Ryan Cisar** use an auger to dig holes for the fence posts.



Volunteer **Kristen Schawalder** of Western PA Conservancy and VISTA **Liza Walrath** fill a raised bed with soil.



AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

United Way of Allegheny County

Contact:

Linda Robins
412-487-6316
Option 2, x3215
lkrobins@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 Linda.

- June 16, 10 AM, Allison Park
- July 14, 10 AM, Millvale
- August 11, 1:30 PM, North Boroughs
- Sept. 8, 10:30 AM, Lighthouse Pointe
- Sept. 15, 6:30 PM, Allison Park

A Sampling of Volunteer Opportunities

- July: Two-hour bellringing shifts (times and location still TBD)
- July 9, 10 AM-12 PM: Car Wash at NHCO Allison Park (rain date - July 16)
- July 17-23: Smile Week - Volunteers will be needed to assemble flower bouquets and deliver them to senior citizens. Contact Nancy at 412-307-0069.
- Receptionists are needed at all sites. Be the face and voice of NHCO!
- Drivers and onboard dispatchers for the Free Rides for Seniors shuttle (see story on page 4)



TJ, Alyssa, Logan and mom Kerri Funovits of Shaler spend an afternoon at NHCO sorting candy and assembling baskets.



Our amazing lead volunteer Jean Muth (seated) is surrounded by helpers Terri Sampietro, Carol Reis and Mary Riethmiller.

Spring Share Helps Hundreds

Nearly 600 children (587 to be exact) received candy baskets filled with treats, games and small toys through this year's Spring Share project. In addition, 471 families in hardship received grocery store gift cards to help them purchase food for a holiday meal.

Spring Share is one of several "sharing projects" held throughout the year. Various items are donated by caring community members and groups and then distributed to local families in poverty, hardship and crisis, relieving a financial burden for them.

More than \$15,000 in food and certificates was donated and given out in April. Thank you to everyone who contributed, with a special mention to **Renee Full, St. Bonaventure's Women's Group, CCAC's 8:30 a.m. water aerobics class, St. Killian's Parish School, Social Security Administration-Seven Fields, Shaler Elementary, St. Catherine of Sweden, American Eagle Outfitters, and Unitarian Universalist Church of the North Hills.**

Our next sharing project is Back-to-School (even though some of your children might still be IN school!). Through July 29, we are collecting new backpacks and school supplies to be distributed to hundreds of kids (K-12) in August. We need backpacks appropriate for all ages (especially larger ones for older kids), pens, pencils, highlighters, white-out, calculators, loose-leaf paper, notebooks, erasers, rulers and scissors.

For information about any of our sharing projects, contact Vicki Burstynowicz at 412-487-6316, option 1, x3143, or vdburst@nhco.org.

La Roche College Steps Up to Prevent Homelessness

NHCO is fortunate to have many wonderful relationships with organizations of all types that embrace our vision of northern Allegheny County as a sharing community where no one is cold, hungry or alone. Recently, we were approached by **La Roche College**, a long-time supporter, wanting to do more to help local people facing homelessness.

La Roche renovated two former dormitory suites that we have used as temporary, transitional housing for individuals facing homelessness. The first person to benefit from the College's generosity was "Anna." She is 20-years-old and became homeless when she lost her job and could no longer pay her rent. With no family support, she had been living in her car for about two weeks when she contacted NHCO for help. Anna had quickly obtained a part-time job, but she had nowhere to live nor enough money to get into an apartment.

NHCO enrolled Anna in the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program (HPRP)—NHCO is one of six local agencies administering the program for the City and County. She stayed at La Roche for one month while all the details for securing her new apartment were worked out (her initial rent was paid, and she will receive rental assistance for a period of time going forward).

Utilizing a holistic approach to address the many needs of people in crisis, NHCO provided Anna with food, gift cards for gasoline, a voucher to purchase a bed (from the **Salvation Army**, another good partner) and connected her with donors to provide additional furniture for her apartment. Anna is now working full-time and plans on enrolling in school to pursue her goal of becoming a pediatric nurse. La Roche gave her a safe place to stay and a vision for a better future. We thank them for stepping up to help Anna.

Three VISTA Positions Available

NHCO has three AmeriCorps*VISTA positions available for a year of volunteer service beginning in August.

The *Computer Connection VISTA* will build the capacity of our employment coach and financial literacy programs by developing computer education sites, recruiting and mobilizing volunteer computer educators, and creating partnerships with fellow community organizations. The *Way to Work VISTA* will recruit, train and develop a corps of volunteers who will facilitate low-income working families' access to affordable and reliable transportation through the Community Auto program. The *Healthy Futures VISTA* will create access to healthful food and nutrition education for low-income families in NHCO's service area.

The deadline to apply is June 10. Contact Susan Rohm at 412-487-6316, option 1, x3120, or shrohm@nhco.org.



Executive Director **Fay Morgan** (holding award) is surrounded by board members, left to right: **Rick McClure**, **Tom Baker**, **Lorna Andrew-Jaja**, **Mary Ciccone** and **David Rishel**.

NHCO Wins Wishart Award!

On May 12, NHCO was the recipient of the *Alfred W. Wishart, Jr. Award for Management Excellence*, presented by **The Forbes Funds**. Nominees for this annual award are judged on their commitment to outstanding performance in the following areas:

- Leadership
- Objective analysis in planning and programming
- Excellence in human resource management
- Continuous improvement in service delivery
- Measurement and monitoring of outcomes
- Commitment to consumer satisfaction
- Collaborative efforts
- Accountability to the public trust

We are humbled and honored by this wonderful award. The \$10,000 prize that accompanies it will go a long way to ensuring that no one in our community is cold, hungry or alone.

"Our family thanks you for all you have shared to help us. May God bless you all and your families this Easter season. The food, and your help and guidance are greatly appreciated by me and my sons." — Avalon mom



Father Frank Almade of St. Juan Diego Parish offers the first blessing. Rabbi Yaier Lehrer of Adat Shalom and Father Tom Phillips of Fox Chapel Episcopal also participated in the ceremony.



Allegheny County's Richard Ranii, Mary Lee Gannon of St. Margaret Foundation and Congressman Jason Altmire celebrate the new shuttle.

New Shuttle Van for Seniors

Thanks to a generous grant from **Allegheny County Economic Development**, we were able to purchase a new shuttle van for our Free Rides for Seniors program.

Our old shuttle had more than 100,000 miles on it and had provided over 35,000 free rides to the doctor, grocery store, hospital, bank and other destinations for hundreds of local seniors living in the Freeport Road area. Operating costs for the shuttle are provided in large part by our wonderful partner, **St. Margaret Foundation**.

On April 4, we held a blessing event at **UPMC Lighthouse Pointe** in O'Hara, which donates office and parking spaces for our program. Thanks to **Giant Eagle** for donating refreshments and to **Gekko Graphics** for helping us out with signage.

The shuttle is operated by caring and friendly volunteer drivers and onboard dispatchers who take appointments and help navigate. We have several openings in our schedule, so if you are looking for a meaningful and unique volunteer opportunity, please contact us. No special license is required to drive the van, and training and ongoing support are provided.

We like to say that it's more than just a ride; it's a relationship. Please contact Kerry Mulhern at 412-449-0151 or kkmulhern@nhco.org for more information about volunteering.

"I cannot begin to tell you how we continually reflect on how absolutely wonderful you have been to us. NHCO has been our lifeline of hope, support and resource. It's so awesome to know that all of you are there to help folks in need or in transition." — Hampton woman whose husband lost his job

More Housing Assistance Provided

"Sean" came to NHCO in financial hardship during his battle with renal disease. His extensive surgeries and high prescription costs caused him to fall behind on his otherwise timely rent payments. We were able to provide Sean rental assistance to help him get back on his feet by enrolling him in the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program (HPRP). He also participates in NHCO's long-term case management program, designed to move him and others towards economic self-sufficiency.

"Leanne" was searching for housing while tending to her own poor health and taking care of her adult daughter with disabilities when she came to NHCO for help. Neither she nor her daughter is able to work, so they have very limited income. Repeated flooding in Millvale caused their belongings to be damaged, which was financially burdensome. They were enrolled in HPRP, found a safer and more accessible apartment, and are faring much better.

NHCO is People Helping People!

Here are just a few of the ways people are making a difference for their neighbors in need through North Hills Community Outreach. We're sorry we don't have room to mention every gift or effort!

- **Temple Ohav Shalom** teens spent their "Mitzvah Day" sprucing up our main service site in Hampton. They also donated \$333 for our mission.
- Like many churches, **Ingomar United Methodist** features a different mission or charity every month. Congregation members donated more than \$2,400 to NHCO during February.
- **North Hills Senior High** pottery and gourmet foods classes held their annual Empty Bowls event, raising \$889 for our food pantries.
- Members of **North Park** and **Memorial Park** churches joined together on May 14 as part of *Go Compassion Day* to paint, organize and clean the offices. They also built shelves at our storage unit, donated by **Guardian Self Storage** in O'Hara.
- **Allison Park Travel** sold Entertainment Books to benefit NHCO, raising \$800.
- **St. John's Lutheran** in Millvale gave \$500, saying "God bless you and the ministry you do."
- **Ross Township Road Crew** donated \$250.
- **Zonta Three Rivers North's** Glass Slipper Ball brought in \$5,200 for our scholarship program.
- **Element Church** in Millvale donated \$500 worth of food to NHCO's emergency food supply in Millvale.
- **St. Bonaventure** in Shaler has been donating food and other items to NHCO on a weekly basis for so long we can't count, so a big thanks to them for their amazing support over the years.
- **North Hills Newcomers** donated \$1,069 from their annual luncheon and auction.
- **Spadafora's** on Route 8 donated \$223 in proceeds from two days' worth of food sales.
- **Tom Breiding**, Commonwealth Speaker with the PA Humanities Council, presented Steeltowns, Coalfields and the Unbroken Circle at **St. Nicholas Croatian Catholic Parish** for NHCO.
- **Bud & Barbara Owens** of Franklin Park hosted a Sunday dinner and asked guests to bring a nonperishable item for our pantry. This resulted in 12 bags of groceries and \$345 in financial donations!
- The "Breakfast Club" at **Shaler Area High** donated \$95 they raised through a donut and coffee sale.
- The **Greater Pittsburgh Auto Dealers Association** donated space for a Community Auto booth at the Auto Show.

"Thank you for helping our family with our gas bill. We really appreciate all the help given to us. Your generous gift is such a blessing." — Shaler mom

Four Supersized Food Drives Help Families in Need

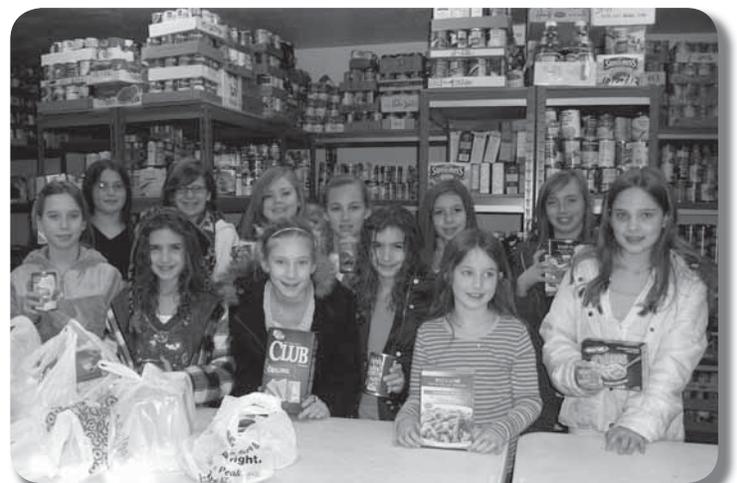
The *Souper Bowl*, organized by volunteer **Rosemary Prager**, involved eighteen local schools that collected 13,450 food items! Thanks to all of them and a special nod to the top three schools: **Carson Middle, Avalon Elementary** and **Marzolf Primary**.

A dozen troops donated some or all of their *Scouting for Food* collections to our pantries. Thanks to troops **36, 81, 171, 195, 257, 270, 283, 329, 335, 344, 572** and **935**. Together, they donated more than \$20,000 in food!

The **U.S. Postal Carriers'** annual *Stamp Out Hunger* campaign brought in \$14,600 in food from the 15101 zip code. Thanks to all of the hardworking carriers and to everyone who left food at their mailboxes.

During March and April, all food and financial donations earmarked for the pantry helped us obtain our proportionate share of **The Feinstein Foundation's** *\$1 Million Giveaway*. Thanks to the 230 donors who gave \$76,259 in food and \$9,621 in funds! We'll let you know how much we receive from the Foundation.

Our pantry shelves start to look a little bare in August and September, so perhaps you or your group could organize a late summer collection. For tips on conducting a food drive or to take a tour of our pantry, please contact Brandi Rukovena at 412-487-6316, option 1, or brukovena@nhco.org.



Central Elementary Girl Scouts brought in a food donation and learned about the pantry while they were here. All troops are invited to do the same!

Events Bring Friends and Funds

Citrus Sale: Thanks to everyone who purchased fruit (including 122 people who donated their orders to the food pantry), helping us to raise \$17,166 for our food pantry services. Big thanks to the 123 volunteers who unloaded the delivery truck, organized and delivered the fruit, and carried boxes to customers' vehicles; **Arlene Frances** who sold 92 boxes of fruit and led the way for our fruit-sorting volunteers; **Bill Ammer** and **Boy Scout Troops 17, 36, 157** and **195** for unloading the truck; **Northmont UPC's youth group** for sorting and delivering fruit; **Donut Connection** and **Vocelli Pizza** on Route 8 for donating breakfast and lunch for our volunteers; and **St. Paul's UMC** for sharing Fellowship Hall with us each year.

Pasta Dinner: More than 200 delicious meals were served at the 5th Annual Pasta Dinner, raising over \$3,500 to help our neighbors in need in Millvale and nearby communities. Thanks to the 32 volunteers who gave 186 hours for this event; **Pastor George Mendis, Liz Edwards, Frank's Backyard Jams** and **Toonbrian Caricatures** for adding their special touches; *new* food donors **Rice's Roadhouse, G. Willie's Uniform, DiPietro's, CC's Cafe** and **Richard Tain**; and **Ann Brooks, Gerry Tonti** and **Attorney Jack Ori** for their generous silent auction donations.

Mini-Masters: The tenth annual miniature golf tournament was a rousing success, with 84 golfers participating, rain AND shine. Special thanks to WPXI's **Vince Sims** for emceeing; **PNC Bank** and **S&T Bank** for their sponsorships; and **Althea** and **Oscar Worthy, Paul Cusick, Susan Edwards, Elaine Hatfield, Carol Wiener, Jo Stone** and **Ed Dietz** for their outstanding contributions. The event netted about \$10,100 for our North Boroughs services.

Pittsburgh Marathon: Thanks to our half-marathon runners: **Melissa Bolte, Paul Easler, J.J. Hensley, Edward Hogan, Elizabeth Pagel-Hogan** and **Dave Rishel**, and relay runner **Rick McClure** and his team. Together our runners raised almost \$5,300. Thanks to **Brian Shields** and **Meghan King** and her Girl Scout troop for giving out water bottles to the runners.

Dessert Theatre Coming Up: On June 15-16, The St. Paul's Players will present Joe DiPietro's comedy *Over the River and Through the Woods* for NHCO's Dessert Theatre benefit. Tickets are \$22 and include a delightful evening of entertainment, fellowship, delicious desserts and a silent auction. Thanks to **Huntington Bank** for their sponsorship. A synopsis and order form is available at www.nhco.org. You can also contact Cheryl at 412-487-6316, option 1, x3111, or clenglish@nhco.org.

Please visit www.nhco.org/fundraisers for additional special events, such as a car cruise on July 31, restaurant benefits at **Grazie** and **Monte Cello's**, and the **Elan Financial Golf Tournament** on August 13, benefitting Community Auto.



Teenagers **Will Rosenberger, Dan Cohan, T.J. Chess** and **Daniel Robinson** carry fruit to supporters' cars during the Citrus Sale.



Volunteers **Jan Harrison** and **Carrie Gibbs** serve up salads at the fifth annual NHCO Millvale Pasta Dinner.



Photo credit: Ed Becker

The winning foursome from **PNC Bank** (and perhaps the best dressed mini-golfers we've ever seen!): **Helen Aluise, Julie Campbell, Joanne Phelleps** (winner of the coveted green mini-jacket, even with an injured hand!) and **Daniela Campana-Knight**.

Good Neighbors Indeed

As part of **United Way of Allegheny County's** *Open Your Heart to a Senior* initiative, together with **Family Services of Western PA**, NHCO participated in the Fred Rogers Good Neighbor Day on March 18-19.

Twenty-three caring volunteers visited with local seniors in their homes and/or performed home safety checks. Thanks especially to employees of **Macy's** at Ross Park Mall and **Target** for their involvement. Senior citizens who were visited and those who ride our Free Rides for Seniors shuttle were treated to **Eat'n Park** Smiley cookies.

New partners have joined *Open Your Heart to a Senior* to ensure that every vulnerable senior in Allegheny County who needs a trained and caring volunteer has one. We are pleased to welcome **Agewell Pittsburgh, Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Services, Center for Healthy Hearts and Souls**, and **Lutheran Services Society**. To help a senior citizen in your community, please call 412-307-0071 or visit www.openyourhearttoasenior.org.

Open Your to a Senior



Stella, 90-years-old and a resident at the Sharpsburg Towers, is visited by *Open Your Heart to a Senior* volunteer and Macy's employee **Sandra Rishor**.

Cars Needed as Waiting List Grows

Since formally merging with Community Auto 18 months ago, we have definitely seen the benefits of combining our efforts.

Car donations have increased (91 cars from July through December 2010), and the number of vehicles being sold to low-income families has also grown (more than one per week).

We now have well over 50 people on the waiting list to purchase a vehicle. If you have an unwanted vehicle, we need it! Donate it to us and you'll get the maximum tax deduction possible (on top of the knowledge that you are directly helping a person in need get to work and provide for his or her family).

Cars are sold below market value with a number of great perks such as a one-year AAA membership, a 6-month warranty, a full tank of gas and car seats for all children who need them. Call 724-443-8300 or visit www.communityauto.org for donation information.

Our Community Auto program was one of ten organizations (out of about 90 applicants) selected to participate in **Pittsburgh Social Venture Partnership's** Fast Pitch event. Our program manager, Jennifer Carr, received hands-on mentoring on developing the best marketing "pitch," which she delivered to an audience of 300 community leaders and grantmakers. She took second place and won a \$7,500 grant for the program!



"Paula" from Wilkinsburg is self-employed and needs a car to travel to her clients' homes.



Mom and Dad worked hard to save money to purchase this 1999 Buick Park Avenue for their family of nearly five.



The parents in this Peruvian refugee family struggle with English; their 13-year-old son translated so we could complete the sale.

NORTH HILLS COMMUNITY OUTREACH

1975 Ferguson Road
Allison Park, PA 15101-3235

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

Yes, I Want to Help!

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone (in case of questions) _____

Gift Amount/Payment Method

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

Check enclosed.

MC/VISA # _____

Expires _____ 3-digit security code _____

Signature _____

You can also make a secure donation at www.nhco.org.



Optional

- Save postage! Please don't send a thank you letter.
- My employer will match this gift; my form is enclosed.
- I wish to remain anonymous.
- Please contact me about volunteering.
- Please contact me about including NHCO in my will.
- This is a commemorative gift:
 - in honor of in memory of in thanksgiving for

Please notify about my commemorative gift:

Name _____

Address _____

OR email _____

NHCO is an IRS-approved 501(c)3 organization.

Your donation qualifies as a charitable deduction.

Please mail to:

NHCO, 1975 Ferguson Road, Allison Park, PA 15101

S11NEWS

Interns Serve and Learn at NHCO

Nine interns completed their field placements at NHCO this academic year. Together, they "volunteered" 3,880 hours of their time and talent at our three main service sites in Hampton, Millvale and North Boroughs.

Thanks and congratulations to **Jessie Foreman, Isabella Aiviolitis, Tom Pegg, Derek Sell** and **Lisa Downey** (all BASW students at University of Pittsburgh's School of Social Work); **Jamie Murphy** (BASW student at Slippery Rock); and **Rachel Peck, Megan Leisher** and **Erin Miner** (MSW students at Pitt).

If you or someone you know is looking for a fulfilling college internship next year, please contact Nancy Jones at 412-307-0069 or nljones@nhco.org.



Interns **Tom Pegg** and **Megan Leisher** work together to help people in poverty, hardship and crisis.

Wish List Priority Items

Thanks to everyone who visits our wish list online and donates items needed. A special kudos to **Pat Hartman** who regularly peruses our wish list and generously purchases a large amount of our requested items in one fell swoop.

Right now, we could really use a sturdy lidded garbage can for our Millvale Satellite, floor and desk fans, used vehicles for Community Auto, toilet paper and paper towels.

For a complete up-to-the-minute list, please visit www.nhco.org/wishlist. To donate, contact Cheryl English at 412-487-6316, option 1, x3111, or clenglish@nhco.org.