



New Milford Social Services

"To Listen, To Advocate, To Empower"



March 2016

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New Milford Social Services

Greetings from Peg Molina:

Wasn't it Elton John who sang "The change is gonna do me good!" in one of his songs? (sorry, I'm dating myself but at least he's still alive and singing!) We have made some recent changes here at Social Services, and we hope you like them.

As many people know, our Food Bank is now a "choice" pantry, meaning that instead of our deciding what will be available due to what we have on the shelves, Ivana takes a weekly inventory of current stock, creates a list and lets all participants choose what they need or want. We hope and believe this is a more user-friendly system. This month, our social work intern, Sayyid, will be asking people to complete a brief survey about how recent changes have worked for them. If he asks you, please help us out by completing his survey!

Another change for us is the format of this newsletter. We felt it was time to liven things up and re-organize material. You will see a quick synopsis of where to find things and key areas of interest running down the left side. We'll have a tip for you—financial or other, on the right. On subsequent pages, information is grouped by topic. Note that our wonderful Family First program occurs in May; now is the time to register if you are a parent with school-age children and haven't attended before. Next month, look for lots of info on summer camps and activities! The back holds details and inspiration from the Food Bank.

We all face change in our lives too~ some is exciting and good, while other things may be dreaded. There are two things that I feel help: change that we initiate is often more acceptable and positive than change that feels forced upon us. So reflect on this: if there's something that you feel needs changing in your life—the way you spend your time, the way you eat, your finances, your family life—take one or two steps in the right direction *yourself!* Don't wait to get fired, or sick, or estranged from someone and have change that is forced upon you. No need to go for a complete make-over; that's hard to accomplish and feels overwhelming. But take a step, then take one more step, and so on. You'll get results!

Second, when change comes into our lives (however it occurs), our attitude makes ALL the difference. Trying to be adaptable and looking for the good in your situation will point the way toward this change being a good, or at least bearable one. Change is a part of life—we all know that—please also feel the power of attitude that you have. You can embrace or accept the change, or resist and fight it. The choice about how to view and handle it is yours, and the road you take truly does make ALL the difference!

Peg

Issue 3.2016



The mission of New Milford Social Services is to help residents meet basic needs of food, housing, clothing maintenance of health and wellbeing, and to help provide various seasonal goods and programs for residents experiencing financial hardship.



Financial Tip of the Month:

Did you get a tax refund or small "nest egg" this year? (rent rebate, gift from family, legal settlement, etc.)

The TWO best things you can do with this money:

1. **Pay down debt:** credit cards with highest interest rates first, personal debt, anything that lowers your credit rating. Pay it down!
2. **Build your emergency fund:** build up a stash of funds that would cover your fixed expenses for three months (rent, car related, utilities, food) and **KEEP IT, hands off!**

Do these two things before considering any new purchases and you'll be making the BEST investment with your money and your future!

PROGRAM UPDATES:



ENERGY ASSISTANCE: MARCH 16TH IS THE LAST DAY FOR A FUEL DELIVERY. CALL THE CAA FOR A FINAL DELIVERY!

Social Services is taking applications for the CT Energy Assistance Program for all forms of heat now. **Approved deliverable fuel participants may call the CAAWC to ask for a delivery any time there is under ¼ tank of fuel by calling 203-744-4700 x122. If you are told that your benefits are exhausted, contact our office to see if other programs are available!**

All **electric heated households** who completed the Matching Payment program last year were automatically re-enrolled onto Eversource’s MPP. **Remember that you need to re-apply for Energy Assistance through our office every year to remain on MPP!** All budget payments need to be in by the end of each month, and *all* required payments must be received by April 30th in order to get a “match.”

If your household income is below the following amounts, you may qualify for energy assistance:

<u>Family size:</u>					
1	2	3	4	5	6
32,514.	42,519.	52,523.	62,528.	75,532.	82,536

If you receive an Energy Assistance DENIAL letter: After you meet with a New Milford Social Services social worker for an initial appointment, CAAWC reviews all applications for approval or denial. *If they need any information from you*, CAAWC sends a letter stating that the application has been denied. However, it also states exactly what is needed to complete the application. Do not give up! In almost all cases, these denials are overturned by providing the requested info **within the specified time**. Please call us if you are confused or need help. Paperwork can be delivered to CAAWC via our office. Keep original documents; copies for the application can be made here.



IT’S BACK! YOGA FOR ALL: *When we say “all” we mean it!* You don’t

have to be physically fit or have a certain body type. Yoga is a wonderful activity to quiet your mind and benefit your body. Many adaptations can be made if you have physical limitations! Join us from now through April 6th on Wednesdays, 5:00 – 6:00 p.m., at the Richmond Center with Faith Ficcaro. Clients are asked to pay \$1 per class; Town employees may participate, paying \$5.00 per class. Call Social Services today!! 

FAMILY FIRST! SPRING WEEKEND: May 20 -22, 2016

YMCA Camp Jewell, Colebrook, CT

One great way to take time out for your whole family is by attending a Family First Weekend with us at Camp Jewell. The May “Family First” is for families that have not yet attended this weekend experience. It is a wonderful opportunity to take your 4 – 15 year old kids away for a weekend that combines lots of fun, group adult time and learning. Facilitated by our staff and great volunteer professionals, adult workshops are focused on handling stress, parenting and living on a “financial shoestring”. While adults are in workshops, kids are enjoying a full range of camp activities, supervised by their capable staff. By mid-Saturday the focus for all is play and enjoyment of activities not readily available in New Milford. Take a chance on something new and join us! You will be rewarded with a great weekend away to gain a new perspective and return refreshed. Families stay in heated, well-equipped cabin areas; all meals provided. \$20 per family plus a small surcharge for horseback riding covers all costs. Transportation by bus is included. Call the office for more information or to register.

(Forms are also available online at www.newmilford.org, click Departments, then Social Services)



GRANDPARENTS AND OTHER RELATIVES RAISING CHILDREN:

The next meeting of New Milford’s “When You’re a Parent . . . Again” **info and support group** will be on **Monday, March 14th** from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at The Maxx, 94 Railroad St. in New Milford. Dinner and child care are included. Come for informal conversation and resources for those in this unique situation. Please RSVP to Leo Ghio at the Senior Center (860)-355-6075 or Amy Bondeson at Social Services, 860-355-6079 x4.



“SNAP” OUTREACH THIS MONTH: CT

Institute for Families SNAP (formerly Food Stamps) Outreach Worker, Sara Arroyo, will be here on **Wednesday, March 9th from 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.** to help people apply for SNAP online. To make an appointment with Sara (who is bi-lingual) and learn what to bring, please call our office. There are currently openings for March; call and learn what to bring to your appointment.

UPDATE: DSS Benefit Renewals can *NOW* be done **ONLINE!** DSS enrollees can go online to renew their benefits or report changes. You can even upload supporting verifications and documents. **Users create a MyAccount** (online benefits account) and access the process through www.connect.ct.gov .

NEW FOR TAX TIME! For all participants in any HUSKY program, you will receive a Form 1095B (people in an Access health plan will receive 1095A’s). This will have individualized information about your health coverage that is needed if you file income taxes. **DO NOT THROW THIS FORM AWAY!** DSS is also required to submit this information to the IRS.



PLEASE be wise and use a VITA site to file your taxes for Free this year Senior Center will have limited appointments for households under age 60 and three sites in Danbury offer day and evening appointments: Community Action Agency of Western CT, 203-744-4700; Western CT State University, 203-797-4500; and Danbury VITA, 203-826-9517. With electronic filing and depositing, you will not wait longer for a return through one of these agencies, and ALL of the money is yours! Call soon!!

COMMUNITY RESOURCES:



Family and Children

THE VILLAGE CENTER FOR THE ARTS: has been awarded a special grant for a program called “Family Art!” This is an opportunity to go to VCA and create a free-build sculpture *as a family*. Families can go once or repeatedly over a period of weeks. For more information and to be referred, contact a member of the Social Services Department.

NEW MILFORD YOUTH AGENCY NEWS:

Delay Your Gray: How to Keep Your Teenager and Yourself Sane ~ a free, fun and informative program for parents of tweens and teens will take place on Monday, March 21st, 6:30 – 8:30 pm at the Maxx, 94 Railroad St. Contact Lindsey Marr at lindsey@youthagency.org for more or to register.

Homework Club: Saturday mornings 9-11, start date TBD. If you have a 3-6 grade child who needs some tutoring/mentoring OR a high school student who wants to be a volunteer tutor, contact Jason@youthagency.org for more info.

Narcan Training: April 5th, 6 – 7pm at the Maxx. Open to all; free Narcan kits available. Training by Greater Danbury AIDS Project. RSVP to Lindsey.

Mental Health First Aid Training: two 4-hour training sessions to teach you how to help someone developing a mental health problem or experiencing a crisis. Saturday, April 2nd and Saturday, April 9th 10:00 am to 2:30 pm—you must attend both dates to receive certification; The Maxx. Register with Lindsey.

HELP FOR FAMILIES OF THOSE DEALING WITH ADDICTION:

Attend **the C.A.R.E.S. Group:** Weekly hope and support group for parents, relatives, caregivers, or loved ones of those affected by substance abuse or addiction. Meetings are located Thursdays, 7:00-9:00 PM at the First Congregational Church Parish House, 36 Main St. For more information, contact info@thecaresgroup.org or [1-855-406-0246](tel:1-855-406-0246)

CATHOLIC CHARITIES FAMILY LOAN PROGRAM: provides small, low interest loans to qualified families (*must be custodial parent of at least one child under the age of 18, employed for six+ months and have income to cover the monthly loan payment*) for security deposits, used cars, car repairs, child care and other work-related expenses. They provide credit and budget counseling to ensure repayment of the loan and help families build a positive credit history. For more info, please call Carolyn Silliman at 203-743-4412 x 242 or go to www.cffc-ct.org.

DANBURY VET CENTER: provides Readjustment Counseling for Veterans and their Families. The Vet Center provides group, individual, couple and family therapy (children 5yrs old and older), free of charge (must show DD214-discharge document) to veterans and active duty service members who present for care. Call to set up an appointment; [203-790-4000](tel:203-790-4000), or walk-in Mon-Fri 8am-4:30pm and a counselor will see you. You've served us, now let us serve you.



CT DSS assists low income families spay/neuter pets. Applications are at New Milford Social Services or www.ct.gov/dss/cwp/view.



Support Groups & Meetings



THE WOMEN'S CENTER OF GREATER DANBURY: offers a number of support groups including “Women Thriving” to help women focus on sustaining positive changes after leaving unhealthy relationships. Weekly groups are offered in their Danbury office. For more info call Karen at 203-731-5200 x 235.

GREENWOODS COUNSELING REFERRALS: If you would like to enter into counseling for a problem, life transition or other issue in your life, Greenwood is a great place to start. They offer a free clinical assessment (which can take place in New Milford) and then you will be provided with three local therapists qualified to help you. If you lack insurance, Greenwood can help cover the fees. If you have insurance, Greenwood will find a therapist who accepts your insurance. Start by calling them at 860-567-4437; you will be given a timely appointment!



Education

COMMUNITY CULINARY SCHOOL is currently registering for its **next session beginning April 25th, 2016**. If you or someone you know is out of work, not getting enough hours at work, or ready for a change, and enjoys cooking, this may be the perfect opportunity! Classes run Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. for twelve weeks. The program then assists you with finding a job in the food industry. Scholarships (up to 100%) available. Call Dawn Hammacott at 203-512-5791 for more information. Applications are available in our office or at www.communityculinaryschool.org.

TBICO: in Danbury, provides a range of employment-related services, business training, and financial education for individuals seeking to become economically stable and self-sufficient. TBICO provides training, ongoing support, and learning opportunities which help students achieve job readiness, personal and career growth, and ultimately independence. TBICO is unique in that it offers all of its services **free** of charge to low-income and/or disadvantaged adults. For more information contact TBICO at [203-743-6695](tel:203-743-6695) or go to www.tbicoworks.org.



State and Legal

ON-LINE LEGAL ASSISTANCE: CTLawHelp has created on-line classrooms to help people who cannot afford to hire an attorney for certain legal issues. Each on-line classroom will walk you through a legal process by breaking down the things you need to do into steps. Topics covered include: asking for special education services for your child, collecting unpaid wages, taking an employer to small claims court, and appealing an unemployment decision. Go to <http://ctlawhelp.org/classroom>. Videos explain workers' rights, applying for SSDI, your rights to Family Medical Leave, getting divorced, rules about disciplining special education students and more. Go to <http://www.youtube.com/ctlawhelp>

FOOD BANK HOURS:



S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Every **THURSDAY** from 9am-4pm.

Please bring in your own reusable bags!!

*The food bank will **CLOSE** if the weather is bad and local*

schools are closed. Please listen to local news stations for closings.

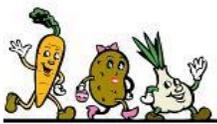


NEW MILFORD FOOD BANK RECIPE OF THE MONTH:

March is National Nutrition Month. Be mindful of what you're eating and how you're moving!

Take on a Challenge this Month!

- Pick a favorite recipe and change one ingredient to a more healthy choice, like hamburgers made of turkey, add an ingredient like diced carrots or spinach to your favorite meatloaf or meatball recipe, or add spinach to mac & cheese.
- Choose healthy snacks such as nuts, whole wheat crackers and low fat cheese, or low fat yogurt fruit smoothies (try adding a bit of kale or beet juice).
- Try moving more. Get out and stretch and take a nature walk. Remember good nutrition is not just about what you eat but about how much you exercise. Just parking farther away and taking a few more steps can make a difference!
- Reduce stress with a warm bath, good book, or deep breathing exercises.



Baked Mac and Cheese



- 3 tablespoons plain dry breadcrumbs
- 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika
- 1 16-ounce or 10-ounce package frozen spinach, thawed
- 1 3/4 cups low-fat milk, divided
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 cups shredded extra-sharp Cheddar cheese
- 1 cup low-fat cottage cheese
- 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 8 ounces (2 cups) whole-wheat elbow macaroni, or penne

Directions:

1. Put a large pot of water on to boil. Preheat oven to 450°F. Coat an 8-inch-square (2-quart) baking dish with cooking spray.
2. Mix breadcrumbs, oil and paprika in a small bowl. Place spinach in a fine-mesh strainer and press out excess moisture.
3. Heat 1 1/2 cups milk in a large heavy saucepan over medium-high heat until steaming. Whisk remaining 1/4 cup milk & flour in a small bowl until smooth; add to the hot milk & cook, whisking constantly, until the sauce simmers & thickens, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in Cheddar until melted. Stir in cottage cheese, nutmeg, salt & pepper.
4. Cook pasta for 4 minutes, or until not quite tender. (It will continue to cook during baking.) Drain and add to the cheese sauce; mix well. Spread half the pasta mixture in the prepared baking dish. Spoon the spinach on top. Top with the remaining pasta; sprinkle with the breadcrumb mixture.
5. Bake the casserole until bubbly and golden, 25 to 30 minutes. (courtesy of eatingwell.com)

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