

New Milford Social Services

"To Listen, To Advocate, To Empower"



February 2018

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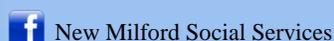
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Greetings from Peg Molina: Everyday Miracles

February. Still cold. No holidays to get overly excited about (sorry George and Abe!). Winter hangs on, starts to feel long. While mercifully short, this month can seem a challenge.

So—this is one of those times where attitude makes a crucial difference. If we dwell on the negative, how does that make us feel? Kinda crappy, right? How about taking the opportunity in this month when day light grows to actively notice the everyday miracles that dot our lives?

Here are some examples: instead of groaning and worrying the next time it snows, take ten minutes to sit beside a window and just watch it. Look at how it illuminates every branch on the trees. Watch for outside creatures. Enjoy the stillness. It gives me a little mental health break just conjuring up the images as I write! When it's not a snowy day, bird-watching is another wonderful experience: they have a lot to teach us about survival and toughing out the bad times! Last weekend, I had the great fortune to watch a full grown bald eagle soar along the Shepaug River, not once but three times. They are nesting locally and quite active along the Housatonic and Shepaug Rivers so a walk may reward you as well.

I continue to run in the winter and often try to get an exchange with local kids waiting at the bus stop. Typically heads are down, attention on their phones but once in a while, I'm in luck. Recently, I got a "good morning" reply with eye contact from a teenage fellow. An everyday miracle, for sure!

I'm reading a book that takes place in the early 1800's; talk about life being hard! That book, our recent cold snap and participating in the annual homeless count have really made me appreciative of the warmth we enjoy during these winter months. We are so lucky to enjoy the basic comfort of heat. I am always reminded of how fortunate we are to have a furnace that works and a cozy home at this time of year. I truly hope that you have this too!

Take some time this month to attend to what is good! If you look, it won't be long before you can recount some everyday miracles too. Share them! Let's **not** fulfill the quote below:

"Plenty of people miss their share of happiness not because they never found it, but because they didn't stop to enjoy it."

So, try to enjoy these wintry weeks, some chocolate on Valentine's Day and I'll catch back up with you in March!

~Peg



DO YOU KNOW? . . . that Operation Fuel has increased its income eligibility guidelines?

Operation Fuel provides one-time emergency assistance for deliverable fuel or electric bills. This state-wide program has made it possible for people with higher incomes to receive help. For example, a household of four with before tax (gross) income up to \$81,444 is eligible for up to \$500 in assistance. This could be in the form of oil or other deliverable fuel, or go toward the electric bill.

As a partner agency we help all NM households under age 60 to apply. The process is quick and easy! Call Monika for an appointment, and please spread the word to local family and friends!

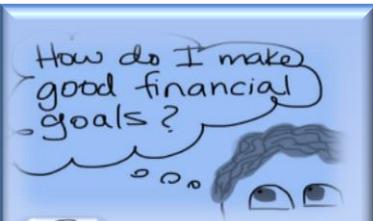
DO YOU KNOW? . . . that every Monday in February from 10am – noon you can get **free "tech help" at the library?** Yes, bring your device and your questions and drop by for help from their digital expert. You can sit with a real, live person and get some answers!

Issue 2.2018



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: Be

a part of "America Saves Week"! Feb.26 – March 3 (with help from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and America Saves)

Saving money, improving your financial life, building wealth. It all starts when you set a goal and make a plan to reach that goal. **So what is your goal?**

America Saves Week's timing couldn't be better—America Saves Week 2018 takes place during tax season, when 75 percent of tax filers receive a refund. During this time, there are several steps you can take to follow through on your savings goal.

1. Go to the America Saves Website:

<https://americasaves.org/for-savers/pledge> (we love their motto: "start small, think big") and make a savings pledge. People who set a goal are more likely to save successfully. Sharing your intention also helps you achieve your goal.

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...Continued Page 2.

PROGRAM UPDATES:



ENERGY ASSISTANCE: Social Services is taking applications for all forms of heat. Fuel deliveries can be covered if approved before March 15th. Many households make their fuel last well into the fall by getting a final fill in mid-March. Call CAAWC to see if you are eligible for additional deliveries and if you are not, call us!

All **electric heated households** who completed the Matching Payment program last year have been automatically re-enrolled onto Eversource's MPP. **Remember that you still need to re-apply for Energy Assistance through our office every year!** All payments should be in by the end of each month, or *all* required payments must be received by April 30th in order to get a "match". If Eversource has raised your budget, pay the new amount if you can. If you cannot, pay the old amount and be sure to discuss this with us at the time of your application. Income guidelines are listed below:

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

Family size:

1	2	3	4	5	6
\$34,366	\$44,940	\$55,514	\$66,089	\$76,663	\$87,237

Visit our department on the www.newmilford.org website, or come to the office for the list of documents needed to apply. All applicants are asked to bring a current electric bill.

Please have ALL paperwork at the time of your appointment. This includes pay stubs even if your employer has gone "paperless". They can help you to get these. Likewise with Direct Express cards and bank statements: you can print full statements online as they must have both your name and your bank's name. You cannot be approved without all needed documents!

A BARBER POLE AT SOCIAL SERVICES!

New Milford resident and long-time barber, Leslie Roy, is giving back to her community by offering her services **HERE** on the **3rd Thursday of each month, 12:30 – 4:30 pm!** Starting with Feb. 15th Social Services clients can get a **FREE** haircut by calling ahead to sign up. Leslie specializes in cuts for men, children, and women with short hair, or can do a simple length trim for those with long hair. Call Monika to make arrangements.

Support Group!



GRANDPARENTS & OTHER RELATIVES RAISING CHILDREN:

The next meeting of **New Milford's "When You're a Parent . . . Again" info and support group** will be on **Thursday, February 8th** @ 5:30p.m. to 7:00p.m. at John Pettibone Community Center. Dinner and child care are included. Come for informal conversation and resources for those in this unique situation. RSVP to Sarah Geary at Social Services, 860-355-6079 x4.



Winter Coats & Boots for Children: We have a limited supply of kid's coats and boots available in the office to give away. If your child is in need, please call us with their sex and coat or shoe size and we'll see if we can make a match!



FREE TAX FILING SITES:

VITA sites in our area: The *NM Public Library* has had VITA staff every Friday, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. 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 (also scheduling NMPL appts). 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!**



Attention HART Riders!

Remember to request a stop at JPCC when traveling Southbound to Social Services. The driver will stop at the front entrance.



Financial Tip continued: ... continued from page 1

Others can provide support and help hold you accountable to your goal.

America Saves Week!

Feb. 26-Mar. 3

2. Decide how much you want to save. Be realistic. You can save automatically by depositing some of your tax refund into a savings account, or through an automated deposit of a portion of your paycheck into a savings account. Saving on a recurring basis and when you receive "extra" income, such as at tax time, is a win-win! If you plan to save at tax time, make sure you have your savings account number and routing number available when you file your return so you can have some of your refund sent directly to that account. The IRS has a form that you'll fill out that allows you to deposit portions of your refund into up to three different accounts. Then, make a plan to automatically save, even a very small amount, every time you are paid.

3. Maintain your motivation and take the "long view" rather than living from crisis to crisis. It's best to save first for an emergency fund. This way, if you need a car repair or something else unexpected, you have the money set aside and can continue with your savings goal. Then take opportunities to help yourself: you can sign up for savings text messages from America Saves. Their text messages will come in the form of tips to help you find money to save and reminders to save for your specific goal. Ask us for helpful hand-outs or booklets on reducing debt, saving check lists or other financial topics, or a bit of one-on-one helping time. **Most of all, don't give up and believe in your ability to do it!!** For more info on this and **many** topics visit: <https://www.consumerfinance.gov>

...If you missed any of our previous financial tips, link in to social services/financial fitness found on our town's website at www.newmilford.org.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

Family and Children



CT CHILDREN'S LAW LINE: The [CT Children's Law Line](#) helps callers understand the legal processes involving children, including custody, visitation, guardianship, abuse, and neglect. The Law Line can also refer callers to other agencies for help. You can call this free service as many times as you need. **Where:** 1-888-LAW-DOOR (529-3667)



NEW MILFORD YOUTH AGENCY NEWS:



Valentine's Day Dance: for families of kids with special needs, this event is on Sunday, Feb. 11th from 2 – 4pm at the Maxx. For more info or to register, contact Debra@youthagency.org or call 860-210-2030.

Homework club is running every week at JPCC. NMHS mentors will work with your child on math, reading, studying, organizing, and more! Both work and play on Saturday mornings. The program is open to area 3rd-7th graders. FREE. For more information, please call the Youth Agency at 860-210-2030 or email Jason at Jason@youthagency.org.



EXCEL PROGRAM: The EXCEL program is an inclusive preschool that provides services for children with special needs and their typical peers together within one setting. Applications are being accepted until March 1st for children interested in a "community friend" slot. Go to the New Milford Public Schools website, <http://www.newmilfordps.org> or contact the Board of Ed offices at 860-354-2654 for more details and an application.



HEAD START: is accepting applicants for the 2018-19 school year now. Families interested in this pre-school program for their 3 or 4 year olds should contact Maria DeOliveira at 860-403-4648.



SPECIAL MOVIE AT BANK ST.: On 2/26, 7pm, the YA, NM

Substance Abuse Prevention Council and Bank St. Theater are sponsoring a **free** viewing of "Angst" ~ **Raising Awareness Around Anxiety**. Candid interviews with youth, young adults who suffer and mental health experts bring this widespread condition to light. For more info: debra@youthagency.org



More Resources!!!



AMERICAN JOB CENTER: New Milford Adult Ed will be hosting staff from this agency on the last Wednesday of each month from 4 – 6:30 pm. **Any NM resident is welcome** to meet with a job counselor for guidance on finding jobs, how to revise your resume and more. Contact Adult Ed at 860-350-6647 x1170.

THE NEW MILFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY: has a variety of awesome offerings if you are looking for entertainment (like free movies twice each month, like "Wonder" on 2/22), a creative outlet (like "Chocolate and Coloring on 2/14, or Operation Gratitude for knitters to help our armed services people); companionship through a range of clubs (game playing, cookbook, etc.) or help with all this blasted technology (various workshops or one-on-one assist). The library is SO much more than a place for books, and the price is right—check it out!!

AMAZON PRIME, MORE AFFORDABLE: Amazon Prime is making its membership available to anyone receiving government benefits on an EBT card (i.e. SNAP or Cash Assistance) for approximately half price, or \$5.99 per month. People with Amazon Prime get free shipping on Amazon orders, free book and movie downloads and a number of other benefits. Amazon also accepts SNAP for online grocery orders. Contact Amazon directly for details.

HOUSING ASSISTANCE FOR PUERTO RICAN EVACUEES: In the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, evacuees from Puerto Rico that came to CT. Most of these evacuees are staying temporarily with family and friends. However, those housing arrangements may be untenable over time, leaving evacuees in need of shelter. To respond to this need, FEMA has made available "Temporary Shelter Assistance," (TSA) for evacuees through March 20, 2018, to fund hoteling of evacuees who may have no housing options. Evacuee households facing a housing crisis should call 211 to be referred for help.

Counseling Resources



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 a list of 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 yours. Start by calling them at 860-567-4437; you'll be given a timely appointment!

THE WOMEN'S CENTER OF

GREATER DANBURY: offers free, confidential counseling and 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 203-731-5200.

NEW MILFORD HOSPITAL

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH:

Located at 23 Poplar St., NMHBH provides mental health services for adults, including psychiatric assessment, med. management, individual and group therapy. Groups offered focus on women's support, anxiety and depression, pain management and DBT (dialectical behavioral therapy). Those interested need to have an assessment prior to joining a group. Call 860-210-5350 for more information or for an appointment.

FAMILY & CHILDREN'S AID:

NM office offers many services for parents & children: groups, counseling, home visits & more; free or insurance-based. For info or an appointment call 860-354-8556.

INTERFACE is a private practice located in the annex of the First Congregational Church. Experienced staff with many sub-specialties. Call 860-354-5116.

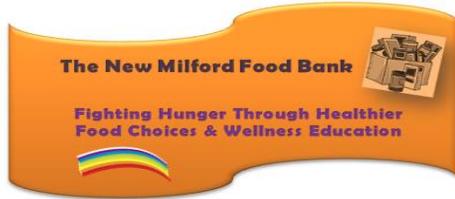
In addition there are other private practitioners who accept HUSKY and Medicare, like our former SW **Amy Bondeson** (860-799-1631—HUSKY only).

You can always call one of our social workers to discuss these options.



FOOD BANK:

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



February 2018						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				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			

[This is a residency-income eligible program: pre-registration required]

Please bring in your own reusable bags!!

SPECIAL NOTE:
FOOD BANK CLOSES IN SEVERE WEATHER



RECIPES OF THE MONTH: February is "Heart Health" month!

Tuna Fish Tacos

Makes: 4 Servings

Ingredients

- 1 can (15 oz) **tuna**, packed in water, drained and flaked
- 8 whole wheat tortillas**
- 1 cup green or red **cabbage**, finely shredded
- ¾ cup **Monterey Jack cheese**, shredded
- 1½ cup of your favorite **salsa** OR the salsa recipe below

Salsa Recipe (Optional)

- 1 can (15 oz) **peach slices**, drained and chopped
- 1 can (4.25 oz) **green chillies**, drained and finely chopped
- ¼ cup **red onion**, finely chopped
- 1 Tbs **fresh parsley**, chopped
- 1 Tbs **lime juice**
- ¼ tsp **Tabasco pepper sauce**



Instructions

1. If making the homemade salsa, combine all salsa ingredients in a medium bowl and refrigerate until serving.
2. Fill tortillas with flaked tun and top with the shredded cabbage, cheese and salsa of your choice

Red Monster Smoothie

Yield : 2 servings

Ingredients

- 1 cup **kale or spinach**
- 1½ cup **frozen mixed berries**
- 1 **banana**, medium
- 1 cup **pineapple** (could use canned or frozen)
- ½ cup **carrots**
- 1 cup of **ice**
- 1 cup **water**

Instructions

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender. Blend until smooth.
2. Divide shake between 2 glasses and serve immediately.



Nutrition Information
Serving Size: 2 cups

Calories: 207
Total Fat: 1g
Saturated Fat: 0g
Protein: 4g
Sodium: 20mg
Carbohydrates: 51g
Added Sugar: 0g
Fiber: 8g



USDA is an equal opportunity provider. This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

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MOBILE FOOD PANTRY:

WEDNESDAY, Feb 7 and Mar 7; 5:30pm-6:30pm at the parking lot of Faith Church

Our office will be closed on Monday, February 19th in observance of President's Day

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