



New Milford Social Services



"To Listen, To Advocate, To Empower"

May 2019

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Greetings from Social Services:

What's the plan? This is a question I've been asking myself lately, mainly because I recently calculated it is about eight weeks before school is out and I, like so many parents, are faced with family planning for the summer. But why plan? What can that accomplish? Well for starters, I want to be prepared for those "expected" life situations. Having an idea of what to expect is essential when you are trying to succeed at something. Students study for tests, property owners save for taxes, parents plan for a summer of no school. These situations occur constantly and yearly. We know they are coming! Sometimes we plan for the "unexpected". We save for emergencies like stocking up on food before a storm "just in case" we lose power. At Social Services we see planning happening all the time by those who come in for services. We see families applying for energy assistance to plan for a New England winter that can be icy, snowy, and/or just too darn cold. Folks come to the food bank each week to help stock their home pantries. This kind of planning helps fulfill a basic need and doesn't take funds away from other essential needs like paying the mortgage, rent or essential utility bill. Sometimes it just frees up a few extra dollars to ensure there is enough gas in the car to get to work. We see disabled folks who are renters stop in to apply for Renter's Rebate. This is a program most look forward to because trying to save on a fixed modest income is difficult when expenses such as gas, food, and sometimes even rent can go up but one's income doesn't adjust. This becomes part of their saving plan for those unexpected emergencies. We see many parents seeking scholarships so their child can join an enrichment program or a camp such as those at Parks and Rec. They try to do this on an already stretched budget. This is part of their plan to take care of their family and help their child enhance a skill, socialize with their friends, or just have some fun!

So why is planning on my mind? Sometimes we rely on others to help fulfill our plans. Maybe it's having a relative care for our children while we are at work, maybe its expecting the same trusted mechanic to still be working a year later when you need your car checked out again, or maybe it's a program you rely on each year to help you stretch your budget by offering some kind of assistance. Planning ahead is essential towards trying to succeed at accomplishing a goal. Every year, we see over 300 households for energy assistance, but as the program ends, we still see a few come in looking for something that is no longer available. We do our best to find alternative options to help them but the better option could have worked if there was just a bit more forethought, a bit more planning. Sometimes we rely on things not to change. I expect the cost of the camp I will send my child to remain the same but that may not be the case. The earlier I find out, the more time I have to try to plan to save more or think of something else. Things do not always remain unchanged. But finding time to plan can help prevent a situation from becoming a crisis. Reach out when you're planning. Talk to others, ask questions, and gather information. If you are in need, talk with us. Our programs are not immune to changes. Every year we tend to discover a policy or application requirement that has changed. Our energy assistance applicants see this every year. Most changes are intended to increase the quality and efficiency of a program. We encourage folks to call in, check on deadlines, and see if program policies or application requirements have remained the same or have changed. Each month through our newsletter we try to help folks plan ahead by sharing what has changed or remained the same for programs we work with. Life happens while we are busy making plans but a bit of planning can help make a better life.

Please read further in this newsletter for updates and open enrollment for the Back the School Program and Renter's Rebate.

~Ivana

Issue 5-2019



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:

The Sensible Shopper:

After reading *84 Insanely Easy Ways to Save Money on Groceries* by Urban Tastebud, the tips on how to save at the grocery store are strategies that can be easily incorporated while you shop. Here are a few tips to consider. **Bring a calculator.** If you have a cellphone with a calculator, use that or bring one along with you. You can calculate as you shop. **Buy bagged produce.** Bagged items tend to be less expensive when than loose items. **Buy in bulk.** While buying in bulk can save money, be sensible with how much you are buying based on your household size. Consider shelf life of the product as well. **Check unit prices.** And yes, buying in bulk can save, but this tip will help you to make sure you are actually saving. If a family pack of 3 boxes of pasta was \$4, but an individual box costs \$1.10, you are paying an extra \$0.23 more per unit. **Check unit size and weight.** When comparing products be sure to check the individual unit size and weight to see which product offers the best price.

For more ways to save, stop in the office to read the article, or view the article at <https://urbantastebud.com/save-money-on-groceries/> To incorporate these strategies, try 1 or 2 a week. And maybe as you practice these tips, you may discover your own techniques.

PROGRAM UPDATES:



The “winter protection program” ends as of May 1st so if you are behind on your electric bill, be prepared to receive a shut-off notice. If this happens and you need help, please contact us ASAP. We can only effectively help **BEFORE** a shut-off work order is executed! Please don’t wait until it’s too late! If your heat is electric and you receive a shut off notice prior to May 15th there may be assistance through the State’s energy assistance program, however, the regular season for energy assistance is over.



Back to School Program: Important Infor for Parents!

It is once again time to prepare to register for the Back to School Program and as it was last year; **registration will begin and end early.** As with other programs, there are years where limitations arise beyond our control. This program may bear witness to these limitations this year so please read carefully for the details of registering. Program registration through our office is prioritized for families **active** with New Milford Social Services. An active household is one that participated in this year’s energy (heating) assistance program, has frequented the food bank at least 4 times within the last 6 months, or has registered their children for a Parks and Rec scholarship within the last year. If a household does not think they fit this description, they may schedule time with one of our social workers to discuss their situation. The Back to School program, sponsored by the United Way of Western CT, is for children entering K-12 grade in New Milford Public Schools for the **primary resident parent** in the case of joint custody. Proof of New Milford residency and income verification is required. This includes wages, alimony and child support, Social Security, Unemployment, TFA, etc. Teenagers with regular part-time or summer jobs are not eligible unless approved by one of our Social Workers. Pre-school and college age kids are not eligible. Participants will receive a bookbag, school supplies and a gift card towards clothing. **Registration opens on May 8th and ends on June 20th, 2019.** Distribution will be on Friday, August 16th, enabling you to take advantage of CT’s anticipated tax-free clothes shopping week 8/18-8/24.



SUMMER=KIDS + CAMPS: YES!



Camp CONNRI is a great camp for families with **children ages 8 – 12.** The camp lasts 5 days, a perfect introduction to “sleep-away” camp. Run by the Salvation Army and located in Ashford, CT, it offers a full range of activities such as swimming, boating, archery, team sports, arts and crafts, and nature studies. This is a Christian-based camp, but children of all religious backgrounds are welcome. **The cost is \$35!** **NM Social Services will be sending a group to camp for Session 6: Mon., August 5th to Fri., August 9th.** Social Services Office Coordinator, Monika, is handling registration and has applications. Transportation will be provided. Openings are available first come, first serve. Children must have had a physical within a year of August 5th.

New Milford Rec-On Summer Camp takes place **Monday July 1st- Wednesday, August 7th (at Noon),** offering plenty of activities for kids *entering grades 1-9.* **Social Services handles all scholarships for this Parks and Rec program,** based on income eligibility. Camp registration begins Tuesday, May 1st and registrants **must create an online account** at www.newmilfordrec.com prior to registering. (You can do so at the Parks and Rec office if you do not have internet access). In order to receive a scholarship contact Social Services **before** registering your child for camp. Scholarships go toward the cost of camp, not for special field trip costs. Payment of the parent’s portion must be made by June 21 (by Noon).

Information on other local camps is in our “Family/Children” section on page 3.



RENTER’S REBATE:

Applications will be taken now until October 1st. **This is a program for CT renters who are elderly or totally disabled (meeting the Social Security definition and over age 18) and who are income eligible.** If you qualify, the program will send you a rebate check. The amount of the rebate ranges from \$150 to \$900 and is based on your income and certain household expenses that you paid in 2018. To qualify you must have lived in a CT rental unit for at least 1 year. The maximum income is \$36,000 for one person or \$43,900 for couples. Applications for persons under age 60 will be taken at our office. Bring **proof** of rent and utilities (electric, gas, oil, water) paid in 2018 and proof of total income for 2018. Documentation of SS can be form SSA-1099, a TPQY form, or a copy of a 2018 Social Security check. Please call for an appointment once you have all needed documentation.



“When You’re a Parent...Again”

An information and support group for **GRANDPARENTS & OTHER RELATIVES RAISING CHILDREN:** This month’s meeting is on Thursday, May 9th at the John Pettibone Community Center @ 5:30pm until 7:00pm. Dinner and child care are included. Come for informal conversation and resources for those in this unique situation. **New families are always welcomed.** Please RSVP to social worker, Sarah Geary at Social Services, 860-355-6079 x3.



Supporting Wellness at Pantries (SWAP): This program helps promote healthy choices at food banks and food pantries by ranking and categorizing the foods offered. This program is important because many families that visit food pantries are more likely to have chronic diseases like high blood pressure and type II diabetes. These diseases can be prevented and managed by the food choices we make. The SWAP program will help individuals make healthier food choices when selecting items at food pantries. Implementing the SWAP program not only helps people make healthier choices but also may influence the types of foods donated. The SWAP program ranks food based upon the nutrition food label looking at saturated (unhealthy) fat, sodium (salt) and sugar. Excessive amounts of these nutrients increase the risk of developing chronic diseases. Foods are categorized based on a stoplight nutrition ranking system (green, yellow or red). “Green” foods are food to choose more often as they are lower in unhealthy fats, salt and sugar. “Yellow” foods are food to choose sometimes as they have medium levels of unhealthy fat, salt and sugar. “Red” foods are foods to choose rarely because they have high levels of unhealthy fat, salt and sugar. Educating individuals on how to choose healthier options at food pantries can positively impact their overall health and most importantly, quality of life. **The New Milford Food Bank recognizes the SWAP program as part of our mission to fight hunger through healthier food choices and wellness education.**

COMMUNITY RESOURCES:



Family and Children



NEW MILFORD YOUTH AGENCY NEWS: Nature Unplugged:

SUMMER ADVENTURE PROGRAM: for kids entering 6th-8th grade. \$80 for all 8 sessions. Promoting friendship, team building, kindness, and self-esteem through outdoor activities that include hiking trips, trail explorations, Club Getaway day of fun, Nomads outdoor adventure rope course, rock climb Fairfield, Ben's Bells kindness day, and lots of ice cream! : Tuesdays and Wednesdays, June-August. For more details, specific dates and to register visit myyouthagency.com. You can also contact Sara Wells at swells@newmilford.org (860)-210-2030 with any questions.

"More about other local CAMPS"



CAMP STEPPING STONES (formerly Camp Jonathan) is a unique day camp for children ages 6 to 12 who have suffered the loss of a significant loved one. It allows children to creatively explore their feelings about death, dying and bereavement in a safe environment. This one week summer camp, which is free of charge, is held at St. John's Episcopal Church, on Main St. in New Milford, **July 22nd-July 26th**. For more information and registration please call New Milford VNA Hospice at 860-354-2216.



OTHER CAMPS: ASAP! Summer day Camp (unplug, connect with nature & explore the arts!) for ages 4-17, July 29-Aug 9. Scholarships available. Call 860-868-0740; asap@asapct.org. **The Pratt Nature Center in New Milford** offers nature centered day camps throughout the summer; ages 3-high school. Scholarships available. Call 860-355-3137; www.prattcenter.org/summer-camp. **New Milford Village Center for the Arts** also runs art themed day camps throughout the summer. Scholarships available. Call 860-354-4318; www.villagecenterarts.org/camps.

Many other camps like **Greenknoll (Brookfield) YMCA Camp**, **Great Hollow Wilderness School in New Fairfield** also offer independent scholarships. Check with these organizations now as financial assistance is provided on a first-come first-serve basis.



MVP-SOS OFFERS SUPPORT FOR EXTRA-CURRICULAR

ACTIVITIES: This organization offers financial support to school-aged youth for a broad range of enriching activities (sports, arts and other classes, field trips, camps, etc.). To apply, complete their one page application (available at www.mvpsos.com or our office) and provide the first two pages of your most recent tax return.



The C.A.R.E.S. group provides education, support, resources, and hope for parents and others to get information and discuss a loved one's suspected or confirmed use of mind-altering substances. Their services are confidential and guided by credentialed addiction professionals. They meet in New Milford, Thursdays, 7:00pm-9:00pm at the First Congregational Church. For more information, please call 855-406-0246.



MCCA provides help and instill hope for individuals, families, and organizations working to overcome and prevent addictions. They have a clinic in New Milford with counselors trained to treat alcohol, drug, gambling and smoking addiction. Outpatient services include intensive outpatient, DUI/DWI, assessments, anger management, relapse prevention, gender specific groups, and mental health treatment. For more information, please call 860-355-7312 or mccaonline.com.

HOTLINE NUMBERS:

- *Suicide Prevention: 1- 800-273-TALK (8255)/ 1-800-784-2433
- *Adult Crisis Hotline: 1-888-447-3339
- *Domestic Violence Hotline: 203-731-5206
- *Sexual Assault Hotline: 203-731-5204
- *Treatment & Services for Opioid Abuse: 1-800-563-4086
- *Youth Crisis- dial 211



ATTENTION FOOD BANK SUPPORTERS:

Please help this year's **USPS Letter Carrier Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive** be a great one by putting a bag of not-expired non-perishable food by your mailbox on **Saturday, May 11th!!** NMSS and Loaves & Fishes count on your support!

Postal Carrier's will pick up
FOOD DONATIONS BY YOUR MAILBOX!
Double bag it in case of rain.
Thanks! 😊

FREE Spring Resource Fair

for families with young adults who have disabilities ages 14-21. May 8, 2019 6-9pm at New Milford High School, Room 2325, Lecture hall- 2nd Floor. Sponsored by NMHS and Litchfield Hills Transition Center



Counseling Resources



GREENWOOD COUNSELING

REFERRALS: Free clinical assessment and list of 3 local therapists to help you. 860-567-4437

THE WOMEN'S CENTER OF GREATER DANBURY: 203-731-5200

NEW MILFORD HOSPITAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH: 860-210-5350

FAMILY & CHILDREN'S AID: New Milford office 860-354-8556

INTERFACE CENTER: 860-354-516

AMY BONDESON, BSW, MS, LPC: 860-799-1631- HUSKY insurance only)



For VETERANS: *4th Weds of every month (except July) meet with the Service Officer at NM VFW, 11 Avery Rd. State Service Officer is Peter DiMarie, 203-805-6340. Town Service Officer is Jim Delancy, 203-770-3665.

*Danbury VET CENTER – counseling services 203-799-4000.

*VA outreach, Linoshka Cruz will meet with HOMELESS VETS to discuss housing and other issues at the New Milford Public Library. Please see a Reference Desk Staff person to set up a meeting.

FOOD BANK:

Every THURSDAY
from 9am-4pm.



MAY 2019						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	1	415	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Please bring your own reusable bags!!

SPECIAL NOTE:

**FOOD BANK CLOSURES WHEN NEW MILFORD SCHOOLS
CLOSE DUE TO SEVERE WEATHER**



"This institution is an equal opportunity provider"



NEW MILFORD FOOD BANK RECIPES OF THE MONTH:

BBQ Chicken Burrito Bowls

BBQ Chicken Burrito Bowls are an easy, customizable lunch option that is great both hot or cold! Vegetarian substitutions included.



★★★★★
4.91 from 11 votes

Prep Time
20 mins

Total Time
20 mins

Total Cost: \$7.10 recipe / \$1.78 serving Servings: 4 Author: Beth M

Ingredients

- 1 cooked chicken breast* \$1.50
- 1/2 cup BBQ sauce \$0.53
- 4 cups cooked rice \$0.88
- 15 oz can black beans \$1.00
- 1 cup frozen corn kernels, thawed \$0.44
- 1 small zucchini \$0.58
- 4 oz pepper jack cheese \$1.00
- 2 green onions \$0.20
- 1 small avocado \$1.00

Instructions

1. Chop or shred the chicken breast and mix with 2-3 tablespoons of BBQ sauce until the meat is well coated.
2. Drain and rinse the black beans. Cut the zucchini into small cubes (1/4-1/2"), shred the pepper jack, slice the green onions, and pit and slice the avocado.
3. To build the bowls, place 1 cup cooked rice in the bottom of each bowl. Divide the chicken, beans, corn, zucchini, shredded cheese, green onions, and avocado slices equally among all four bowls. Drizzle one more tablespoon of BBQ sauce over top and serve, or refrigerate until ready to eat.

Notes

*I used a rotisserie chicken breast, which was approximately 1/4 of the whole chicken.

BBQ Chicken Burrito Bowls <https://www.budgetbytes.com/bbq-chicken-burrito-bowls/>

Creamy White Bean and Spinach Quesadillas

Crispy on the outside, creamy on the inside, these insanely delicious Creamy White Bean and Spinach Quesadillas make an awesomely fast weeknight dinner.



★★★★★
4.79 from 14 votes

Prep Time
10 mins

Cook Time
10 mins

Total Time
20 mins

Keyword: easy, Snack, Vegetarian Servings: 4 quesadillas Author: Beth M

Ingredients

- 1 15oz. can cannellini beans \$0.69
- 3/4 tsp chili powder \$0.05
- 1/4 tsp cumin \$0.03
- 1/8 tsp garlic powder \$0.02
- 1/8 tsp salt \$0.02
- 2 cups fresh spinach \$0.87
- 4 oz. pepper jack cheese, shredded \$1.00
- 1/2 cup sour cream \$0.35
- 4 8-inch flour tortillas \$0.96

Instructions

1. Rinse and drain the cannellini beans well. Once well drained, transfer them to a bowl and add the chili powder, cumin, garlic powder, and salt. Stir to combine the beans with the spices.
2. Roughly chop the spinach into smaller pieces. Add the spinach, cheese, and sour cream to the bowl with the beans, then stir to combine.
3. Divide the spinach and bean mixture between the four tortillas, then fold them in half to close.
4. Cook the quesadillas, one or two at a time, in a skillet* over medium heat until the tortillas are brown and crispy and the filling is melted and gooey (3-5 minutes each side).
5. Cut the quesadillas in half, then serve.

Notes

*I cook my quesadillas in a dry skillet (they don't stick), but you can use oil if you prefer a more fried texture to the tortillas.

Creamy White Bean and Spinach Quesadillas <https://www.budgetbytes.com/creamy-white-bean-and-spinach-quesadillas/>

MOBILE FOOD PANTRY:

* Weds. May 1st and Weds. June 5th; 5:30pm-6:30pm at parking lot of Faith Church [Weather Permitting]

New Milford Social Services will be CLOSED on Monday, May 27 in honor of Memorial Day



PERMIT NO. 10
NEW MILFORD CT 06776
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PRESORT STANDARD



860-355-6079
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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED