

# New Milford Social Services

*"To Listen, To Advocate, To Empower"*



**JAN 2020**

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New Milford Social Services

**Greetings from Social Services:**

The holidays have passed, and a new year has begun. We hope that your year ended with many treasured moments filled with love, peace, and joy. And if you also experienced loss, pain, or sadness, we hope you find peace in your journey of grief and healing. The world is balanced by dichotomies such as love and loss, happiness and sadness, accomplishments and struggles. This worldly balance can be felt in our family lives, friendship lives, or work lives. For all of us at Social Services, we ended our year with both joy and sadness. Since we last shared our two-month newsletter in November, our staff has been busy helping to bring heat to people's homes, add food to home pantries, connect individuals to State programs and insurance, and secure shelter to those in need. Also, together with our amazing volunteers and community partners, we came together to make this year's holiday programs great successes! Our community shared food and gifts with hundreds of local adults and children while bringing a bit of financial relief to many a stretched budget. The spirit that fills this season with compassion, kindness, generosity, and grace was overflowing in our small town. And, the collaboration of many good people shined a vast bright light in our community. However, there was one very bright light that did not shine this holiday season. A light that was taken from us unexpectedly and broke our hearts. Our dear volunteer and office assistant, Dora Ruiz, passed away in early November. Dora was a generous spirit of kindness and compassion. She cared deeply for those folks in crisis that called our office or walked through our doors. Her caring spirit showed each day on her face and in her smile. Whether she was printing up registration forms, entering data into the computer, or escorting people through the food bank, she worked with a zeal of sweetness and giving. Her strength and determination to do what she needed to do was awe-inspiring. She pushed against her struggle to give the most of herself. We miss her dearly and our hearts are heavy with sorrow, but she left us the gift of resilience and with that we will rise from the depths of our grief to find peace.

May peace prevail in your life throughout the entire year of 2020.

~Ivana

*"The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of those depths."*  
~ Elisabeth Kubler-Ross



**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 \$86,949.00 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! **Funds are limited.**

**Issue 1-2020**

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



*We support our community through empowerment, advocacy, connection to resources & opportunities to increase the welfare of our residents in need.*



**Financial Tip of the Month:**

**Simple Living:** *Reflecting on past learning can be helpful for you in the now. You are a year or so older and not in the same place in your life when you first learned it. Re-looking at something old can bring a very new and fresh perspective- So read on!*

Helpful excerpts from a New Year's piece on **"Simple and Minimal":** After the excitement and excess of the festive season, the arrival of the New Year conveys a sense of moderation and reflection amongst many. The promise of new beginnings and fresh starts provides the impetus to reflect and ask how we can be happier, freer, more fulfilled. The achievement of these and more are usually not done through being and having more, but rather with less. As we strip away the excess and clutter, we have more space, mentally, emotionally and physically, to live the life we are meant to live. Simple living is a set of habits and hoping to do it all at once in all areas of one's life is

... (continued, page 2)

# PROGRAM UPDATES:



**ENERGY ASSISTANCE:** We are taking applications for the winter season 2019-2020. If you heat with oil, propane, kerosene, wood or electric please call the office to make an appointment.

The first day of fuel delivery was November 13<sup>th</sup> and the last day to apply for fuel (oil, propane, kerosene, wood) is March 16<sup>th</sup>. The last day to apply for electric heat is May 1<sup>st</sup>. If you are a renter with heat-included, you may be eligible to apply for a one-time small grant and that deadline is May 1<sup>st</sup>.

All **electric heated households** who completed the Matching Payment program last year will be automatically re-enrolled onto Eversource's MPP. **Remember that you still need to re-apply for Energy Assistance through our office every year!** You should have received a letter stating what your monthly budget payment was in November. All payments need to be in by the end of each month, and *all* six payments must be received by April 30<sup>th</sup> in order to get a "match". If Eversource raises 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
\$36,171	\$47,300	\$58,430	\$69,559	\$80,688	\$91,818

Visit our department on the [www.newmilford.org](http://www.newmilford.org) website, or call Monika at the office for the list of documents needed to apply. All applicants need to bring a current electric bill even if you do not heat with electric and even if it is not in your name.

**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!

**Clean, Tune and Test:** Upon request and approval of application, funds will be provided to eligible households to cover the cost of a clean, tune and test of their household's deliverable fuel heating system. Renters must receive written landlord permission and funds will not be taken from the fuel benefit. This is a great way to increase the efficiency of your fuel use!

## JOB OPPORTUNITY!



THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU will

be holding a **JOB FAIR here at Social Services on Thursday, January 16, 2020 from 9am – 2pm.** A Recruiter Assistant will be on hand to assist with the online application. **This part-time job pays \$25/hour** and DSS will disregard all income attributed to the 2020 census for TFA, SNAP, State Supplement, SAGA, and non-MAGI medical programs (Husky C and MSP) for individuals temporarily employed with the Census Bureau.



**Tax time is approaching!**

Do you know that it is possible to get your tax return done for FREE for eligible households through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program (VITA)? **Danbury VITA will be in New Milford on Fridays** starting the end of January. Check their website [[www.danbury-vita.org](http://www.danbury-vita.org)] after January 15th for further info and to schedule an appointment. Also, we will post specifics in our office and in our next newsletter as site locations are verified. There are also day and evening appointments available at the Danbury VITA office at 203-826-9517, at Community Action Agency of Western CT at 203-744-4700 or at Western CT State University at 203-797-4511. With electronic filing and depositing, you will not wait longer for your return through one of these agencies, and ALL the money is yours!



### Financial Tip... (continued from page 1):

admirable, but more likely to set oneself up for failure. So, it might be more effective and successful to start small; focus on a few things and make them into habits.

**Live with only what adds joy or value:** Before buying anything, ask if it adds joy and or value to your life and if you really need it? Ask the same question of the things you own and the relationships and activities that you have in your life. Questioning our purchases and possessions will make us more mindful and conscious of our consumption, reducing our clutter and saving us money in the process. Evaluating our relationships and commitments will help us invest our time and resources on people and activities that inspire, energize and contribute to our growth and happiness.

**Make time for yourself:** You are the most important person in your life. This is not ego-talk. If you are not happy or well, you can't offer anyone else the happiness and care they deserve. So, prioritize your own well-being. Make time to be on your own and find space for some peace, quiet and activities that fill you.

**Clear some space:** This could be your mental, emotional or physical space or all three. Clearing space provides peace and calmness. It also clears away the 'clutter' that has been inhibiting and holding back your life. Is your schedule packed and leaving you with little time for yourself and loved ones? Start clearing away a few non-essential commitments. Busyness is overrated. Is there someone in your life that drains your energy and tends to put you down? Is it helpful to have this person in your life? Probably not; so, surround yourself with people who encourage and empower you. Does a kitchen table or worktop or your study desk cause you stress and effort with the amount of stuff on them? Try decluttering and tidying one space at a time and keep it clear.

Take it one step at a time but start with something.

**Learn to say 'No':** We hate to be left out and we hate to disappoint, so we say 'yes' to the latest models of consumables, we say 'yes' to commitments not because we enjoy them but because we are obliged to. But if we want to reclaim our time, our resources and our life for what really matters to us, we must learn to say 'no', and say it often. It might be awkward and difficult at first, but then it becomes liberating. And that is a good and unforgettable feeling! [NMSIssue1-2017]

### "When You're Parent...Again"



An information and support group for **GRANDPARENTS & OTHER RELATIVES RAISING CHILDREN:**

Next meeting will be on Thursday, *January 9, 2020* at JPCC @ 5:30pm until 7:00pm. Dinner and childcare 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.

# COMMUNITY RESOURCES:



## Family and Children



### New Milford Youth Agency News:



\* **FREE, Homework Club**, Saturdays 9am-11am at the Youth Agency. 3<sup>rd</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> grade students will receive help with homework, math, reading, studying, organization, and much more.

\***FREE HOOPS!** Basketball at JPCC for grades 9-12, 3pm-5pm, every Wednesday beginning October 2<sup>nd</sup>. One-time registration at myyouthagency.com. Drop in when you can! Contact Stacey for more info at 860-210-2030 or [skabasakalian@newmilford.org](mailto:skabasakalian@newmilford.org).

#### **\*New Programs- Limited Scholarships Available\***

**Game Design and Coding: Students grades 6-8** will have the opportunity to use the technology that our town possesses. Led by instructor Mr. de St. Croix of Project Lead the Way. Game Design offers students a chance to engage in creative gaming using software such as Blender. This six-week commitment will provide students the opportunity to learn and use their technology skills in a create and productive way. Cost is \$90 without a scholarship. **Begins January 30<sup>th</sup>** through March 5<sup>th</sup> on Thursdays from 2:30pm-5pm at SMS in the PLTW classroom.

**Yoga and Mindfulness with Ms. Delpha for grades K-2:** A yoga teacher, as well as an experienced classroom teacher, Ms. Delpha will guide your child through this yoga/mindfulness class aimed at having fun, learning strategies to reduce stress, situational anxiety, learn breathing and movement techniques to increase confidence. Cost is \$90 without a scholarship. **Begins January 23<sup>rd</sup>** through February 27<sup>th</sup> on Thursdays from 4pm-5pm at JPCC.

*Registration for all programs can be done by calling the Youth Agency at 860-210-2030 or by visiting myyouthagency.com.*

New Milford Parks and Rec has many programs for children Kindergarten and older with possible scholarships available through our office. Please contact us for more information on financial assistance.

**“The Litchfield Hills Transition Center will present a “Transition 101 Workshop” for parents of special needs students Jan. 15 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. in New Milford.**

A snow date of Jan. 22 is planned for the program to be held at Sarah Noble Intermediate School on Sunny Valley Road.

The guest speaker will be Missy Wrigley.

The focus will be on the transition of high school to post-school options. The goal of the program is to inform parents or interested parties and students of the IDEA regulations specific to IEPs and transition services at the secondary level.

In addition, the discussion will address ways to make the transition into career/employment, postsecondary education/training, and/or independent living smoother and less stressful.

Admission is free.

Refreshments will be provided.

For more information or to RSVP, call Ashley Albanese or Roxanne Kraft at 860-210-2222, or email [albanesea@newmilfordps.org](mailto:albanesea@newmilfordps.org) or [krafr@newmilfordps.org](mailto:krafr@newmilfordps.org).” [originally printed in NM Spectrum 1.1.2020]

**WIC (Women, Infant & Children Food & Nutrition Program)** for pregnant women or families with children under 5 years old meets in New Milford on the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of every month at St. Francis Xavier Church from 9am-4pm. Feel free to walk in to talk or call at 203-456-1410. Income guidelines must be met to qualify. *Immigrant families can receive WIC and it is NOT considered a public charge.*



**Help for Veterans on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of every month (except July):** Meet with the Service Officer at New Milford VFW at 11 Avery Road, New Milford. In case of inclement weather, please call to verify meeting is still on. State Service Officer is Peter DiMarie, 203-805-6340. Town Service Officer is Jim Delancy, 203-770-3665.

### SIGN UP!

**for year-round WEEKEND LUNCH or SCHOOL BREAK LUNCH BAGS FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN**



Sometimes we all need a little help. If your family is struggling to provide food for your children, Camella's Cupboard can help!

Need is self-identified and there is NO verifying paperwork required. Qualifying for free or reduced lunch IS NOT required to participate.

**Signups are now open for weekend and break bags. This is a pick-up program!**

Camella's Cupboard also stocks in-school food pantries at SMS & NMHS that any student may access by going to their counselor.

To sign up to participate, visit their website at [www.camellascupboard.com](http://www.camellascupboard.com).

### We all can benefit from support- Counseling Resource:



#### THE WOMEN'S CENTER OF GREATER DANBURY:

offers free, confidential counseling and several support groups including divorce, abusive relationships and past trauma, and surviving sexual assault for women and men. Weekly groups are offered in their Danbury office. For more info, call 203-731-5200 and their website [www.wcogd.org](http://www.wcogd.org).

#### 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.

#### GREENWOOD COUNSELING REFERRAL:

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

INTERFACE is a private not-for-profit practice located in New Milford; experienced staff with many sub-specialties for adults and children. Call 860-354-5116.

#### FAMILY & CHILDREN'S AID:

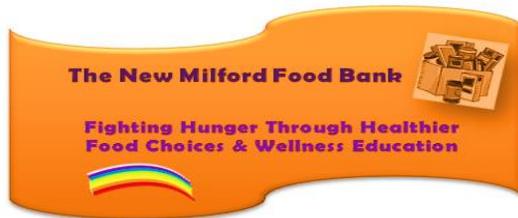
NM office offers many services for parents & children: groups, counseling, home visits & more; free or insurance based. For info or an appointment call 860-354-8556.

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

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

**FOOD BANK:**

**THURSDAYS  
from 9am-4pm.**



Jan 2020						
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	

***Please bring your own reusable bags!!***

**SPECIAL NOTE:**

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

*"This institution is an equal opportunity provider"*



**NEW MILFORD FOOD BANK  
RECIPES OF THE MONTH:**

**Fruit + Veggies: Fresh, Canned or Frozen**

All of us are trying to save on the cost of our grocery bills and sometimes avoid the fresh items all together. Here are some budget friendly tips on how to include fruit and veggies in your weekly grocery trip from "Meeting your MyPlate Goals on a Budget".

- Buy these items in all forms. Sometimes canned and frozen vegetables have more nutrients since they are harvested at peak time.
- Any canned items can be rinsed to cut out additional sugar or sodium.
- Look for canned and/or frozen items that are not pre-sauced, as well as no or low salt/sugar added.
- Canned and/or frozen is also a time saver as the items typically comes diced, chopped, etc.
- Buy fresh when it is season. Remember for SNAP receipts you can use SNAP money at our farmer's market. These items are less expensive in season.

*~Sarah*

**Skillet Sheppard's Pie**

**Ingredients:**

- 3 cups ground turkey
- 2 cans diced tomatoes
- 1 can of corn
- 1 can of sweet peas
- 1 can of green beans
- 2 tbsps. butter
- 1 1/2 tps. Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 4 cups instant mashed potatoes
- 3/4 cup shredded cheese



**Directions:**

Preheat oven to 350. Cook ground turkey and add in the 7 ingredients listed after. Simmer and heat until mixture thickens. Remove from heat. Spoon mashed potatoes over mixture, sprinkle with cheese and bake for 25 – 30 minutes.

Recipe provided by DelMonte via the Canned Food Alliance mealtime.org under Cold-Weather Dishes. Feel free to check out the website for more canned recipes: <https://www.mealtime.org/meals-and-nutrition/recipes>

***Holiday Closings: We will be closed on Wednesday, January 1st in honor of New Year's Day and on Monday, January 20th in honor of Martin Luther King Jr Day.***

***MOBILE FOOD PANTRY: [sponsored by CT Food Bank]***

***\* Weds. Jan 8th and Weds. Feb 5th; 5:15pm-6:30pm at parking lot of Faith Church [Weather Permitting]***

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



NEW MILFORD SOCIAL SERVICES  
2 PICKETT DISTRICT RD  
NEW MILFORD CT. 06776  
860-355-6079  
CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED