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“Joyful living” – two simple words that sum up this month’s theme of the magazine just in time for Mother’s Day. It should be easy enough to achieve. After all, we live in one of the most beautiful parts of Westchester County. But honestly, I’ve been having a hard time lately embracing “joyful living” with this never ending winter. I’ve tried to trick myself by thinking that spring is on the horizon. I’ve painted my toes a lovely shade of pastel pink. I’ve done a thorough spring cleaning in my house but still Mother Nature refuses to cooperate.

Nevertheless, I wanted to highlight six facts I learned while putting together this issue that made me smile and will likely make you appreciate living in North Castle.

Once upon a time there was a little girl named Bonnie Gleicher living in the Windmill community. Gleicher loved theater and had leading roles in her school plays. As a young girl, she was “young Jane” in Jane Eyre on Broadway and played an orphan in the Broadway national tour of Annie. Fast forward seventeen years, and Gleicher composed the music and lyrics for Addy and Uno—a family musical about disabilities and friendship featuring a colorful cast of puppets that is currently playing off-Broadway. There’s definitely more to come from this talented composer.

Danny McManus is a fifth-grader at Wampus Elementary School living with leukemia. Nine of his friends voluntarily shaved their heads to raise money for leukemia research. There’s no doubt that Danny has a strong support network here and friends who are willing to go the extra mile. From his teacher Mrs. Marchesini who has put together videos for him from his classmates to fellow churchgoers at St. Patrick’s, the McManuses have a community who truly cares about Danny’s recovery.

Students in the Dr. Robert Pavlica Authentic Science Program at Byram Hills High School are lucky to have educator Stephanie Greenwald at the helm as the program director. She’s passionate about her job and calls it “the absolute best job I ever had.” Read our up close and personal article on her and you’ll see why the students in the program garner numerous awards and accolades from the most prestigious science programs.

Speaking of accolades, The Armonk Chamber of Commerce is gearing up for their Citizen of the Year event this month at the Whippoorwill Club on May 15th. Big congratulations to Judy Gilmartin-Willsey and the Armonk Independent Fire Department for all that they do day in and day out to make this town a better and safer place to live, work and play in.

As far as I’m concerned every day should be Mother’s Day. With three kids ages 10 and under, there is a lot of worrying when it comes to parenting. Just read Armonk mom Marlene Kern Fischer’s essay and you’ll see what I’m talking about. That’s why the moms in your life should be celebrated and for me, having a meal with loved ones where I don’t have to be a short order cook or clean up afterwards sounds heavenly. Check out some delicious local options to make mom happy.

A few summers ago, a friend of mine took me kayaking on Candlewood Lake. Having grown up in the city, I had never been kayaking before and I loved everything about it. The tranquility of being on the water, the rhythmic strokes needed to propel the kayak forward. It was one of those rare afternoons when I felt truly present and appreciative of the beautiful scenery. Luckily there are many options for kayakers of all levels right here in Westchester. Read our round-up of local spots and take to the waters!

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In early March at the Chappaqua Performing Arts Center, The Mental Health Association of Westchester (MHA), The Lagond Music School, and Music & Miles: Changing Minds joined forces to present a new multi-arts evening of energizing performances that shined a light on mental health issues and the power of the arts as a vehicle in sharing individual stories of healing in the face of adversity.

The evening of expressive arts benefitted the Miles Applebaum Music Scholarship Fund at The Lagond Music School and The Mental Health Association of Westchester. Performances included nine musical and dance presentations along with three “Voices of Recovery” monologues. Radio DJs Coach and Bruce Figler of 107.1 The Peak, a media partner of the event, emceed the evening.
noticing when family, friends, or neighbors are not acting themselves or acting out of the ordinary and to especially watch out for neighbors. We’re all connected.”

In her remarks from the stage, Shari Applebaum encouraged the audience in “taking the time to notice [others] and ask, ‘Are you OK?’”


Kelly Leonard is Founder & Principal Consultant of KLO Associates LLC, a digital marketing boutique agency. A frequent contributor to Inside Press, Kelly has lived in Chappaqua since 2004.

Shari and Ed Applebaum of Armonk, Mile’s parents, were the event co-chairs. When asked what she wanted attendees to take away from the evening’s performances, Shari, who is also a Suicide Bereavement Specialist at MHA said, “A sense of hope and healing. No one goes through life unscathed. Everyone has something that they’re dealing with whether it’s a mental or physical health issue.”

The Miles Applebaum Music Scholarship Fund was established to honor and remember Miles Applebaum, a guitar student who studied at The Lagond Music School and later the Boyer School of Music and Dance at Temple University. Miles died by suicide at the age of 21 in 2014, and the Scholarship Fund was created to carry on his dream by providing aspiring musicians the opportunity to ignite their passion and study music at The Lagond Music School, a nonprofit musical haven for students of all ages.

The 2018 scholarship winners were runner-up Audrey Pretnar, a guitarist from Mohegan Lake and winner Liam Kharem, a drummer and bass clarinetist from Sleepy Hollow.

Close friends of Miles who performed at the event hoped attendees would come away with a new awareness and understanding for those dealing with mental health issues. Annabelle Hilier in her onstage monologue said, “We live in a world where sensitivity is defined as weakness. Emotions are amazing, even the sh*tty ones.”

A unique element of the evening’s performances was each of the musicians, singers, performers, and speakers had been touched in some way by a suicide or an attempted suicide. They shared their experience, strength and hope from the stage through their words and artistry with the audience.

Roseanne Lanna, Lagond Music School Co-Founder and Executive Director, who also served along with Charlie Lagond as Show Director, said she hoped the evening would offer a “sense of awareness, of noticing when family, friends, or neighbors are not acting themselves or acting out of the ordinary and to especially watch out for neighbors. We’re all connected.”

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Kelly Leonard is Founder & Principal Consultant of KLO Associates LLC, a digital marketing boutique agency. A frequent contributor to Inside Press, Kelly has lived in Chappaqua since 2004.
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"I actually sang before I spoke," reminisces 29-year old former Windmill resident Bonnie Gleicher, who wrote the music and lyrics for the children’s off-Broadway show Addy and Uno currently playing at The Kirk Theater on West 42nd Street. The family musical featuring a colorful cast of characters represented by puppets touches on themes such as disability, kindness, bullying and friendship.

One of the main characters “Uno”, a math whiz, is entered in a math competition but fears being on stage due to his autism. But his friends with other disabilities ranging from ADHD to mobile impairment help him overcome taunting from the school bullies and ultimately succeed in the end. There are themes any grade schooler can relate to resulting in a heartfelt musical with soaring tunes that is sure to leave audience members smiling and cheering for “Uno.”

A Love for Theater at an Early Age

Music was a big part of Gleicher’s life from a young age. She recalls as a toddler prancing around her house, pretending to be “Ariel” from The Little Mermaid. As an elementary school student in Armonk, Gleicher landed the lead roles in both Peter Pan and The Wiz of Oz. She soon yearned to audition for roles in the city and the
talented Gleicher was cast as the orphan “Kate” and the understudy for Annie in the Broadway national tour of Annie as a 10-year old and then as “Young Jane” in the Broadway musical Jane Eyre when she was 12.

Gleicher is thankful for her supportive parents, Teri and Kenny Gleicher, who still live in Windmill and helped her achieve her dreams. “Growing up, my mom drove me in and out of the city along the West Side Highway to audition and perform in New York. She never pushed me to do any of this. She basically saw I was living my dream and sacrificed a lot by touring the country with me in Annie for eight months while my dad and grandmother helped raise my sister.”

Gleicher took a hiatus in high school from performing in the city and instead focused on her schoolwork while continuing to take piano lessons at home. “It basically took two years until my piano teacher told my parents that they were wasting their money,” Gleicher says with a chuckle. Instead of practicing Chopin, Gleicher was writing songs. She stopped piano and began to focus on songwriting more seriously. She still did a few talent shows and open mic nights at Byram Hills High School but stayed out of the limelight. Gleicher recalls how her social studies teacher Matt Allen was always supportive of her and they still keep in touch today.

Meeting at Decca Records: A Defining Moment

And go places she did. A journalism student and Phil Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Wisconsin at Madison, Gleicher was lucky enough to have one of her demos heard by an executive at Decca Records as an undergraduate. “He told me this all sounds great to me, but I hear theater in it.” It was a defining moment for Gleicher. “I thought to myself, oh my God. That makes so much sense. That brings everything that I’ve ever done together.”

And so Gleicher wrote her first full-length musical in her senior year of college and has continued writing ever since.

The Show’s Short Timeline

Gleicher describes the writing process as “euphoric” and “seeing the impact the show has had on audiences is incredible. While writing the music, I knew it had to feel fun and playful and comical, while revealing the characters’ disabilities in a way that was sensitive and touching.” The day after meeting Dr. Stilton she wrote Uno’s anthem “Brave” and was able to complete all the music within a month.

The show was first performed at the 14 Street Y downtown and then went to Off-Broadway within a year and a half which is a very short timeframe, notes Gleicher. Most shows take 5-7 years until they come to fruition. Gleicher credits the producing team of Tom and Michael D’Angora of making the show more interactive and improving the dialogue before the production moved to off-Broadway.

“Writing musicals is such an investment in every way. There are so many up and downs with doing what you love but it is really satisfying when you get to see the impact this show has on people,” comments Gleicher. “There are a lot of shows that the world wants but not what the world needs. Addy and Uno is a story that the world needs.”

The Future for Gleicher

Up next, Gleicher is writing an original family musical called Little Things. Gleicher who previously lived above a children’s playground in the city, used to love listening to the children at recess. “It is such a beautiful sound and I thought how can I capture that in a musical. It’s about children tasting freedom and going up against a tyrannical principal.” The show is currently being produced by the New York Theatre Barn and NYU Tisch’s Graduate Musical Theatre Writing program. Addy and Uno will be performed at Gleicher’s alma mater Wampus Elementary School on May 15 and Gleicher will be in attendance. So what would Gleicher say to any aspiring songwriters or thespians in the audience? “If you love what you do, you believe it’s your purpose, and your intentions are pure, you will live your dreams.”

Stacey Pfeffer is the Editor of Inside Armonk and Inside Chappaqua magazines.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF BONNIE GLEICHER
Northern Westchester: A Kayaker’s Paradise

BY DEBORAH NOTIS

Looking for a way to relax, reconnect with nature, soak in the sun, and get some exercise, all at the same time? Try kayaking. Northern Westchester, with its beautiful ponds, lakes, and river, offers various kayaking experiences, ranging from easy outings to more challenging adventures.

Where to Go

Kayakers can look no further than Wampus Pond in Armonk for an easy, serene adventure. Wampus Pond, part of the 102-acre Wampus Pond Park, is open to kayakers throughout the summer. The natural water pond was once a reservoir that fed the New York City water supply. The park surrounding the lake is particularly peaceful and filled with history, including early 20th century rock shelters.

For beautiful, endless views of blue, and a chance to experience the more challenging Hudson River waters, head west to Ossining Beach. In 2011, a kayak launch was opened at the Louis Engel Waterfront Park. This launch enables kayakers to launch off the beach rather than off a dock. Head west for a view of the Sing Sing Correctional Facility.

Travel about four miles north to Croton Point Park and kayak on the Croton River, which ardent kayaker Paul Okura calls “a local gem...so clean and beautiful.” The Croton River is crystal clear, peaceful, and scenic, and it offers exquisite views of the Palisades. Croton Point Park is one of the oldest parks in the Westchester County system. According to Mary Kaye Koch, Director of Marketing for the Westchester County Parks Department, “Croton Point is a beautiful spot for bird-watching while you are kayaking down the river. On the clearest
of days, you can even see all the way down to New York City.” Visitors can plan to picnic or camp out at the park as well.

Franklin D. Roosevelt State Park, right off of Crompound Road in Yorktown Heights, offers two lakes for kayaking. Bring your own kayak to Crom Pond or Mohansic Lake, the two freshwater ponds in the park. The park itself, known for its spacious picnic areas, pool, hiking trails, basketball courts, and playgrounds, offers a chance to enjoy a range of other activities as well.

George’s Island Park, located off of Dutch Street in Montrose, offers another easy, scenic launch spot in Westchester County. “If you’re looking for a tranquil spot for kayaking, George’s Island is perfect,” according to Koch.” With a boat launch for boats up to 21 feet long, George’s Island gives kayakers an opportunity to connect with nature and observe the diverse wildlife. Boat fees vary by park. Check out parks.westchestergov.com for more information.

Touring Options

Throughout Northern Westchester, kayakers can go at it alone or sign up with a service for a more guided kayaking experience. Between May and October, Hudson River Recreation offers two to three hour expeditions on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. Tours meet at Croton Point Park or the Echo Canoe and Kayak Launch in Croton on Hudson. Kayak along the Croton River, passing historical sites like Van Cortlandt Manor.

Hudson River Recreation tours are geared towards adults, but if you are looking for a family kayaking experience, try Hudson River Expeditions. Hudson River Expeditions takes you a little farther north to Peekskill and the Bear Mountain area. Kayakers can either navigate their way through the Peekskill Bay and see the city from a new perspective or travel through the Bear Mountain region, visiting the historical site of Fort Montgomery. They offer both family tours with single and tandem kayaks in the Peekskill region and custom tours that can be booked for six or more participants.

Safety Precautions

John Clark, program director of Hudson River Recreation, suggests that kayakers “expect the unexpected and plan for it.” He suggests that kayakers always wear a US Coast Guard approved life jacket, take lessons, and learn rescue techniques. “You have to know what to do if you fall out!” Clark warns. Paying careful attention to the weather and tide conditions is also extremely important. Dress for the water, not the air. Finally, for a successful trip, Clark says to make sure that someone else knows where you are and where you are going.

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**DEborah Notis is a writer and co-owner of gamechanger-now.com, a free referral service connecting Westchester families to highly qualified instructors. Deborah’s writing can be found in the Inside publications.**
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BY BETTINA PROBER

Chappaqua resident Lisa Jacobson knows migraines. As a chronic sufferer for the past 30 years, she has endured more than 9,000 migraines, tried more than 120 treatments and seen countless doctors. But she is also an entrepreneur who decided years ago that she wanted to use her business skills to help solve a formidable health issue that is often stigmatized.

“I wanted to help people somehow, and I realized the one thing that I was really expert at was migraines,” she said. And so began The Daily Migraine, a website (www.thedailymigraine.com) and community forum dedicated to helping other migraine sufferers. Founded in 2014, The Daily Migraine now has more than half a million followers on its website, Facebook and Instagram pages.

Jacobsen was not new to entrepreneurship. In 1983, when she was 24, she founded Inspirica, a test preparation and academic tutoring company that now has more than 100 employees worldwide. She used the skills she honed there to build The Daily Migraine. She now devotes 40 hours a week at Inspirica.

“I have heard from a lot of people that their bosses or spouses think they are just shirking their responsibilities when they have migraines,” she said. But migraine sufferers experience much more than head pain. Extreme sensitivity to light and sound, throbbing headaches and nausea are also common symptoms. Others experience stroke-like symptoms and are not able to function for days.

Creating Community for Migraineurs

The Daily Migraine is chock-full of information and tools for migraineurs (people who suffer from migraines) to use to help navigate their disease. Visitors to the site can download forms to help track their migraines, speak to their doctors, and write down any treatment ideas they think of. But most importantly, it offers a community that migraine sufferers can connect with.

“People who suffer from migraines don’t feel alone anymore,” she said. “When I first started getting daily migraines after neck surgery, I only found one other person in Chappaqua who also suffered from them.” Since this was before the onset of social media, it was very difficult to find a support system. Now, the website brings migraines together from all corners of the world, including Iraq, Nepal and of course the United States. This sense of community is a comfort to many people.”

Providing a Patient Perspective

Since founding the site, Jacobson has become the top migraine patient advocate in the world. She has spoken at conferences internationally, including the American Migraine Foundation and the International Headache Symposium, providing doctors with a much-needed patient’s perspective. “Some of these organizations have been around a long time but never had patients involved before,” she said. “I recognized a need for more information for the migraine community,” which the website provides.

A Stigmatized Illness

Additionally, there is often a stigma associated with migraines, as many people think that having migraines is just like having a bad headache. But according to Jacobson, migraines are actually one of the most debilitating diseases in the world.

“I have heard from a lot of people that their bosses or spouses think they are just shirking their responsibilities when they have migraines,” she said. But migraine sufferers experience much more than head pain. Extreme sensitivity to light and sound, throbbing headaches and nausea are also common symptoms. Others experience stroke-like symptoms and are not able to function for days.

Raising Funds for Migraine Research

Jacobsen’s goal now is to raise money and awareness for migraine research. She has partnered with Chappaqua resident Scott Boilen, President of Allstar Products Group, to create the Migraine Hat. The hat, which costs $29 and can be ordered directly from the site, contains an ice pack to help soothe the pain. All of Jacobson’s profits from the hat will fund migraine research.

“People have said that the Migraine Hat is revolutionary,” said Jacobson. Since cold soothes the pain, “if you have the hat on, you can function. It takes a migraine that has a pain scale of 8 down to a 6, which can be the difference between lying in bed all day or putting your kids on the bus.”

Luckily for Jacobson, she has finally found a treatment plan that works for her. “I started The Daily Migraine when my migraines were at their worst,” she said. But after trying many different combinations of traditional medicine, stress-release tactics, and lifestyle changes, her migraines started to dissipate. Being pain-free has enabled her to focus on the site and help others.

“It’s like I have my life back again,” she said. Her success with alleviating migraine symptoms after so many years is also inspiring to The Daily Migraine’s many followers. As she said, “Now, I can also offer hope.”

Bettina Prober is a Chappaqua resident and mom of three. This is her third article for The Inside Press.
Congratulations to our 2017 Companywide Leading Sales Professionals in Armonk

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Associate Real Estate Broker
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Silver Award

ANDREA HOOLAN
Associate Real Estate Broker
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HARRIET LIBOV
Associate Real Estate Broker
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Armonk

Glorious reservoir views from this European style Farmhouse. Alfresco living central to this home’s design with French doors and outdoor eating rooms. A farm-to-table lifestyle is embodied by organic vegetable garden, potting shed, and significant post-and-beam horse barn.

Web# IA1421542 · $2,950,000
Presented by Harriet Libov

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This 5 bedroom home blends luxury amenities and transitional style with an open floor plan. Harriet Libov Web# IA1448081 | Armonk | $2,195,000

GEO THERMAL HOME
New construction with value. Well proportioned rooms with quality and custom upgrades. Jaimme B. Pudalov Web# IA1343912 | Bedford | $1,950,000

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Modern classic in an organic environment perched on one of the highest points in Armonk. Amy Singer Web# IA1419021 | Armonk | $1,890,000

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Meticulously maintained home lives as a 5 bedroom with pool, spa and 4 season sport court. Andrea Hoolan Web# IA1419896 | Bedford | $1,650,000

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Contemporary home with finest materials, oversized windows, natural light & serene privacy. Harriet Libov Web# IA1450613 | Armonk | $1,399,000

PRIME LOCATION
Free standing Colonial with 2 car garage located next to the Betsy Shuler Nature Preserve. Carol Schmidt Web# IA148757 | Armonk | $1,350,000
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Armonk

This home is perfectly set in the privacy of a cul-de-sac in the highly-prized lake community of Windmill Farm. This light-filled six-bedroom residence offers a thoughtfully designed open floor plan with the latest amenities and energy-efficient systems.

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Light-filled immaculately maintained Contemporary on one private level acre in The Estates. Aurora M. Banaszek
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EXCLUSIVE WHIPPOORWILL
Surrounded by natural beauty, this 4-BR home is nestled on over two private level acres. Jaimme B. Pudalov
Web# IAH41365 | Armonk | $1,075,000

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Peaceful, private setting on 2.1 acres, this modern residence boasts an open floor plan. Harriet Libov
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Go to: armonkchamberofcommerce.com for more information.
The Armonk Chamber of Commerce has chosen Judy Gilmartin-Willsey as its 2018 Citizen of the Year. Judy will be honored at the annual Citizen of the Year golf outing and dinner at The Whippoorwill Club on Tuesday, May 15.

If Judy’s face looks familiar, it’s probably because you know her from Framings of Armonk. Judy and her husband Carter Willsey started the business 28 years ago after working in advertising; the timing was perfect because they wanted to be able to bring their young daughter to work with them. Framings was originally housed on Bedford Road, next to the old lumberyard, and moved to a building located on what is now the DeCicco’s parking lot. The business was then resituated to its current location on the corner of Main Street, where its creative and whimsical windows have been adding character and beauty to downtown Armonk for the past 22 years.

Judy, a graduate of Parsons School of Design, likes to be known as a “yes” person and said she feels it’s her “responsibility to do the best work and contribute to the community.” With a reputation for helping out in any way she can, Judy is involved in a myriad of activities. She is a member of the Grace Notes, an acappella group that performs at nursing homes and assisted living facilities (including the Bristol, located in Armonk), libraries, elementary schools and senior citizen centers throughout the area. Over the years, Judy has mentored the dozens of high school students she has hired to work at Framings. In addition, Judy has helped sponsor and promote the Friends of the North Castle Public Library’s annual Armonk Outdoor Art Show and is committed to helping Armonk businesses grow and thrive. Her upbeat energy, good works and positive attitude extend beyond the store itself and into the wider community. Whether it’s her riding her bicycle around town, stopping to chat or waving to friends, Judy’s big smile brings a smile to the lives of everyone who knows her. This award is so well-deserved. Honoring Judy honors all of us.” We couldn’t agree more.

For more information and to purchase tickets to the golf outing, cocktail party and events visit http://www.armonkchamberofcommerce.com/events/details/citizen-of-the-year-2018-525 or call 914-273-2353. All are invited to attend the day of celebration.

Marlene Kern Fischer is a twenty year resident of Armonk. She has had articles featured in CollegiateParent, HuffPost, Grown and Flown, Kveller, Today Parents, the New York Times (Modern Love) and on her own site, Thoughts From Aisle Four.
The Armonk Chamber of Commerce Citizens of the Year—Judy Gilmartin-Willsey and the Armonk Independent Fire Department—will be honored at a Golf Outing and Dinner on May 15th at the Whippoorwill Club in Armonk.

The Chamber described Judy, the owner of Framings for over 30 years, as “a vivacious and endearing presence,” who has also “committed herself to civic life here, as co-founder of the Chamber... Judy helped create the Armonk Winter Walk in 1991, which evolved into the wildly popular Frosty Day in 2008. She has lent her windows and expertise to the beautification and betterment of the town and its events, including support of the current Chamber of Commerce and the Armonk Outdoor Art Show.”

“...and the Armonk Independent Fire Department—it's men and women volunteers—are town heroes who have given selflessly over the past 85 years. As such, they are the first organization to receive this honor by the Chamber. All firefighters and emergency responders undertake extensive training, with 140 hours needed to become a firefighter and 160 hours for an EMT. In addition to fighting fires and providing emergency medical care to area residents and businesses, the AIFD also teaches fire safety to community, school and youth groups. Members are required to participate in multiagency drills in case of large scale emergencies, such as aircraft rescue and triage preparation for medical personnel.

Two veterans and ex-chiefs, John Heimerding and Mitch Sime, have more than 120 years of service between them. Currently serving is the department’s first and only female fire chief, Luci Labriola-Cuffe, and long-time resident Tommy Cox has been a member since elementary school. The current fire commissioner is newly elected Phil Goulet. To sponsor a firefighter’s dinner/tee hole or contribute to the local Stayin’ Alive Charity, register or find additional details, please visit: armonkchamberofcommerce.com
Armonk Beautification Committee; Behind the Scenery

BY ELLA ILAN

If you feel a sense of pride as you drive through town and notice the flowers in the spring, the attractive street signs or tasteful holiday decorations, you can thank the Armonk Beautification Committee. This committee is made up of dedicated volunteers appointed by the North Castle Town Board. They meet once a month to propose ideas and facilitate projects in partnership with town authorities regarding landscaping and the beautification of Armonk, Banksville and North White Plains. Carol Bidjarano, the committee chairwoman, says “We are a great cast of characters. We do everything as one. Everyone brings something else to the table and we have a lot of fun.”

A Multitude of Projects

Typical annual projects undertaken by the committee include the hanging flowering baskets adorning Main Street, the barrels of flowers at various traffic islands, and the flags that fly from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Every year, the town is spruced up for the holidays with wreaths on the light poles, snowflakes suspended over Wampus Brook Park and the North White Plains Community Center, and the holiday tree in the gazebo. The new street signs in town with an eagle atop them were one of those projects. “It took a while to get the street signs up and the town supervisor got positive feedback from people...It’s a good feeling when you work on something behind the scenes and people compliment it without even knowing you worked on it. I feel proud when I go through town and see those signs,” reflects Ms. Bidjarano.

A Town Clock Tops the Wish List

The committee’s current wish list of projects includes erecting a town clock similar to those in neighboring towns, more “Welcome to the Hamlet of…” signs at all points of ingress into the towns, more flowering trees on the traffic island by Route 120 heading towards Chappaqua, and updating the trash containers in town. The town clock would be one of the more expensive items, costing anywhere from $12,000 and up. Funding and support from the community could make such an endeavor a reality. Donor names could be memorialized on a plaque located on the clock.

A Dire Need for Volunteers

The committee would also love to attract new members as the group could benefit from some fresh ideas. It currently has six voting members. Ideally, they prefer to have an odd number of members so that they can avoid a tie. Nancy Battistelli, the North White Plains subcommittee chairwoman says, “The town needs more people taking an interest. No one seems to have any time with their hectic schedules.”

The North White Plains committee did not have their annual holiday party and tree lighting ceremony this year due to the hardship involved for the few older committee members who did not have enough personnel. They quickly learned that their past efforts were appreciated when many young families expressed their disappointment since they had been looking forward to this family event. Upon discovering that the beautification committee needed help organizing the event, several young community members pledged to get involved and help organize the holiday festivities next year.

Despite the various challenges, these devoted volunteers get the job done and manage to make Armonk, Banksville and North White Plains look beautiful. The one thing that is clear is that it takes a village. The committee welcomes anyone that would like to attend a monthly meeting and get involved. Additional information about the committee including wish lists and donations can be found at www.northcastle-ny/beautification-committee.

Ella Ilan lives in Pleasantville. This is her first article for Inside Armonk.
It’s a... Yummy’s Jessica Meyrowitz Takes Knitting to the Extreme

BY BETTINA PROBER

The first thing you notice when you walk into Chappaqua resident Jessica Meyrowitz’ home office are the plastic bins. Big bins, stacked high, lining almost every inch of wall space. And all of them are filled to the rim with colorful handmade knits that call out to be held and touched. They look cozy. They look warm. They look delicious. They look, well, yummy.

Meyrowitz is the founder of It’s a... Yummy, a company devoted to the creation of handmade throws, pillows, baby blankets, hats, scarves, wraps and belts. But these are not your ordinary knit products. They are made with a specially sourced, 100 percent merino wool yarn called core spun yarn, and they are knit using a technique called extreme knitting. The result is a product that not only looks and feels good, but is durable too.

“I wanted the yarn to feel like a cloud,” she said. “When people feel (the products) I want them to say it’s so yummy...so soft.”

Meyrowitz’ path to launching It’s a... Yummy is as interesting as her products. After graduating from Boston University, she pursued acting in New York City, landing roles in Off-Broadway productions, commercials and television. Though she achieved enough success to support herself, she decided to switch gears when her husband was transferred to Maryland. While there, she worked in radio sales and advertising, eventually opening her own ad agency, called JSM Media, in Washington, D.C. In 2011, her husband Eric accepted a New York City-based job, and her family, which now included sons Jake and Alec, moved to Chappaqua.

“The agency was very successful, but it became more and more of a challenge to go back and forth to D.C. with young kids,” she said. As such, in 2016, she closed the agency and decided to take a break from the working world. To fill her time, she signed up for two classes: a pottery class at the Chappaqua Arts Center and a knitting class at Katonah Yoga.

“I wanted to expand my horizons and do something creative,” she remembered. During class, her pottery teacher encouraged all of the students to look online for project ideas. Deciding to search for knitting projects too, Meyrowitz came across a blanket she wanted to make for her family room. The only catch was the blanket was made with extreme knitting, a method Meyrowitz was not familiar with.

As Meyrowitz discovered, extreme knitting is knitting with very large yarn and large needles. The result is chunkier stitches that are looser than conventional knitting stitches, giving the pieces a distinctive look. Most extreme knitting projects use roving, which is basically what yarn is before it is spun. Though roving is very soft, it is not as durable as traditional spun yarn.

“I wanted to make my blanket with yarn that wouldn’t fall apart,” she said. After calling several yarn stores, she realized that the type of yarn she wanted to use for her blanket was not readily available. She then began calling mills directly to find what she wanted. As she searched, she realized she had happened upon a business opportunity.

“I didn’t start this to make a business,” she laughed. “I started it to make a blanket. But I said to myself, there must be other people who want this big, soft durable yarn.” After doing more research, including visiting local farms to learn more about sheep, shearing and yarn creation, she had developed a plan to source her specialized yarn.

Soon, It’s a... Yummy was off and running. Meyrowitz launched the company in October 2016 on Facebook with three products in 13 different colors. The response was immediately positive.

“The outpouring of support from the Chappaqua and Armonk communities was really special,” Meyrowitz said. By February 2017, Meyrowitz had added several more products and colors to the line. Currently, It’s a... Yummy offers more than 25 products in 38 colors, as well as limitless amounts of custom options.

Once the orders started coming in, Meyrowitz hired a knitting team to keep up with the demand. The knitting force, as she refers to it, is composed of eight moms, all from Chappaqua and Armonk. Though some already knew knitting basics, she taught all of them the extreme knitting technique. This sparked another idea: offering do-it-yourself knitting kits and knitting parties. Both have been extremely successful; the kits were featured on the Today show's holiday gift episode, and the parties have morphed into knitting workshops and seminars held all over the tristate area and beyond.

"Knitting is so mindful and meditative; it really gives me joy to teach people because it is so relaxing and easy," she said. "After an hour knitting workshop or party, you leave with a skill and a scarf. And you will have both forever."

For more information on It’s a... Yummy products and upcoming workshops, visit www.itsayummy.com. Prices start at $65.

Bettina Prober is a Chappaqua mom who has put the It’s a... Yummy knitting kit on her Mother’s Day wish list.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JESSICA MEYROWITZ
My Sisters’ Place: A Haven for Hope and Help

A Not for Profit Providing Local Support to Victims of Domestic Violence & Human Trafficking

BY STACEY PFEFFER

It’s a non-descript building in downtown White Plains steps from the Metro-North station but for people served by the non-profit My Sisters’ Place (MSP), it is a beacon of hope. It is a safe haven where victims of domestic violence (DV) and human trafficking can finally begin to change their lives.

Founded more than 40 years ago, MSP offers residential, support and legal services for victims of abuse and trafficking. The non-profit also offers educational and preventative programs for students in middle school and high school. In addition, MSP advocates for legislation protecting victims and provides training for healthcare professionals and law enforcement personnel. In short, MSP is a comprehensive agency that provides direct services, legislative advocacy, and prevention education to 15,000 people a year in Westchester County.

Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women in the US and up to 10 million children witness some form of domestic violence annually.1 Although 84% of the victims of abuse and human trafficking that MSP helped last year were female, they also provide services to a small percentage of men or transgender individuals. Last year MSP provided counseling to 130 children and emergency housing for more than 175 adults and children at two confidential full-service shelters located in Westchester.

Battling Misconceptions

There is a misconception that both domestic violence and human trafficking don’t happen in affluent communities but these problems cut across socioeconomic levels, notes Karen Cheeks-Lomax, the CEO of MSP. When they do happen in affluent communities, they are widely sensationalized in the media such as the brutal stabbing of Scarsdale pediatrician, Dr. Robin Goldman, by her husband Jules Reich, a well-respected tax attorney, and a human trafficking and sex slave ring discovered in Pound Ridge-based author Joseph Yannai’s basement.

Judy Dobles, a Chappaqua-based volunteer for the past six years with MSP, knows all too well that domestic violence doesn’t discriminate. As a volunteer in the ‘Sisters in Law’ program, she has accompanied MSP clients to court, solely for the purpose of supporting the victim as much as possible.

“Whether that’s talking or just sitting quietly by their side, if they don’t want to talk, shielding them from having to see their abuser before going in to the courtroom, and basically just trying to keep them as calm as possible before they have to go in before the judge,” explains Dobles. She recalls one of her first “accompaniments” with a very educated, successful client who had had a lucrative career and came from an affluent background. “It was difficult to connect that information with the broken person I saw before me.”

Still Dobles finds this type of volunteerism rewarding. “It’s rewarding when a client walks into a courtroom or magistrate’s room and can answer questions calmly and succinctly. It’s really rewarding when they exit the room with a smile because they feel like they are being heard and they’re not alone. Also, as a huggy/feely person myself, I would say that 99% of the time, my clients and I hug goodbye—and I feel truly honored to get those hugs.”

Expanding the Definition of Domestic Violence

“Domestic violence doesn’t fit in a box,” notes Cheeks-Lomax. Danielle DiNapoli, a community educator in MSP’s Domestic Violence Education and Prevention (DVEP) program which educates more than 5,000 middle and high school students a year. She explains that it is “not just physical abuse. It is an intentional pattern of behaviors where one person is gaining and maintaining control over another. It can be financial, mental, cyber or spiritual/cultural abuse.”

DiNapoli also teaches the students about warning signs in a relationship that may lead to abuse further down the road. Extreme possessiveness, jealousy, isolating the victim from family/friends or checking in at the person’s place of work or showing...
earlier age,” explained DiNapoli.

For high school students, DiNapoli states that 1 in 3 have been involved in an abusive relationship. They may feel particularly afraid to discuss it with an adult because their parents, she points out, might not even know about the relationship or forbid dating. Gabriella Ibacache, a children’s counselor at MVP points out that the abuse may start off as very small or subtle and the abuser may manipulate their partner by apologizing or buying them gifts.

DiNapoli wants students to understand that the power and control that we see in society can trickle down into our relationships. “By the time I’m seeing them [the kids may be 11 or 12 years old], and this is the first time that they are talking about these issues, and that’s a real problem. We need to be teaching kids how they should be treated and treat one another at a much earlier age,” explained DiNapoli.

Safety Planning

When DiNapoli talks to high school students, MSP provides survivor stories and they discuss warning signs, what type of abuse the survivor endured and reasons why the survivor did not leave. “A lot of the kids ask, ‘why didn’t the victim just leave?’ People tend to shame and blame the victim for not leaving,” said DiNapoli. But on average, DiNapoli says it takes the victim seven attempts before she leaves permanently. And when the victim does decide to leave for good, it is the most dangerous time for that person. They could be seriously harmed or killed. “So much of what we do at MSP is “safety plan” – figuring out the safest way to leave, and that’s not the same for every person, and can change daily due to new salient factors,” explains Cheeks-Lomax.

Ibacache notes that the barriers to leaving can still be just as hard even when the victim is affluent. When children are in the mix, the danger increases significantly warns Ibacache.

Human Trafficking: It Does Happen Here

For more than a decade, MSP has been helping victims of human trafficking and last year helped 85 survivors of human trafficking. In New York State, there were 942 victims identified by social service providers and law enforcement in 2016. Of the victims, 82% were for sex trafficking purposes and 18% were for labor trafficking with 27% of the victims being minors. 43% are citizens from other countries and 57% are residents of New York from outside the five boroughs.

6 Critical Life Messages to Help a Friend

If you believe a friend is in an abusive situation, these are the messages that the staff at My Sisters’ Place say she or he needs to hear. “It is important not to “revictimize” the person who has been abused,” notes Cheeks-Lomax. All of these messages validate the person’s experience instead of shaming or blaming the victim.

1. Believe in you
2. I trust you
3. I know you can handle it
4. You are listened to
5. You are cared for
6. You are very important to me

Housing, Public Transportation & Immigration Status: A Trifecta of Issues for Many MSP Clients

Although MSP has 60 employees and is a $6 million agency (with $1.6 million from private donors), Cheeks-Lomax notes that they are working in a sector that is very challenging. There are challenges that are unique to Westchester County such as a lack of affordable or low-income housing and public transportation for clients.

Imagine if you need to push a baby carriage to get here, notes Cheeks-Lomax. “If you don’t have safe housing, you can’t do much,” laments Cheeks-Lomax. MSP recently won a conditional award to work with Westhab, the largest developer of affordable and low-income housing in the county, and hopes to partner with them to create 17 two-bedroom apartments for MSP clients in the near future.

“Immigration status is also a huge issue. In 2009, Westchester County was not reimbursing immigrant populations at MSP. We briefed the issue as to who should be served by these federal dollars. We took it all the way up to the governor. If people couldn’t come to us, we argued that they would end up at a hospital or a drug rehab. Every single county now in New York State provides services to immigrant victims of DV and human trafficking,” Cheeks-Lomax explains triumphantly.

Looking Ahead

Cheeks-Lomax is hopeful that the #metoo movement will highlight the power dynamic that is present in domestic violence cases and raise awareness about it. “There are the same fundamentals of fear and intimidation intersecting. For us, it proves a point. It is always about power and control and the abuser does it because he/she can.” She is also looking forward to working with County Executive George Latimer, and believes MSP will make some good headway with his administration.

Stacey Pfeffer is the editor of Inside Chappaqua and Inside Armonk magazines.

1. Source: dvrc-or.org
2. Source: loverspect.org
3. Source: NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance Refugee Services

Imagine if you need to push a baby carriage to get here, notes Cheeks-Lomax. “If you don’t have safe housing, you can’t do much,” laments Cheeks-Lomax. MSP recently won a conditional award to work with Westhab, the largest developer of affordable and low-income housing in the county, and hopes to partner with them to create 17 two-bedroom apartments for MSP clients in the near future.

“Immigration status is also a huge issue. In 2009, Westchester County was not reimbursing immigrant populations at MSP. We briefed the issue as to who should be served by these federal dollars. We took it all the way up to the governor. If people couldn’t come to us, we argued that they would end up at a hospital or a drug rehab. Every single county now in New York State provides services to immigrant victims of DV and human trafficking,” Cheeks-Lomax explains triumphantly.

Looking Ahead

Cheeks-Lomax is hopeful that the #metoo movement will highlight the power dynamic that is present in domestic violence cases and raise awareness about it. “There are the same fundamentals of fear and intimidation intersecting. For us, it proves a point. It is always about power and control and the abuser does it because he/she can.” She is also looking forward to working with County Executive George Latimer, and believes MSP will make some good headway with his administration.

Stacey Pfeffer is the editor of Inside Chappaqua and Inside Armonk magazines.

1. Source: dvrc-or.org
2. Source: loverspect.org
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Community Comes Together to Support Danny McManus, a Wampus Student & Leukemia Patient

“Isn’t taught us a lot about cancer—how it can affect anyone, even kids…and that even with cancer Danny is still just Danny—my friend. He has shown us that having a strong growth mind-set helps get you through the things in life.” Shane Gordon, Danny’s friend

BY JULIE ESKAY EAGLE

Usually ten-year old Danny McManus, a fifth-grader at Wampus Elementary School, is outside with a ball and lacrosse stick. Standing 5’4” tall, he towers over most of his friends, and is a tireless force of nature. This past October, while Danny was competing in the Tri-State 91 Lacrosse tournament, he wasn’t keeping up the way he normally would. Danny’s parents sensed something was wrong, took him to the pediatrician, and within 24 hours was admitted into the hospital and diagnosed with leukemia—a form of blood cancer. When I see people in town now, Deidre McManus, Danny’s mother says, “I realize we have changed people by sharing what we are going through.” The subsequent outpouring of support from family and friends, neighbors, doctors, teachers and clergy tells a heartwarming story about the generosity of Armonk’s community.

When Mrs. McManus and her husband Francis were told that they needed to bring Danny to the hospital, they had to find someone to take care of their older son, Colin, who is in 7th grade. Their neighbors Drs. Erik Cohen and Maude Lemercier were already friends, but have become like extended family, giving Colin an extra set of adults to rely on, and helping the McManuses to interpret the constant stream of medical information.

That first night, while Danny was being evaluated in the hospital, Deirdre thought of her lifelong friend, Karen Wolownik, a Nurse Practitioner and Nurse Leader in the Pediatric Blood & Marrow Stem Cell Transplantation Unit of Maria Fareri Children’s Hospital at Westchester Medical Center. Within a few hours, Karen received an alert from the hospital about Danny. She called Deirdre right away—Karen’s expertise was precisely what they needed. Karen was confident that Danny was in the right place to deal with this horrible disease.

Danny’s AML Treatment

The first line of treatment for Danny’s acute myeloid leukemia which is commonly called AML is potent chemotherapy, often followed by a stem cell transplant. The Children and Adolescent Cancer and Blood Disease Center at Maria Fareri Children’s Hospital has become a center of excellence for such therapies. The center was established in 2011 when Westchester Medical Center hired Dr. Mitchell Cairo from Columbia University to lead it. Dr. Cairo is a world renowned specialist in stem cell biology, molecular oncology and experimental immunology and a long-time Armonk resident.

In addition to the expertise provided by Dr. Cairo and his team, the McManuses have been overwhelmed by the competence and compassion of the staff at Maria Fareri Children’s Hospital. “They’ve worked with Danny every step of the way to always make sure he understood what to expect during every procedure.” For example, before Danny had a port connected to deliver chemotherapy, the Child Life Specialist explained the procedure by letting Danny feel the port and see how it would be used with the help of a doll. Then, during the chemo, Danny needed an NG tube (a nasogastric tube) to deliver nutrition directly to his stomach. The physician working with Dr. Cairo, Jordan Watson, MD, asked one of the residents to demonstrate for Danny what it would be like and, right in front of Danny, inserted a tube down Jordan’s nose and throat! She said, “I’ve always wanted to know what it felt like!”

Community “Shavees” Support Danny

As if that wasn’t enough, last month Dr. Watson asked the McManuses if Danny would be part of her team, raising funds to support the St. Baldrick’s Foundation, which is dedicated to funding research for childhood cancers. Danny’s family and friends created The Mighty McManus Team, Dr. Watson and her fiancé shaved their heads alongside nine of Danny’s friends, and together they raised nearly $30,000. Danny’s friends, Shane Gordon and Michael Bellantoni, are two of the “shavees.” Gordon says, “The reason we all shaved our heads was because he really likes his hair, so we thought it would be good if we let ours all grow back together.” In addi-
tion to funding research, the McManus’s relatives created a GoFundMe campaign to lend a hand while Deirdre and Francis take time from work and manage the costs of Danny’s care.

A Turn for the Better

The next step in Danny’s treatment was a stem cell transplant. Statistically, 1 in 4 siblings have markers indicating they are a good match and won’t be rejected by the recipient. In Danny’s case, they were thrilled to discover that his brother, Colin, is a 100% donor match for Danny, making a stem cell transplant an ideal option. On January 4th Colin underwent a 3-hour operation—drawing bone marrow from both hips to obtain stem cells to populate Danny’s bone marrow. Since then, Danny has been improving every day, and although he has no immune system of his own yet, he was able to come home from the hospital after 133 days when they celebrated Danny’s 11th birthday on March 13th.

The McManuses are touched by the efforts made by every church and synagogue in the community. Melissa Gordon, who attends St. Patrick’s with the McManuses, says that since Danny’s diagnosis, a remarkable number of children and adults have filled the church on First Fridays, when the Church holds special services for adoration and prayer. At school, Danny’s teacher, Mrs. Marchesini, has kept Danny as involved as possible, and in the meantime made t-shirts, videos with messages from his classmates, and a video of the whole class singing Happy Birthday to Danny.

Shane Gordon and Danny look forward to getting on their bikes again and exploring the outdoors. When I asked Shane how Danny’s illness has affected him and his friends he said, “It’s taught us a lot about cancer—how it can affect anyone, even kids…and that even with cancer Danny is still just Danny—my friend. He has shown us that having a strong growth mind-set helps get you through the things in life”.

For those who would like to help, both the Maria Fareri Children’s Hospital and The St. Baldrick’s Foundation accept donations. In addition, the McManuses recommend registering with BeTheMatch.org to help someone in need of stem cells.

When a person develops leukemia, the body makes more white cells than it needs, crowding out the normal cells and affecting the way major organs work. Eventually, there aren’t enough red blood cells to supply oxygen, enough platelets to clot the blood, or enough normal white blood cells to fight infection.

Julie Eskay Eagle, a 14-year resident of Armonk, is a consultant to companies and investors in the health care industry. This is her first article for the magazine.
The students of the Dr. Robert Pavlica Authentic Science Program at Byram Hills High School have been consistently racking up an impressive roster of scientific accolades in recent years. In 2017 alone, they earned coveted top awards from the Westchester-Rockland Junior Science and Humanities Symposium, Regeneron Science Talent Search, the American Academy of Neurology's Neuroscience Research Prizes and the Siemens competition to name a few. All of this recognition, however, is not what’s most extraordinary, according to program director, Stephanie Greenwald. “The best part is the community Breeding the Next Generation of Young Scientists: Up Close and Personal with Dr. Robert Pavlica Authentic Science Program Director Stephanie Greenwald

BY SHAUNA LEVY

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he students of the Dr. Robert Pavlica Authentic Science Program at Byram Hills High School have been consistently racking up an impressive roster of scientific accolades in recent years. In 2017 alone, they earned coveted top awards from the Westchester-Rockland Junior Science and Humanities Symposium, Regeneron Science Talent Search, the American Academy of Neurology’s Neuroscience Research Prizes and the Siemens competition to name a few. All of this recognition, however, is not what’s most extraordinary, according to program director, Stephanie Greenwald. “The best part is the community

Dr. Pavlica created. He felt strongly that any student who wanted to be here could. We have honored that legacy and cultivated an environment that empowers students to be their absolute best.”

When Greenwald began her career as a school administrator and science teacher almost 25 years ago, science research wasn’t necessarily a “thing.” What she did know, was that she loved teaching and inspiring children. With 14 years at Byram Hills H.S. under her belt, when the previous director retired last year, she was offered her current position and fell into “the absolute best job I ever had.” There is no question about Greenwald’s passion as she rapidly speaks, “There is nothing more exciting than watching a student who enters this room timidly, find what they love and see that moment when it all clicks. That is my favorite thing in the whole world.”

DEVELOPING A BROAD SKILL SET

Celebrating its 30th anniversary next year, this three-year research program was designed for students who wish to pursue excellence in advanced areas of original research. Students develop skills in bibliographic research, research methodology, and modes of communicating research. Though the workload is described as “very high,”
students don’t appear scared off with approximately 80 students enrolled. They participate in group classes with BH faculty and individual meetings with mentors.

The focus is on quantifiable science, yet there is a sense that something magical is at play in this classroom where students’ greatest capabilities make themselves apparent. Greenwald describes the staff’s philosophy, “We pride ourselves on guiding students to find what they are truly passionate about. Almost any topic can be researched. If it can be measured with a numeric value, it’s science.” This is the key to the program’s continued success. Greenwald, explains, “The students who self-select into the program have such a high level of enthusiasm because they are studying what they love. That without a doubt is the major intrinsic motivator.” Study topics have included everything from fashion, football and dogs to vectors, biodiesel fuel and prostate cancer microbiology.

**COMBAT SCIENCE ILLITERACY WITH COMMUNICATION**

Once students select their subject matter, the focus is on reading as much material as possible including everything from layman material to professional literature. This research prepares them for the ultimate task of producing a 40-50 page publication. Greenwald describes the process, “They become experts, getting to know ‘the movers and shakers’ in their field. It is imperative that students are able to communicate in everyday terminology.” Communications are integral to the program and an English teacher is on staff to strengthen these skills. According to Greenwald, “There is a vast amount of science illiteracy in this country. Scientists must become better communicators. It is a pet peeve of mine that we have a plethora of incredible experts, yet only a small list of people who understand them. The public must be able to understand that science is not something you can refute. It is simply fact.”

**WORKING WITH PROFESSIONAL MENTORS**

A pivotal point in the program is when students identify a professional mentor from a university, medical center or research institute with an expertise in their area of study. “There are so many glorious people who see themselves in the students and wish they had a program like ours when they were younger. We truly wouldn’t exist without their time and generosity.” Mentors may be local, but many span the world and have been as far as England and Israel. They communicate via email, telephone, video conference or in person. Oftentimes, students are invited to spend time working at their laboratories.

The program has very clear benchmarks, during which students receive a high level of critiquing that they learn to accept in order to produce their best work product. “Our grading system is set-up to empower students to be able to take risks and fail. They are not penalized for giving the wrong answer,” says Greenwald. When students hit roadblocks, they are encouraged to ask questions and seek solutions. “I always tell them that all that stands in our way are words and time. If you can’t understand it, research it,” Greenwald guides.

**BREEDING YOUNG SCIENTISTS**

At its core, the program aims to support an initiative to create a greater number of PhD and advanced degree candidates in the sciences in this country. Fostering scientific literacy is further supported by engaging in programs at the elementary school level. Greenwald described a common sense approach to breeding young scientists: “Teach them to wonder and problem solve. Encourage them to always ask questions,” she said. “Experiment with trial and error.”

Of the future, Greenwald is optimistic. She disagrees with the stereotypical view of millennials saying, “Every day, I watch students suddenly see above and beyond what they expected their capabilities to be. That’s the moment they learn they are in control of their destiny. It happens here all the time and that’s what makes this place so special. I tell the students, I have faith in my future as long as you take care of it for me.” And, her work is contributing to their ability to do just that.

Shauna Levy is a writer, communications professional and stay-at-home mom. She is currently raising her three boys, ages 8, 6 and 4 alongside her husband in Chappaqua.
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Reserve Now

Dining Out On Mother’s Day

Classics Elevated

Mother’s Day and any day at Amore in Armonk means experiencing the spirit of seasonal simplicity in Italian cooking. Proprietors Mark & Joe Mazzotta describe the menu as “a nod on traditional classics infused with modern-innovation…. thus, resulting in the classics elevated to new levels.” An aroma of brick oven pizza and roasted garlic permeate the room. It is comfort food that is truly palate pleasing... “a simple joy.” The original building was rescued from a dusty, decades old roadhouse and reincarnated into a cozy trattoria—resembling a Tuscan style farmhouse eatery with a rustic elegance inside & out. Established in Armonk almost 20 ago, the new ‘reinvented’ setting is centered in the heart of downtown.

Amore Pizzeria & Italian Kitchen
1 Kent Place, Armonk
(914) 273-3535
amorearmonk.com

A Different Experience

An exciting newcomer promises a “different dining experience this Mother’s Day.” Inka’s Seafood Grill is inviting you to reserve soon to “celebrate all the Moms in our lives.” A special three-course prix fixe menu is being offered, with both Peruvian and American selections. $55 per person. Limited outdoor patio seating, weather permitting. Reservations recommended.

Inka’s Seafood Grill
465 Main Street, Armonk
(914) 730-1122
Inkasseafoodgrill.com

Signature Dishes

Pleasantville residents and visitors alike have been blessed since the quaint and warm Bistro 146 came onto the scene. Still a local fine dining favorite, Bistro 146 has traditionally offered a pre-fixe menu on Mother’s Day. This year, they are promising to include two signature dishes: a Maine Lobster Clam Bake, ‘our style,’ and their ‘famous’ Premium seafood paella!

Bistro 146
146 Bedford Road, Pleasantville
(914) 495-3992

Festive & Farm-to-Table

Whether an intimate dining experience with ‘just mom,’ or an event for the whole family, festive gatherings on Mother’s Day are a long held tradition at the Kittle House. Built as a barn in 1790 and named after local farmer John Kittle, how appropriate it is that the Kittle Barn and Carriage House began its existence with a farm-to-table connection, a philosophy and tradition that has continued throughout the years. Crabtree’s Kittle House established itself as the farm-to-table pioneer in Westchester County and has maintained its excellent reputation as an outlet for the finest sustainable, naturally raised and grown products from small, artisanal farmers located in the Hudson Valley and beyond.

Crabtree’s Kittle House
11 Kittle Road, Chappaqua
(914) 666-8044
www.kittlehouse.com

Eclectic & Inviting

Family gatherings have a rich history inside Chappaqua’s eclectic, new world cuisine restaurant. Here, “New York and Parisian style seating lends a city-like feel to a small town joint.” Though Le Jardin has its origin roots in French cuisine, its many other influences have transformed it into the place where you can get a little taste of everywhere. The interior is cozy and inviting, while the outdoor patio (seasonal & weather permitting) offers patrons a truly inviting dining experience surrounded by a beautiful garden—seemingly plucked from the grounds of Versailles and dropped in the little hamlet of Chappaqua. From French classics and steaks, Classic Latin style tacos done to perfection, onward to nationally recognized award winning BBQ and some of the best burgers around, Le Jardin has it all and does it with service that will bend over backwards for you.

Le Jardin du Roi
95 King Street, Chappaqua
(914) 238-1368
Lejardinchappaqua.com
I Wish I Would’ve Known: A Letter to Younger Moms from an Older Mom

BY MARLENE KERN FISCHER

Now that I’m on that other side of parenting (meaning my three sons are mostly grown and I’m no longer in the trenches), I’ve had some time to reflect. When I say reflect, I mean think about things I think I got right and things about which I was off base. There are things I wish I had known—things I would tell my younger self about being a mother if I could. Here is some of what I would say...

Dear Younger Me,

I am not going to tell you to enjoy every minute of parenthood because, if I offer that advice, I know you will find a way to reach across time, into the future, and smack me (and you would also think an impostor was writing to you). While one kid is vomiting and another is shrieking and the third is out of sight and up to mischief, it’s hard to think about how fleeting time is. I realize that from where you’re standing right now, time may as well be standing still. Just know that the time will pass and, despite their best efforts to break you, you will survive somewhat intact.

Give them your all but-

Save a little something for yourself. I threw myself into parenting because it’s the job I always wanted. However, I wish I had done just a tiny bit more for myself. Like writing—I know I barely had time to think, much less create cogent and insightful sentences but I wish I had held tighter onto the things that were important to me. I’m grateful to get a chance to do more now but I wish I had’t waited so long. So, younger me, please listen and nurture yourself, as well as those children. Carve out a little time for you.

Stop worrying so much-

I know you can’t help worrying. Unfortunately, that’s not going to change in the future. But I can tell you that all the worrying you are doing is a huge waste of time and effort. At least try and dial it down a notch if you can. Or start meditating a little so you can be a tiny bit more Zen.

You’re not screwing them up-

Good news; despite a few mistakes we made along the way, they all turn out fine. They are actually pretty hardy and resilient creatures. Even the high strung one. In fact, they are more than just fine—they are terrific. They aren’t necessarily any tidier but they are good people who care about each other, their friends and girlfriends...yes, I said girlfriends. They are now human enough to have significant others—really nice ones you’re going to like. You will finally have other females in the house. And, as a bonus, I want you to know the kids will be able to get jobs and support themselves.

It’s just a phase-

The baby who wakes up all the time? He does learn to sleep through the night. And that kid who only eats pasta? He will start eating chicken and veggies at some point. How about the one who keeps having tantrums and throws things when he loses? Yup, he will stop doing that. In fact, he’s so docile now it’s hard to believe he’s the same person. And how about the one who can’t manage his money? OK—we are still working on that one but I’m guessing he learns how to do it someday soon. My point is, although their personalities don’t completely change most of the behavioral stuff really is just a phase. Just ride it out like you would a wave and know that some new weird behavior will come along before you know it. And that even if it doesn’t, it eventually ceases to be your problem (at least to some degree).

You already know this but-

Despite the craziness and lack of money and time, work on keeping the marriage magic going. Try and go out a little more; the kids will be fine without you. I know you want to be with them but they really will grow up and have their own lives. You need to make sure you and the hubby still have things to say to each other after they are gone.

I don’t want to tell you everything that is going to happen—some of it is amazing and some, well...you will get through the bad things too. And at the end of the day you will even still have a sense of humor.

Most of all I want you to know two things: You did a great job and I’m proud of you. When it’s all said and done you will be so glad you did it all.

So hang in there. I will check in on you again and, if you need me, feel free to reach out and I will be there for you.

Love,
Older Me

Marlene Kern Fischer is a 20-year resident of Armonk. This is her first piece for the Inside Press; her work has also been featured in CollegiateParent, HuffPost, Grown and Flown, Kveller, Today Parents, the New York Times (Modern Love) and on her own site, Thoughts From Aisle Four.
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