

## A Lifeline for Families

For parents whose children experience serious emotional and behavioral issues, the challenges can seem overwhelming. Not only are they dealing with the stress and heartbreak of seeing their kids struggle, they're also trying to navigate a complex maze of services related to school, health, housing, finances and more.

These families often don't know where to turn—plus, they can feel desperately alone.

North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center has an innovative program that addresses the needs of these caregivers: our Family Advocate Program which pairs parents with one of our family peer advocates.

"These credentialed professionals aren't therapists," explains Paul Danilack, Supervisor of High-End Community-Based Services at the Guidance Center. "Rather, they are parents of their own children with special needs who are trained to educate, guide and empower other parents to better understand their children and their needs."



Yvonne Novy-Cutler, Paul Danilack and Shari Bushansky

**"We want to help  
these parents  
not feel so isolated."**

For two decades, Yvonne Novy-Cutler has been a family peer advocate with the Guidance Center, meeting with parents to learn about their child's particular issues, which may include severe depression and anxiety, school refusal, aggressive behavior and more. "Whereas social workers and mental health counselors work with families, we can share our personal experiences," she says. "We've been where they are and have walked in their shoes."

Family peer advocates provide a wide range of support, attending evaluations with parents; going to CSE (Committee on Special Education) meetings; helping build skills within the family to manage difficult behaviors; and seeking residential placement or inpatient hospitalization if needed. While advocates don't provide therapy, they can help families access those services.

Shari Bushansky, another one of our dedicated advocates, helps run the program's weekly support groups, where parents share their challenges and successes, talk about what worked and what didn't, and build a social

support network.

"We want to help these parents not feel so isolated," says Bushansky, who has been serving our clients for 20 years. "Often, their family and friends don't understand what it's like to be the parent of a child with emotional and behavioral disabilities, and it helps the parents to know they aren't alone."

Our advocates work with parents and the child's therapist to help design a plan to modify their youngster's negative behavior. For example, they help parents create behavioral charts to develop a uniform approach of rewards and consequences, which helps motivate children to listen and respond appropriately. Moreover, advocates act as a bridge to many services, such as schools, counselors, courts, case management and others.

Danilack has nothing but praise for his team. "Yvonne and Shari are critical members of both the department and the agency," he says. "They put their all into their work and know better than anyone how to connect with the families they serve."



Both Novy-Cutler and Bushansky say that, while their work can be stressful, the rewards far outweigh the difficulties. "These parents have been down a long, tough road, and watching as their families heal makes it all worth it," says Novy-Cutler. Confirming the advocates' value at a recent parent support group, one mom stated, "These two women have saved my life!"

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# A Message From The Executive Director / CEO



In December 2021, a sobering report came out of the office of U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murphy. He laid it out in stark terms: "The challenges today's generation of young people face are unprecedented and uniquely hard to navigate. And the effect these challenges have had on their mental health is devastating."

## Even before the pandemic, the statistics were alarming.

One example: In 2019, a third of all high school students—and half of female students—reported "persistent feelings of sadness or hopeless." That marked a whopping 40% increase from 2009.

What caused such a dramatic jump in just a 10-year period? We know that mental health is impacted by numerous factors, from brain chemistry to family relationships to socio-economic conditions and more. Undoubtedly, the preponderance of messages on social media suggesting everyone else but you is having a perfect life played a big role. Then came the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 virus. Social isolation,

remote school, loss of treasured milestones and extracurricular activities, fear of illness, loss of loved ones—all of these factors led to levels of depression and anxiety among our youth that surpassed anything we'd ever experienced.

As we have from the very beginning of the pandemic, North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center continues to offer a comprehensive, innovative and intensive response to the crisis.

Within a few days of the shutdown in March 2020, we moved to a telehealth platform so we could see clients in a seamless fashion while protecting them and our staff. We held free virtual "Pandemic Parent Support Groups" to help families navigate the numerous challenges they were facing. We also ran a series of webinars featuring our own clinical team as well as outside experts talking about issues ranging from self-care to bereavement to health disparities.

In September 2020, we also launched one of our most important programs ever: the **Douglas S. Feldman Suicide Prevention Project**. This life-saving initiative, which combines crisis clinical interventions, preventive education and community outreach, came about at a time when suicidal thinking among our youth was skyrocketing due to the pandemic.

## Responding to Your Needs

As soon as it was safe to do so, we began to see clients in person but retained the option of conducting virtual therapy. Through this hybrid approach, our families could decide what worked best for them,

**"We will always listen to your needs and concerns, and we will respond swiftly and compassionately."**

and we will continue this policy in the future, when the pandemic becomes more endemic and less of a crisis.

As I write this message, COVID-19 rates are low on Long Island, but as we've learned all too well, the virus is unpredictable. But one thing you can count on: We will always listen to your needs and concerns, and we will respond swiftly and compassionately. That's something the Guidance Center has done throughout its nearly 70-year history.

The cover story in this issue of Guidelines provides a perfect example of how the Guidance Center responds to the needs of the children and families we serve. Our clients face a diverse set of challenges, and a one-size-fits-all solution would be woefully inadequate. We created our **Family Advocate Program** to provide individually tailored support to families whose children are facing serious emotional and behavioral challenges. Our peer support specialists go into clients' homes, to schools and to other locations so they can provide help when and where it is needed most.

## Our promise to you:

We will continually evaluate our programs and evolve to fit your needs. We hear you, and we are here for you.

Wishing you health and safety,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathy Rivera".

**Kathy Rivera**  
Executive Director/CEO

## We've Got You Covered!

Given the continuing safety issues surrounding the pandemic, we are seeing many of our clients via a secure, easy-to-access telehealth platform. However, all of our staff are on site, and we are conducting in-person appointments at our three locations. We continue to offer flexible services so we can provide the highest quality care in a timely, affordable fashion. To schedule an appointment, please call us at (516) 626-1971 or email [intake@northshorechildguidance.org](mailto:intake@northshorechildguidance.org)

# Guidelines

SPRING 2022

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# Donor Profile: John M. Zenir, Esq.



John Zenir

At North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center, the well-being of children and families always comes first.

At the legal practice of John M. Zenir, Esq., where the focus is on family law, divorce law and estate planning, the exact same philosophy holds true.

"Children are deeply affected by divorce, custody, abuse and other difficult circumstances," says Zenir. "One of the realities with family law is that kids always think they caused the problem between their parents; whether they are 2 or 22, they believe it's their fault if their parents are getting divorced."

Improving the lives of children has been central to Zenir's life. As a young man, he taught 7th and 8th grade, and helped young people receive their high school equivalency diplomas.

While he veered from that path for nearly two decades, running a family cleaning supply business, he eventually found himself drawn to the law and got his degree at Touro. He soon felt pulled to center his practice around family law, working for many years representing children as part of a law guardian panel.

## Therapy is Vital

His experiences in family court gave Zenir an unvarnished look at what conflict in the family can do to children. "When I first started as a lawyer, I saw how difficult it was for children to witness their families breaking apart," he says. "It was devastating."

But at the time, he adds, there was little open discussion about therapy. "Receiving mental health care is essential when kids go through such challenging times," says Zenir, who shares that mental health issues in his family impacted him as a child. "It's so important that we make therapy available to young people. That way, we will be much more likely to create adults who are not limited by their traumatic childhood experiences and can deal with society's problems."

## The Children's Center

Zenir's involvement with the Guidance Center began when we took on the role of overseeing the Children's Center at Nassau Family Court, which was designed to provide care and early learning to children, ages 6 weeks to 12 years, while their parents or guardians were conducting court business.

Since the pandemic took hold, family court has moved to an almost exclusively virtual model, so the Children's Center has not operated for the past two years, but its value

that they shouldn't hear, which made court officials very concerned. It served to protect children from heated exchanges, and the people running it from the Guidance Center were wonderful."

## Championing Our Mission

Zenir continues to be a champion for the Guidance Center. He recently began charging a \$100 consultation fee to prospective clients, which he donates in full to support our work.

"Especially during pandemic times, there is no question that kids desperately need therapy," he says. "Everyone is recognizing that therapy is a big part of wellness today, and that the more available therapy is, the better our community will be."

## What the Future Holds

While Zenir's practice is thriving, he's considering reducing his hours so he can spend more time with his wife Deborah



John Zenir,  
Allison Cacace  
and Bob  
Mangi

to the families who used it over many years is unquestionable.

"It gave families the freedom to not worry about what their children might experience if they had to wait in a hallway near the courtroom," says Zenir, who co-chaired many fundraisers for the Children's Center with Robert C. Mangi, Esq. and Allison Cacace.

The Children's Center, founded by the late Honorable Burton S. Joseph, was loved not only by kids but also lawyers and judges.

"Family court issues can be contentious and highly emotional, and yelling and angry outbursts aren't uncommon," says Zenir. "Before the Children's Center existed, kids were at risk of hearing adult conversations

of 52 years, his three children and six grandchildren—but he doesn't expect to ever retire fully.

"I will probably cut down to 16 or 20 hours somewhere down the road," says Zenir, a history buff who plans to travel more and increase his visits to the New York Historical Society.

Whatever path he chooses, the Guidance Center is grateful to John Zenir for his unwavering dedication to the children and families of Long Island and to the Guidance Center's vital work.

**To learn more about supporting North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center, contact Director of Development Lauren McGowan at (516) 626-1971, ext. 320.**

# Staff Profile: Stepping Up for Our Garden

The Guidance Center has a great team, all of whom are dedicated to going above and beyond for every client. A perfect example: Ricardo Castillo, one of our social workers, who was determined that the organic garden in our Roslyn Heights office would not be a victim of pandemic neglect.

He explains: "We use the garden to help kids learn lessons about responsibility, self-confidence, teamwork and growth. But when the pandemic first hit, we saw most of our clients through telehealth, so they weren't able to be onsite to tend to the garden, and they really missed the experience."

Castillo came up with a creative plan: He decided to use an iPad to Zoom with his clients while he planted and harvested from the garden, so they could feel like they were a part of the process.



Ricardo Castillo tends to our garden in Roslyn Heights.

He worked on the garden through the summer and early fall for the past two years, and it was a beautiful sight. "We had a great crop of tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, strawberries and even watermelons," says Castillo, who often dropped by on Sundays to volunteer his time.

"We're truly proud of our organic garden program, and especially grateful to Ricardo for all his work to keep the garden growing and to engage our clients in the process," says Kathy Rivera, Executive Director/CEO. "Our staff always puts the needs of kids first."

Lisa Corleto, Castillo's supervisor, adds, "Ricardo is a talented clinician who uses his strengths as well as his interests to engage his clients. He does so with ease and in a way that is in line with current evidenced-based models. Ricardo's work with his clients is transformative."

## Volunteer Profile: Louis M. Pierre



Louis M. Pierre in a celebratory mood.

When the pandemic took hold, many of our clients in the New Cassel/Westbury area lost jobs or became ill, and they were in dire need of necessities such as clothing and food. That's when Louis M. Pierre took action.

"COVID was so difficult for many people, who needed food and other goods," Pierre says. "How can you sit in the comfort of your home, happy with your family, while other people are suffering?"

Pierre's wife, Marmeline Martin, a longtime Guidance Center outreach worker, identified a need that extended beyond our usual mental health treatment. The pair stepped into action, making trips to food banks, loading the couple's car to capacity and delivering to grateful clients.

Dr. Nellie Taylor-Walthrust has nothing but praise for Pierre, who she says

became "a dedicated first responder who graciously took on the role of assisting Marmeline with weekly pick-up, bagging and delivering food to needy seniors, grandparents, young mothers and anyone who needed food during this critical time."

"Helping other human beings is very rewarding," says Pierre. "It was beautiful to see the kids and families so happy, blowing kisses to us and clapping."

The Guidance Center is grateful for the dedicated volunteer service of Pierre and also for the dedication of Martin, who has been serving the community for 12 years.

"This was a beautiful team effort that was consistent and well-coordinated," says Taylor-Walthrust. "I know the Westbury/New Cassel community will remember their generosity and kind spirit for years to come."

# Fundraising Events

## You Brought Hope and Healing to Kids!

Keeping our treasured supporters safe was top of mind when we decided to cancel our biggest fundraiser in fall 2021.

This year's theme, An Appeal to Heal, was a huge success, thanks to all of you who donated and to our four superstar couples who pledged to match all gifts up to \$100,000: Marilyn and Russell Albanese, Rosemarie and Mitchell Klipper, Tracey and Seth Kupferberg and Andrea and Michael Leeds. We not only met our goal, but exceeded it, raising over \$200,000!

We're so grateful to Stacey Sager of Channel 7 Eyewitness News who lent her talents to promotional videos encouraging donors to participate in An Appeal to Heal.

And some big news! We're excited to announce that we have a date and location set for our in-person fall fundraiser! The event, which hasn't yet been officially named, will take place on September 8, 2022, at the Manhasset Bay Yacht Club. Save the date for what is certain to be a wonderful event, hosted once again by Stacey Sager!



Stacey Sager



Russell and Marilyn Albanese



Mitchell and Rosemarie Klipper



Seth and Tracey Kupferberg



Michael and Andrea Leeds

## Americana Manhasset: Community Champions!



Every holiday season, Americana Manhasset supports over 150 not-for-profit

organizations during its annual Champions for Charity® holiday shopping benefit. "We're thrilled that North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center participates each year," says Catherine Castagna, President of Castagna Realty, which owns and operates Americana Manhasset, along with other luxury properties. "Over the past 26 years, Champions for Charity® has raised over \$16 million, thanks to the overwhelming participation of our loyal

and philanthropic-minded clientele. The Guidance Center has a long relationship with the Castagna family, including our wonderful longtime Board Member Rita Castagna. "Giving back has been an integral part of Castagna Realty and Americana Manhasset's mission," she says. "We are proud of our community and are dedicated to making it an even better place to live, work and play. We applaud North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center for their continued dedication to helping all children and strengthening families. They are an indispensable resource in our community."

In 2021, the Guidance Center received over \$12,300 from Champions for

Charity®. We are grateful to the entire Castagna Family for their unwavering support throughout the year and to all of you who shopped and were Champions for our Charity.



Board Member Ruth Fortunoff Cooper shops at Americana Manhasset.

# Fundraising Events

## SAVE THE DATE



THE JONATHAN KREVAT MEMORIAL  
GOLF & TENNIS CLASSIC  
25TH ANNIVERSARY  
HONORING JEFF KREVAT,  
ESTEEMED FOUNDER OF THE KREVAT CUP  
BENEFITTING  
NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER  
MONDAY, JUNE 6, 2022  
at ENGINEERS COUNTRY CLUB  
ROSLYN HARBOR, NEW YORK  
REGISTER TODAY: [NORTHSHORECHILDGUIDANCE.ORG/KREVATCUP2022](http://NORTHSHORECHILDGUIDANCE.ORG/KREVATCUP2022) OR 516.626.1971 x309  
\*PROOF OF VACCINATION REQUIRED



NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY  
GUIDANCE CENTER

## Too Much Sun Spoils the Fun



### Family Ice Skating



We were so excited to be hosting our first-ever Family Ice Skating Fundraiser, co-chaired by Joshua D. Brookstein of Sahn Ward Braff Koblenz and Guidance Center Board Member Jeffrey Greenblatt of PSEG Long Island.

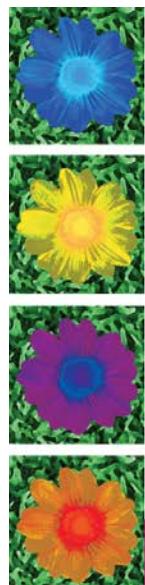
With the hard work of Brookstein and Greenblatt, we had sold over

100 tickets to the event, scheduled for February 12, 2022, at Christopher Morley Park. Imagine our surprise—and disappointment—that the thermometer hit a record 59 degrees!

While melted ice meant no skating, our supporters and sponsors stood by us, and we raised nearly \$6,500. Many



thanks to our partners PSEG Long Island and Sahn Ward Braff Koblenz, and our sponsors Americana Manhasset, Jeff and Jill Bernard and Republic Bank!



## SAVE THE DATE

North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center's

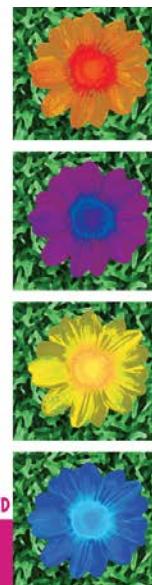
# SPRING APRIL 28 2022 LUNCHEON

at Glen Head Country Club

Boutiques & Mahjong, Canasta or Bridge

Boutiques open from  
10:00am-3:00pm  
Mahjong, Canasta and  
Bridge begin at 10:15am  
Luncheon and Program  
follow at 12:30pm

For more information or to register: (516) 626-1971 ext. 309  
or visit: [www.northshorechildguidance.org/luncheon2022](http://www.northshorechildguidance.org/luncheon2022)



# *Community Education*

# *Caring for Grandparent Caregivers*



Kathy Rivera and Dr. Nellie Taylor-Walthrust took part in a webinar on our C-GRASP initiative.

When grandparents are the primary caregivers for their grandchildren, it can be a daunting role. That's why the Guidance Center created C-GRASP, our Caregiver Grandparent Respite and Support Program, supported by the Town of North Hempstead's Project Independence.

Executive Director/CEO Kathy Rivera and Dr. Nellie Taylor-Walthrust spoke about the program on a webinar hosted by Kimberly Corcoran-Galante, Commissioner for the Department of Services for the Aging, and attended by newly elected officials,

including Town Supervisor Jennifer DeSena.

"I'm so grateful for our partnership with the Guidance Center; they have been on the forefront of providing education and treatment in the mental health field," says DeSena. "Our country has lost hundreds of thousands of people to overdoses and other deaths of despair, many of them leaving children in the care of their grandparents. The C-GRASP program is providing much needed support for the grandparents, who can then take better care of these children."

# *Teaching Smart Tech Habits*



*Clockwise from upper right: Kathy Rivera,  
Dr. Reena Nandi, Elizabeth Lyons of Buckley  
and Paul Danilack.*

and Supervisor of High-End Community-Based Services Paul Danilack—gave attendees guidance on helping their children have a balanced approach with social media and other technology.

"Parents can set appropriate boundaries when it comes to a variety of technologies, both for their kids' mental and physical well-being," says Rivera. "Reasonable time limits, internet safety protocols and things like teaching good posture all combine to create healthy tech habits." Many thanks to Board Member Nancy Lane for facilitating this connection to Buckley!

# *Together, We Make the Difference!*



On January 13, 2022, the Guidance Center gave an overview of all our services in a webinar hosted by the Manhasset Coalition Against Substance Abuse (CASA), which brings together parents, schools, community and youth to address mental health challenges and substance use within the community.

"CASA is excited to have the Guidance Center as a partner," says program Development and Community collaborate with partners from their knowledge, expertise, reach m their combined strengths as we those we serve."

Thank you to Alissa Striano for connecting us with Manhasset CASA, and to Supervisor Jennifer DeSena for taking part in the discussion!

# Community Outreach

## Standing Up for Maternal Health Equity

The facts are alarming: According to the N.Y. State Department of Health, a Black woman is up to four times more likely to die in childbirth than a white mother. In Nassau County, the infant mortality rate per 1,000 births is 9.4 for Black babies versus the 2.2 for white non-Hispanic babies.

In response, Dr. Nellie Taylor-Walthrust, Director of the Guidance Center's Leeds Place, and Dr. Martine Hackett, Associate Professor at Hofstra University, created Birth Justice Warriors, a volunteer educational and advocacy group that works to remedy this inequity.

In late January, Dr. Taylor-Walthrust was invited to join N.Y. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand at a press conference promoting the Maternal CARE Act, which would establish programs to reduce bias in maternal health and bring health care services to pregnant women and new moms.

Both the Guidance Center and Birth Justice Warriors support this important legislation, and we hope that you will join us in spreading the word so that all women receive the care they need and deserve.



Dr. Nellie Taylor-Walthrust, third from right, next to Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, with Dr. Martine Hackett to Taylor-Walthrust's right, at the Maternal CARE Act press conference.

## Zonta Club Welcomes Warriors



Members of the Zonta Club of Long Island, a group of professionals working to advance the status of women and girls both locally and globally through service and advocacy, welcomed Dr. Nellie Taylor-Walthrust at their February meeting to learn more about our Birth Justice Warriors initiative.

"We were so excited to learn about Birth Justice Warriors and their advocacy on behalf of maternal health equity," says Kathy Rau, co-president of Zonta Club of Long Island. "It was great to know that someone is taking a leadership role in this important area."

## Kudos from the Senator!



Ellen Labita, dedicated Guidance Center supporter.



Senator Chuck Schumer applauds our work.

of the great work of the Guidance Center in Nassau County." Thank you Sen. Schumer! We are very grateful to Ellen, of Baker Tilly US, for allowing us to join her at this important event!

## Yes We Can Community Center



Pictured L to R: Councilman Robert Troiano, Dr. Nellie Taylor-Walthrust, Supervisor Jennifer DeSena, Councilman Dennis Walsh and Director of Yes We Can Tyronza Murray

We were excited to take part in the Town of North Hempstead's Health and Wellness Day in celebration of Black History Month at the Yes We Can Community Center in Westbury! Many thanks to all involved in putting on such an important event!

# Program News

## Adventures of a Lifetime

The separate outings taken by our Latina Girls Project clients and the teens in our Wilderness Respite Program are in full swing, giving young people the chance to create strong emotional bonds and develop responsibility, self-esteem and social skills.

Executive Director/CEO Kathy Rivera joined the Wilderness Respite outing to Caumsett State Park this winter to see the program in action. “The teens had such a wonderful camaraderie,” she says. “They all support each other, whether they’d been on trips before or were first timers. And they had such an appreciation for the beauty of the natural setting.”

The teens from the Latina Girls Project took several recent trips in the past months, among them a visit to Sky Zone Trampoline Park, What’s Cooking and Dix Hills Ice Rink.

“Most had never been ice skating,” says social worker Erika Perez-Tobon, who leads the trips. “Although they were initially frightened, they overcame their fears, offering the teenagers an opportunity to feel proud of themselves. These outings provide an incredible growth experience.”

The trips also provide respite for the entire family. “It’s important for both parents and kids to have time to refresh apart from one another,” says Perez-Tobon. “Plus, the teens get to have fun, and that’s also a crucial part of emotional health.”

Many thanks to John and Janet Kornreich for making the Latina Girls Project trips possible!



Kathy Rivera and Bruce Kaufstein, the recently retired founder of our Wilderness Respite Program.



The teens enjoy a rest on their hike at Caumsett State Park.



Cooking together was a great bonding experience—and lots of fun!



At Sky Zone, the Latina Girls had a ball!

# Program News

## COVID Conversations Soothe New Moms



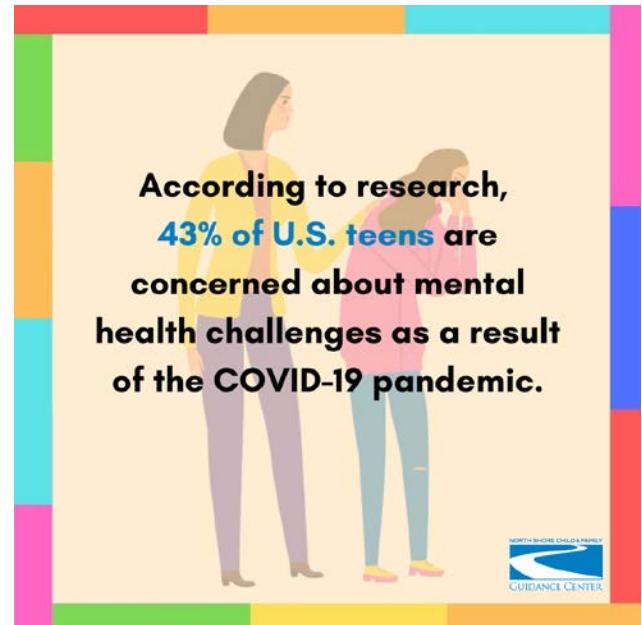
The pandemic has been difficult for everyone, but for new mothers, the anxiety was particularly intense. In response, the Guidance Center held virtual support groups, called "COVID Conversations," so our clients could discuss, process and connect about the impact this was having on their lives.

Social worker Liz

Lauricella, who works with mothers in our Diane Goldberg Maternal Depression Program, says that the arrival of the highly transmissible Omicron strain caused much concern.

"No one has written a Girlfriend's Guide or What to Expect for becoming a mother during a global pandemic," she says. "These moms were feeling more isolated and stressed than they would have imagined just as they were getting to know their babies and learning who they are as mothers. These conversations made all the difference."

If you or someone you know is experiencing postpartum depression, contact us at (516) 626-1971. We are here to help!



## Grants

**Community Chest of Port Washington** - \$8,000 for General Support

**The Dammann Fund** - \$10,000 for Good Beginnings for Babies

**Ike, Molly & Steven Elias Foundation** - \$12,500 for General Support

**Glen Oaks Club** - \$5,000 for General Support

**Kiwanis Club of North Shore Foundation** - \$250 for General Support

**The Kupferberg Foundation** - \$25,000 for General Support

**The Liebowitz Foundation** - \$2,000 for General Support

**Fay J. Lindner Foundation** - \$25,000 for the Let the Light In Campaign

**Nancy & Edwin Marks Family Foundation** - \$150,000 for Right from the Start

**MJS Foundation** - \$100,000 for General Support

**The Eleanor & Roy Nester Family Foundation** - \$5,000 for General Support

**Newsday Charities** - \$20,000 for Right from the Start

**NYBKW Charitable Foundation** - \$1,000 for General Support

**PSEG Long Island** - \$4,000 for Triage and Emergency Services

**Caroline and Sigmund Schott Fund** - \$10,000 for General Support

**Jane & Martin Schwartz Family Foundation** - \$5,000 for General Support

**The Peter and Caroline Striano Foundation** - \$25,000 for General Support

**United Way of Long Island** - \$7,500 for General Support

# Inside the Guidance Center

## Guidance Center Welcomes New Board Member!



The Guidance Center is pleased to announce that Mary M. Margiotta, a Principal in the Ernst & Young's Financial Services International Tax and Transaction Services practice in New York, has joined our Board of Directors. She will serve as Treasurer of our Board.

"As a parent, I have seen how important mental health is for children to develop into happy and successful adults," says Margiotta. "Especially

Mary M. Margiotta is joining the Guidance Center's Board.

in today's high-stress world, children need and deserve the opportunity to access this life-changing and often lifesaving help. I am thrilled to be able to help make it possible for more Long Island families."

Mary and her husband, Vasu Krishnamurthy, are residents of Manhasset and are the proud parents of two college-age daughters, Nina and Mia.

## We're Growing!

Are you a social worker or other mental health professional who wants to join a dynamic, dedicated team? We'd love to meet you! We also have openings for administrative staff and front-desk help. To learn more, email [executiveoffice@northshorechildguidance.org](mailto:executiveoffice@northshorechildguidance.org) or visit [www.northshorechildguidance.org/careers](http://www.northshorechildguidance.org/careers).



## Staff Learns Lifesaving Skill



Narcan is used for suspected opioid overdoses and can truly save lives. Thanks to Dr. Nellie Taylor-Waltrust, Director of our Leeds Place office in Westbury where our substance

use treatment program is located, our staff has been trained in Narcan's use and has received Narcan kits.

"All of us know someone whose loved one has lost his or her life to these dangerous substances," says Kathy Rivera, Guidance Center Executive Director. "While you hope to never have to use Narcan, it's important to have the ability to do so."

We are grateful to the Nassau County Department of Human Services, Office of Mental Health, Chemical Dependency and Developmental Disabilities Services, who provided the kits and the training.

## Creating Lasting Connections

Each year, the Guidance Center hosts a Staff Development Day, which brings together employees from all three of our locations. This past fall, we took a hybrid approach, with some joining in person while others zoomed in to the event.

The creative team who organized the day did a terrific job, combining educational activities with fun-filled games that led to lots of laughter and new friendships among colleagues who work in different departments. A fine time was had by all!

Director of Outpatient Operations Cindy Ambrose unwinds with some meditation techniques.



# In Memoriam

## In Memory of Jason Daniel Witler

Following the passing of Jason Daniel Whitler from an accidental fentanyl poisoning in April 2021, his family identified the Guidance Center as their charity for which funds would be raised in support of our work with mental health and drug and alcohol addiction.

"People need to know that anything that doesn't come from a pharmacy is laced with fentanyl," says Bonnie Witler, Jason's mother. "Using any street drugs is like playing Russian Roulette, and I don't want anyone else to die from this terrible crisis."

Last June, the first annual Jason Daniel Witler Memorial Home Run Derby garnered support from friends and family



Jason and Bonnie Witler



The Jason Daniel Witler Memorial Bench, at our Whispered Wishes headquarters.

who requested that a beautiful bench be available for a moment of reflection for anyone who may need it. The bench now adorns the backyard of our Roslyn Heights headquarters where it holds a peaceful spot in the shade. We extend our deepest gratitude to the Witler family and their friends.



## In Honor, In Memory or to Celebrate

Gifts to the Guidance Center can be made to honor or remember a loved one or a friend, or to commemorate a special occasion. Make your online gift at [www.northshorechildguidance.org](http://www.northshorechildguidance.org) or by mail to the Development Department, NSC&FGC, 480 Old Westbury Road, Roslyn Heights, NY 11577 or call (516) 626-1971 ext. 337 for more information. Don't forget to include your name and address and the name and address of the individual for whom you are making the donation.

### In Honor Of

**Terry Brown's Birthday** – Leslie Tannenbaum

**Ruth Fortunoff Cooper** – Jennie Fortunoff; Joanne and Scott Silverman

**Ellen Feldman's Birthday** – Rosanne and Samuel Spear

**Jeffrey Greenblatt** – Eric Cagner

**Bruce Kaufstein's Retirement** – Edward Paley

**Rosemarie and Mitchell Klipper** – Susan and Robert Miller; Erika and Kenneth Witover

**Andrea and Michael Leeds** – Randi Fetner Sherman; Erika and Kenneth Witover

**Marion Levine's 90th Birthday** – Irving Levine

**Andrew Malekoff's Retirement** – Rita Castagna; Daphne and Charles Chan; Nancy Cowles; Marion and Irving Levine; Daniel Oliver; Edward Paley; Heather and

David Schwartz; Alexis and Howard Siegel

**Luis Porcelli** – Natalia and Adam Good

**Kathy Rivera** – Marleen Litt; Lisa Littlefield; Elise and Howard Rubin

**Nellie Taylor-Waltrust** – John Grillo

### In Memory of

**Michael Bruno** – Sarah Stamboulie

**Sue Cole's Sister** – Marion and Irving Levine

**Marie DeLuca** – Regina and Frank Miritello

**Douglas Feldman** – Linda Budd; Jean and Jeffrey Forman; Andrea Lev; Diane and Darryl Mallah; Reva and Alan Rothenberg

**Helene Fortunoff** – David Barish; Pamela Bernstein-Gulla; Amy and Daniel Cantor; Rita Castagna; Matthew Cohen; Franki Doshi; Leslie and Bernard Ettinger; Joy Fernandez; Janet Finke; Muriel and Allan Greenblatt; Alice Gross; Anna Kanes; Asima and Anil Kapoor; Amy Katz; Nancy

and Lew Lane; Andrea and Michael Leeds; Marion and Irving Levine; Marilyn Lundy; Dale and Andrew Malekoff; The Mayrock and Sands Families; Lauren and Michael McGowan; Vicki and Stephen Monaloy; Laura Oliver; Christina Pumo and John Nanavakis; Heather and David Schwartz; Carol and Paul Shaman; Barbara Sheib and Martin Saiman; Marie and Paul Vitale; Sandra and Scott Weingarten; Jonathan White

**Kenan James Hassan** – Deniz Turgut

**Phyllis Manko** – Harry Manko

**Joann Marinaccio** – Annette Albanese

**Leonard Rautenberg** – Andrew Borinstein

**Marie Rautenberg** – Ellen Rautenberg

**Joseph Rescigno** – Regina and Frank Miritello

**Peter Sheintoch** – Marion and Irving Levine

**Barbara Simpson** – Edward Simpson

# In Memoriam

## In Memory of Helene Fortunoff



Helene Fortunoff

All of us were saddened to hear of the passing of Helene Fortunoff, 88, in November 2021.

Helene, renowned as a groundbreaking entrepreneur and passionate philanthropist, had a long history of dedication to the Guidance Center. Her involvement started in our early days, when past Board Presidents Rochelle Lipton and Lucille Kantor, along with former Executive Director Marion Levine, introduced her to the organization.

We were blessed to have Helene as a member of our Board of Directors for nearly a quarter century, from 1981-2005. She cared deeply about

our work and was known by all for her intelligence, strong work ethic and kindness.

She was also known for her high energy and joie de vivre. In 2011, she was one of our featured dancers at the "Dancing with our

Stars" Gala, and her performance was a true delight.

A passionate and generous philanthropist, Helene was involved not only with the Guidance Center but with many worthy causes, including the UJA-Federation of New York and the Lustgarten Foundation, which works to eradicate pancreatic cancer, the disease that took the life of her son Louis in 2012.

Another of Helene's passions was the Fortunoff Holocaust Video Archives at Yale University. In addition, she was a chairperson at Hofstra University, and she was also involved in Mount Sinai Hospital of Miami Beach.

When we profiled Helene and her daughter Ruth Fortunoff Cooper, a longtime Guidance Center Board Member, in our February 2018 issue of Guidelines, Helene told us, "Giving is an emotional thing. I've always believed that you get more than you give when you dedicate yourself to helping others. And it's also made my life a whole lot of fun."

We will always hold a special place in our hearts for Helene, and we extend our sincere condolences to her husband Robert Grossman, children Esther, Andrea, Rhonda, Ruth and David, and all her loved ones.



## Create a Lasting Legacy

You can secure the future of North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center beyond your lifetime with a planned gift. Your contribution can be made as part of a financial or estate plan. Here are several ways to make a planned gift:

### IRA Rollover

An IRA rollover allows people age 70½ and older to reduce their taxable income by making a gift directly from their IRA.

### Bequest

A bequest is a gift made through your will or trust. The Guidance Center's Legacy Society recognizes individuals who have made bequests.

### Retirement Plan Assets

Use your assets that are subject to higher taxes to fund a gift to the Guidance Center and leave more tax-favorable assets to your family. The Guidance Center does not pay tax on these gifts, which allows your gift to directly support the mental health of children and families.

### Stocks, Bonds or Mutual Funds

Maximize the monetary gains in your financial portfolio

by funding a charitable gift with donated appreciated stock, mutual funds or bonds. This is a tax-savvy way to help benefit the Guidance Center for years to come.

### Life Insurance

Designate the Guidance Center as a beneficiary of your life insurance. You can use a life insurance policy that is no longer needed to show your support and help local children and families get the mental health services they need.

These are just a few ways in which you can make a planned gift. Speak to your financial advisor about your interest in supporting the Guidance Center. Together you can determine which gift options may be most appropriate.

**For more information, contact Lauren McGowan, Director of Development, at (516) 626-1971 ext. 320 or [lmcgowan@northshorechildguidance.org](mailto:lmcgowan@northshorechildguidance.org)**

# In the News

From television and radio to print and online media, the Guidance Center is at the center of the conversation.



Kathy Rivera discussed the impact of Daylight Savings Time on children's mental and physical well-being on this network TV news show.



The team at our Latina Girls Project spoke about our life-saving program on this very popular show.



Helene Fortunoff was honored for her legacy as a ground-breaking businesswoman and philanthropist.



Our Ask the Guidance Center Experts column tackled anxiety and panic attacks in teens, Seasonal Affective Disorder and children's sleep disorders brought on by the pandemic.



An editorial applauded the Guidance Center's support of the Maternal CARE Act and the work of Birth Justice Warriors (see page 8).

## Newsday



The Guidance Center's role in a widely attended press conference was featured in "Gillibrand Seeks Funds to Reduce Deaths Among Pregnant Women."

Former Board Member Helene Fortunoff received glowing tributes in a Newsday story on her passing (see page 13).

Our mental health counselor Dena Papadopoulos was interviewed for "Long Island Seniors Learn to Grow Up Fast in Pandemic Era."



Our longtime Board Member Jo-Ellen Hazan was featured in a fun Newsday piece on holiday decorations, showcasing her extensive collection of nutcrackers!



Our monthly Parenting Plus column highlighted the expertise of several of our staff members on issues ranging from maternal health inequity to teen dating violence.



Kathy Rivera and Elissa Smilowitz were the featured guests on this hour-long podcast, discussing the impact the pandemic has had on the mental health of youth, suicide prevention and our Douglas S. Feldman Suicide Prevention Project.

## Let's Get Social



The Guidance Center has a vibrant, active presence on social media, where we share pertinent advice, videos, advocacy opportunities and more, as well as important stories from our partners and outside media that shed light on children's mental health and well-being.

## Blog



How the Arts Can Expand Your Child's Horizons



When Parents Have No Place to Turn



Gratitude for Hope and Healing, By Kathy Rivera, Executive Director/CEO

[northshorechildguidance.org](http://northshorechildguidance.org)

In our weekly blogs—which post on our website, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter—we covered topics such as the impact of coverage of the war in Ukraine on children, work/family balance and helping kids heal from trauma. Do you have news to share? Would you be interested in contributing to our social media presence as a guest blogger? We'd love to hear from you! Email communications@northshorechildguidance.org.

# You Can Make a Difference

## Girl Scouts Care



One of our moms welcomes this special gift from a local girl scout troop.

Thank you to Garden City Girl Scout Troop and leader Michelle Bastiani for their donation of personal care kits for our Good Beginnings for Babies moms!

## Cheers to Acts of Kindness!



Cuties Addison and Riley, whose mom works at the Guidance Center, with their Halloween cups.

Small acts of kindness can mean a lot. That philosophy is what inspired our supporter Margaret Scheidel to donate these cute Halloween cups to the Guidance Center. "So many people were feeling helpless during the COVID crisis, and I simply gave them an outlet to offer support," says Scheidel. "Children's well-being has been affected just as strongly as adults, especially since kids can't make sense of what was happening. Providing a simple smile to a child during a holiday celebration made so many people feel happy."

## A Bounty for Babies



Dr. Nellie Taylor-Walstrust and the donated baby supplies.

Dr. Nellie Taylor-Walstrust, who heads up our Good Beginnings for Babies initiative, was all smiles when she received a bounty of baby items for the young moms in this Guidance Center program, which provides support, counseling and advocacy for

pregnant and parenting teens. Thanks go out to the Student National Medical Association at the Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell; and Ariana Ram, the medical student who organized the drive with Taylor Bristol, a Hofstra undergrad and intern for Birth Justice Warriors (see story, page 8).

## Help Us Spread the Word!



It's so important that members of the community know the Guidance Center is here to help during difficult times. If your family has used our services, please leave a review on Google or Yelp. Just click on the QR codes. Thank you!



## Please Support the Guidance Center Through Our Annual Fund

The Annual Fund is our "lifeline," composed of unrestricted funds that can be used when and where they are needed most. It's easy to give. You may make your donation in one of three ways:

Online at:  
[www.northshorechildguidance.org](http://www.northshorechildguidance.org)

By phone:  
Call (516) 626-1971, ext. 337

By mail: Make checks payable to NSCFGCC and mail to  
NSC&FGC  
480 Old Westbury Road  
Roslyn Heights, NY 11577

**Thank you for your support!**



480 Old Westbury Road  
Roslyn Heights, NY 11577-2215  
tel: (516) 626-1971  
fax: (516) 626-8043  
[www.northshorechildguidance.org](http://www.northshorechildguidance.org)



For nearly 70 years, the Guidance Center has been caring for the emotional well-being of children and families in our communities. While the pandemic has brought additional challenges to the work we do, we continue to face these tasks head on and will continue to do so in the future.

### FACT

The U.S. Surgeon General stated that depression and anxiety symptoms in youth have doubled during the pandemic.

#### THE GUIDANCE CENTER RESPONSE...

**6,370 individuals**  
received lifesaving  
mental health  
services

### FACT

The CDC revealed that 18.8% of teens seriously considered attempting suicide.

#### THE GUIDANCE CENTER RESPONSE...

**152 new patients**  
were regarded as  
emergencies

### FACT

The CDC's most recent statistics show that 36.7% of adolescents aged 12-17 years had persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness.

#### THE GUIDANCE CENTER RESPONSE...

**74,840 therapy  
sessions** were  
provided

### FACT

According to the CDC,  
1 in 6 U.S. children aged 2-8  
years had a diagnosed mental,  
behavioral, or developmental  
disorder.

#### THE GUIDANCE CENTER RESPONSE...

**253 children** were  
seen in our early  
childhood programs



To donate today please visit: [www.northshorechildguidance.org/donate](http://www.northshorechildguidance.org/donate) or call 516.626.1971

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