

Neighbors Link

VOLUME 28

OUR MISSION: To strengthen the whole community by actively enhancing the healthy integration of immigrants **OUR STRATEGY:** Educate, Empower, Employ

Newly Passed Immigration Protection Act Defines Role of Police and Advances Public Safety

On March 20th, the Immigration Protection Act passed the Westchester County Legislature with bipartisan support and was signed into law by County Executive George Latimer. This historic bill provides vital new tools for county and local law enforcement to build trust with immigrant communities and is fully compliant with federal immigration law.

To promote passage of the bill, Neighbors Link worked closely over the past year with a consortium of 20 organizations that make up the New York Immigration Coalition Westchester County Steering Committee, as well as many legislators, including Catherine Borgia who sponsored the bill.

"This act reaffirms that Westchester is a welcoming county," said Legislator Borgia, who spoke at the opening of the new Neighbors Link Center in Ossining. "Immigrants don't have to be afraid to report a crime, give information to the police or interact with any county employee."

Studies have shown that



immigrants are more reluctant to report crime when they fear that police are acting as immigration agents. The Immigration Protection Act will instill a sense of security among those who are victims or witnesses of crimes and will advance public safety in the immigrant community, and for all

of us who call Westchester home.

Neighbors Link Executive Director Carola Otero Bracco added, "The IPA does not give extra rights to anyone. It just assures that basic rights on American soil apply to all. We hope it will be used as a model around the country."



Westchester County Legislator Kitley Covill, Neighbors Link's Program Director Ramiro Rincon, and Westchester County Legislator Catherine Parker await news of the bill's passage.

INSIDE:

The new
Neighbors Link
Center in
Ossining opens
its doors





Agnes Hassell (left) presenting the Gabby I. Rosenfeld Be a Hero Award to Audrey Kolloff (center) and Sue Bicksler-Taub, owner of Holbrook Cottage, Briarcliff Manor (right) at the April 28th Neighbors Link "Many Cultures, One Community" Benefit at Brae Burn Country Club



After months of planning, the Friends of Neighbors Link celebrate a successful event that drew record sponsors and guests.

Neighbors & Friends

The honoree of this year's benefit was Stuart Marwell, President and CEO of Curtis Instruments, whose contributions to our area and support of the local immigrant community helped Neighbors Link take the evening to a new level of fundraising success.



Neighbors Link volunteers were recognized for their extraordinary contributions at the Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner on March 26th at Crabtree's Kittle House.

On March 1st, Neighbors Link partnered with Films on Purpose to present "Which Way Home," a film about the harrowing journey of unaccompanied child migrants. Below, Neighbors Link's Executive Director, Carola Otero Bracco (left), and Neighbors Link Board Member Dr. Elisa Burns (center) facilitate a post film discussion with the film's director, Rebecca Cammisa (right).



NEIGHBORS LINK IN OSSINING

“Word has spread that we are in Ossining,” said a beaming Luisa Granda-Rodriguez, Director of Operations and Community Development for Neighbors Link. With classes in session right down the hall of the new Spring Street center, Luisa spoke before a group of 30 deeply involved individuals who have come to be known as the Ossining



Expanding



Neighbors Link Stakeholders. It was April 9th, the first official day of programming at the Neighbors Link Center in Ossining, and the stakeholders could not be prouder.

Dave Loretan, often singled out for his resolve to see the project through to completion, was excited to see clients begin to use the new center. “It’s important for people to know that there is a friendly place for them, a place where they can be part of a welcoming community.”

Envisioning a positive, healthy culture of integration for Ossining, the stakeholders group began collaborating with Neighbors Link three years ago to replicate the model that’s been successful in Mount Kisco since 2001. Stakeholder and volunteer tutor Lisa Rosenbloom observed, “It was clear that all the good things being done in Mount Kisco could be done here.”

The new facility provides a host of educational development programs and serves as a hub for recent immigrants, low-income families and community volunteers.

Prior to the opening of the new location, Neighbors Link had been providing Workforce Development and Parent Education programs in Ossining for several years. The new center offers multiple sessions of English language tutoring, Eco-Cleaning and Home Companion classes, job safety workshops, and several parent education classes, with childcare available.

Miriam, a mother of two and participant in the opening day English

tutoring session, learned about the new center by participating in Neighbors Link Parent Education classes at Ossining’s Park School. In biweekly Friday sessions there, parents learn about topics such as the school system, nutrition and family budgeting while their young ones participate in supervised activities. “The child care makes it possible for me to learn,” she said.

Diana, an English Language Learner, is eager to come to practice and improve her English. “You need English for everything. For school, for the doctor,” said Diana. “My children say to me, ‘You need to practice, Mommy.’” Both women are excited about the new center, where they plan to take classes and also to volunteer.

Sue Donnelly, Chair of the Village of Ossining Zoning Board and member of the stakeholders committee, said that the new Center “is bringing



something so needed to our immigrant neighbors in Ossining. The location is perfect for the community that Neighbors Link serves, and very walkable for moms and small children. It's so warm and inviting here. Like a home away from home."

Rebecca Sussman, Neighbors Link Parent Education Manager, has been closely involved with the launch of the Ossining site. "It's the first day our doors have been open and the number of people attending programs is higher than we imagined. This community needs us. We want to show them that, at Neighbors Link, you can make connections with people who care."



to Meet the Need

NEIGHBORS LINK IN YONKERS

Down county in Yonkers is another culturally rich community with a large immigrant population. Neighbors Link has been offering Parent-Child Together classes at Dayspring Community Center in Yonkers since 2017. The program is designed for parents with children from birth to age four and focuses on positive parenting skills, early childhood development, school readiness and empowering parents to embrace their role as their children's first teachers.

In 2018, we began offering English as a Second Language programs in Yonkers. We are also offering legal services, citizenship assistance and consultations.



Neighbors Link has an array of programming in Yonkers, including parent education and English language tutoring. Recently, the Parent-Child Together group enjoyed a trip to the Yonkers Public Library, where they received library cards and signed up for the "1000 Books Before Kindergarten" program.



Accolades for Neighbors Link and its Ongoing Mission to Prepare Immigrants for Success

PERSISTENCE AWARD

At its April 24th *Persistence Dinner*, the Pace Immigration Law Society honored Neighbors Link and Executive Director Carola Otero Bracco. The dinner honors warriors in the immigration field who do not give up in the face of adversity while advocating for immigrant rights.



Westchester County Legislators MaryJane Shimsky and Catherine Borgia present a surprise proclamation for Carola Bracco at the Pace Immigration Law School Persistence Dinner.

Carola was recognized for her "gifts of shrewd strategy, profound wisdom, prudent judgment, and brilliant, patient, discerning teamwork" in building the Neighbors Link organization. In accepting the *Persistence Award*, she credited the dedication of its supporters, volunteers and staff

with Neighbors Link's growth and success.

Bracco said, "I am grateful for this honor from the Pace Immigration Law Society because it sends a loud, clear message that this work is critical. I represent a whole team of people that includes our exemplary legal team of

Karin Anderson and Elizabeth Mastropolo, Neighbors Link staff, our supportive board of directors and our partners, including Vanessa Merton of John Jay Legal Services and Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University and Jessica Young and Ariel Gould of Make the Road New York."

PIPELINE SCHOLARS

The Neighbors Link Pipeline Scholars program is designed to help students and their parents make the transition from elementary to middle and high school.

Recently, our Mount Kisco and Ossining Pipeline Scholars joined Mount Kisco Village Historian Harry McCartney and his team on a fun and educational family hike.



Status of DACA Leaves 800,000 Young People Temporarily Safe, but Uncertain of What's Next

In February, the Supreme Court denied the government's request for review of the judgment in Department of Homeland Security v. Regents of University of California. This decision temporarily protects Dreamers, as it allows for DACA renewals to continue for the 800,000 young people with DACA.

Individuals with DACA may request renewals if their DACA status expires after September 5, 2016. If they previously received DACA and it expired before September 5, 2016 they can also renew their status, but must file as an initial application. More recently, a federal judge had signaled his readiness

to potentially reopen the process for filing new applications in 90 days.

While positive, these measures are temporary and tenuous. Without more permanent action by Congress, Dreamers remain in a legal limbo. Despite their potential eligibility, any children who were too young to apply previously will not be able to apply for DACA until Congress acts.

Neighbors Link Community Law Practice has scheduled multiple legal clinics and consultation times specifically to assist DACA recipients. Anyone looking for legal assistance with DACA should feel free to call us at 914-666-3410.



"The typical DACA recipient came to this country when they were six years old, and this is their country."

—Carola Otero Bracco

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