Making smart dietary choices just got a whole lot easier for Pantry clients, thanks to a new program called Nudge, piloted first right here at our pantry. A collaboration between Blythedale Children’s Hospital and Feeding Westchester (formerly, the Food Bank for Westchester), Nudge is funded by a two-year grant from Blythedale and Kohl’s Eat Well, Be Well community services program.

Nudge pairs bilingual nutrition information, colorful “icons,” and cooking demonstrations to help clients make healthy food choices. "Food is an important part of overall health," says Marie Roth, a registered dietician at Blythedale and one of the program creators. "We saw this as an opportunity to help clients connect well-being to the choices they make every day."

While the Pantry already offers clients a wide selection of wholesome foods, Nudge helps them make the healthiest choices for their families. A colorful bilingual poster with cartoon icons helps clients learn, for example, which foods are low in sodium or high in iron, as well as explaining the value of eating such foods. Matching icons are hung on shelves in the Pantry where those foods can be found.

"I like the fact that we’re not imposing on clients, but providing..."
Healthy Choices Are Just a Nudge Away

Continued from page 1

them with information to make their own choices,” says Danice Tatossian, a nutrition resource manager at Feeding Westchester active in developing the program.

To encourage clients further, the Pantry has rearranged their shelves so that the healthiest foods are grouped together, at eye level. For instance, brown rice and whole wheat pastas are now on the easiest-to-reach shelves, next to a drawing of a hand holding a heart, to signify that such foods help lower cholesterol and reduce the risk of obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure. Several times a month, a registered nutritionist from Feeding Westchester’s Just Say Yes to Fruits and Vegetables (JSY) program drops by to whip up healthy recipes that clients can sample, and to hand out bilingual recipe cards.

“Clients are really enthusiastic about the cooking demonstrations,” says Roberta Horowitz, Pantry Director of Operations and Programs. Roberta noted that after one demonstration included ground turkey, there was an uptick in clients choosing it. Volunteers, too, are finding the new program helpful for guiding clients to better selections. The new guidelines help volunteers pack foods that best conform to health restrictions for home-delivery clients.

Although the Pantry’s Nudge program has just begun, it has proved to be successful already. We hope the program will become a model for other Westchester pantries. Many offer clients choice. Now, those choices can be more informed.

Our Mission

The Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry is an affiliation of faith-based congregations dedicated to providing supplemental food to underserved residents of Northern Westchester. We are committed to creating a healthier and stronger community. Our volunteer efforts respect the dignity of those we serve, and are an expression of the spiritual mission of our member institutions.

Save the Date!

Plans are already underway for the Pantry’s second annual Hunger Awareness Week (HAW). Mark your calendar for September 22 through September 29. There will be lots of ways to participate.

President’s Letter

Lastly, I’ve been reflecting on relationships. About dignity, care, and listening. One of the many joys of being part of this pantries. It’s the opportunity it provides to listen to, and learn from, others — in giving, receiving, too. What have I learned? That here, in this community, dignity is paramount. Selfless volunteerism is thriving. Generosity is a renewable resource that runs more deeply, more broadly, and more quietly than I imagined. Caring is everywhere. The Pantry is a place where all these threads come together. Nowadays, when the news is so disheartening, it is renewing to know that there is a place where dignity and care prevails — where people and organizations are working together to make the world a better place by starting right here at home. So, I invite you to come to visit the Pantry. If you need a helping hand, you’re welcome. If you want to lend a helping hand, come on in. If you know someone who needs us, or who is looking for a way to give back, send them our way.

We are building relationships here. That’s what being a community is all about.

Laura Desmarais

Board President

Thank you to Our Dinner Dance Sponsors!

Shodie & Paul Alcorn
Anne & Richard Bentzen
June & Roger Blanc
Suzanne & Philip Bowers
Poppy and Robert Cummings
Nancy Delahun
Laura & John Desmarais
Adrienne & Thomas Flanagan
Linda & Victor Fried
Joyce & Shelley Greenhaus
Meg & Donald Gregg
Kelley & Doug Housman
JoAnne & Harold Hochstein
Robert & Nathan Horowitz
Susan & Robert Klein
Angie & David Kung
Karen Lennon
Ronni & Jordan Metzger
Ann & Robert Natalie
Jaclayn & Ira Polikoff
Louis Terille & Joseph Pugin
Mary Ann & Chris Robinson
Harriette & Louis Scott
Suzanne & Emilio Sironi
Anita & John Stockbridge
Geraldine Tortorella
Judy & Michael Ward
David McKay Wilson

On Saturday, May 5, the Pantry hosted our first-ever dinner dance, honoring long-time volunteers André and Armiella Ferrara. A fundraiser with the emphasis on FUN, this feel-good, sold-out party was held at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Mount Kisco and featured the swinging sounds of the Don DuPont Big Band.

Thanks to our generous sponsors, our local partners, and all the fun-loving, dancing guests who made this party such a success.

We thank our Partners for helping the Pantry Swing into Spring!

Clockwise, left to right:
1. Shodie and Pastor Paul Alcorn of Bedford Presbyterian Church, with Clare Murray Community Center of Northern Westchester
2. Harriette Scott, Carla Hansy, Louis Scott (in back), Judy Newton, Simon Newton, and Andrew Strawcutter
3. Laura Desmarais and Robert Horowitz honor long-time volunteers André and Armiella Ferrara, accompanied by their daughter Josephin Cherniawski
4. Kelley Houseman and Roberta Horowitz honor long-time volunteers André and Armiella Ferrara