

New Milford Social Services

"To Listen, To Advocate, To Empower"



January 2018

Contents:

- Financial Tip pg. 1
- Program Updates pg. 2
- Community Resources pg. 3
- FB Hours & Recipes pg. 4

Special points of interest:

- **Page 1:**
Operation Fuel update
- **Page 2:** *Energy Assistance*
- **Page 2:**
Parent...Again support group
- **Page 2:** *Update for SNAP filing*
- **Page 3:** *Job, Library and Amazon Prime!*
- **Page 3:** *Local Counseling Services*
- **Page 3:** *Youth Agency*
- **Page 4:** *-Food Bank hours & recipes -Mobile Pantry hours - -Holiday closings*



40 Main Street
 New Milford, CT 06776
 (P) 860-355-6079
 (F) 860-355-6019

Email: socialservices@newmilford.org
 Website: www.newmilford.org
 New Milford Social Services

Greetings from Peg Molina: Making a Difference!

For anyone who follows the news of this country, it seems that a whole lot of it fits into the "bad" category these days: budget deficits, program cuts, changes to policies that we, as a people, once held dear, profound loss of respect and common decency toward others, and so on. When Connecticut finally passed a state budget last October numerous cuts to programs were enacted in order to close a huge budget gap. One such cut was to fundamentally change the CT Dept. of Social Services "Medicare Savings Program". This helps about 113,000 elder and disabled residents statewide with critical health care costs. Many of us in the health and social services fields were shocked that cuts of this nature could so blithely be passed.

So what happened? When letters started going out to inform current recipients of the upcoming changes, offices like ours were flooded with calls of distress and alarm. We all started researching the options, and urging people to contact their state legislators. Well, call and write they did! So many people reached out to tell how devastating these cuts would be that the CT General Assembly is going to re-visit this policy and cuts that were to begin in January have been delayed for 2-3 months. The hope is that monies to off-set this change will be found elsewhere and the Medicare Savings Program will be revised, but not to the degree that thousands of people lose crucial benefits. That is a pretty awesome outcome from a calling and letter-writing effort!

Here is the big take-away from what happened: **when you feel something is wrong, speak out! Act up! Call people who are in a position of power or strength and let them know how you feel!** While we often feel like powerless beings, the truth is that we are NOT! This is a prime example of something that has occurred time and again: citizen action leading to a change in public policy. As we embrace a new year and look out upon the landscape of issues, problems and concerns for our own future and our nation's future we cannot forget the power that we hold. To use Margaret Mead's words (and Ivana's favorite quote!) "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, **it's the only thing that ever has.**"

Happy New Year and Stay Strong! (I've included a few New Years resolutions here and there ~ see which speaks to you!)

-Peg

*"Don't make a New Year's resolution;
 Find a New Year's **Solution**"*



DO YOU KNOW?... that Operation Fuel has increased its income eligibility guidelines? Operation Fuel provides one-time emergency assistance for deliverable fuel or electric bills. This state-wide program has made it possible for people with higher incomes to receive help. For example, a household of four with before tax (gross) income up to \$81,444 is eligible for up to \$500 in assistance. This could be in the form of oil or other deliverable fuel, or go toward the electric bill. As a partner agency we help all NM households under age 60 to apply. The process is quick and easy! Call Monika for an appointment, and please spread the word to local family and friends!

Issue 1.2018



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



Financial Tip of the Month:

Tips for Planning out your Tax Return and Refund (from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau): You only file your personal tax return once a year. Depending on your situation, filing can be easy or complicated. Many people prepare and file their own returns, but the majority of consumers still seek help from a professional tax preparer. If you think you will need help preparing and filing your tax return in 2018, now is a great time to start making a plan. It's also a great time to starting thinking about how you will use your refund if you're among the 75 percent of tax filers who will receive one. **Before you file, find out what resources are available to you.** You can generally get free tax preparation assistance by IRS certified volunteers at a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance **Continued Page 2.**

PROGRAM UPDATES:



ENERGY ASSISTANCE: Social Services is taking applications for all forms of heat. Fuel deliveries can be covered if approved before March 15th. Many households make their fuel last well into the fall by getting a final fill in mid-March. Call CAAWC to see if you are eligible for additional deliveries and if you are not, call us!

All **electric heated households** who completed the Matching Payment program last year have been automatically re-enrolled onto Eversource's MPP. **Remember that you still need to re-apply for Energy Assistance through our office every year!** All payments should be in by the end of each month, or *all* required payments must be received by April 30th in order to get a "match". If Eversource has raised your budget, pay the new amount if you can. If you cannot, pay the old amount and be sure to discuss this with us at the time of your application. Income guidelines are listed below:

If your household income is below the following amounts, you may qualify for energy assistance:

Family size:

1	2	3	4	5	6
\$34,366	\$44,940	\$55,514	\$66,089	\$76,663	\$87,237

Visit our department on the www.newmilford.org website, or come to the office for the list of documents needed to apply. All applicants are asked to bring a current electric bill.

Please have ALL paperwork at the time of your appointment. This includes pay stubs even if your employer has gone "paperless". They can help you to get these. Likewise with Direct Express cards and bank statements: you can print full statements online as they must have both your name and your bank's name. You cannot be approved without all needed documents!

SNAP OUTREACH:



Sadly, the CT Institute for Families has lost funding for this program so there will no longer be satellite appointments for SNAP available in New Milford. We appreciate and thank Sara Arroyo for her years of service to our community. Going forward, SNAP applications can be done online at www.ct.gov/snap by filing in-person at the Danbury DSS office at 342 Main St. or by completing a paper application (we have these) and mailing with copies of documents to the Scan Center.



GRANDPARENTS & OTHER RELATIVES RAISING CHILDREN:

The next meetings of New Milford's "When You're a Parent . . . Again" info and support group will be on **Thursday, January 11th** @ 5:30p.m. to 7:00p.m. at John Pettibone Community Center. Dinner and child care are included. Come for informal conversation and resources for those in this unique situation. RSVP to Sarah Geary at Social Services, 860-355-6079 x4.



Winter Coats & Boots for Children: We have a limited supply of kid's coats and boots available in the office to give away. If your child is in need, please call us with their sex and coat or shoe size and we'll see if we can make a match!



"This year. I just wanna go on more adventures. Be around good energy. Connect with people. Learn new things. Grow."



...If you missed any of our previous financial tips, link in to social services/financial fitness found on our town's website at www.newmilford.org.



Financial Tip continued: For more info on this and many topics visit: <https://www.consumerfinance.gov>

... continued from page 1: (VITA) location if you meet any of these conditions:

- a. Your income is \$54,000 or less
- b. You are 60 years old or older
- c. You have a disability or
- d. Speak limited English

If your income is \$64,000 or less, you can use a major tax preparation software product, offered through the **IRS Free File Alliance**, to prepare and file your return for free.

If your income is more than \$64,000, you can still **download free tax filing forms** through the IRS.

If you're a military member or military dependent, you can get **free tax help** from the Military VITA program.

Preparing to Save: To help you follow through on a plan, identify a financial goal and make a plan to save your tax refund. Whether your goal is to set aside some money for unexpected expenses or you have a longer-term goal like saving for education or another major expense, here are three ways that planning to save can be helpful:

It may help you focus on a financial priority that is important to you but that you may not have the money to pay for out of your regular income.

Once you identify a goal, it may help you to manage your other expenses and perhaps avoid overspending on things that are not priorities.

If you don't already have a savings account or another way to save, it will give you time to set it up so that when you file your return you can automatically direct the amount you want to save to that account.

Saving at tax time can be easy and automatic. Your tax refund provides you additional income that is over and above what you receive in your paycheck, so it may provide a one-time opportunity to set some money aside.

While you are filing your tax return: Through the tax filing process, the IRS helps you to direct money to up to three separate accounts and you never have to touch the funds. You can tell the IRS to send the amount you want to save to a separate account and to send the remainder of your refund to your regular checking account or other type of transaction account, such as a prepaid card.

Be aware of fund delays: Due to **changes in the tax code in 2017**, the IRS is required to hold any refund that includes the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) or the Additional Child Tax Credit (ACTC) until at least February 15. The IRS normally strives to issue direct deposit refunds for electronically filed returns within 21 days of filing. If you plan on filing as soon as tax season opens, usually in mid-January, you may have to wait a little longer to receive your refund if it includes either one of these tax credits.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES:



Family and Children



CT CHILDREN'S LAW LINE: The [CT Children's Law Line](#) helps callers understand the legal processes involving children, including custody, visitation, guardianship, abuse, and neglect. The Law Line can also refer callers to other agencies for help. You can call this free service as many times as you need.

Where: 1-888-LAW-DOOR (529-3667)



NEW MILFORD YOUTH AGENCY NEWS:

Internet Safety: attend this cyber safety workshop for teens and parents on Wed. 1/10, 7pm at the Maxx. Catch up on the latest facts, presented by the Women's Center of Greater Danbury. Free, but registration required at 860-210-2030 or www.myyouthagency.com

Homework club is running every week at JPCC. NMHS mentors will work with your child on math, reading, studying, organizing, and more! Both work and play on Saturday mornings. The program is open to area 3rd-7th graders. FREE. For more information, please call the Youth Agency at 860-210-2030 or email Jason at Jason@youthagency.org.



HOMELESS YOUTH: In late January, the CT Coalition to End Homelessness will be overseeing a count of homeless youth across the state. Please help us to get an accurate sense of New Milford's homeless and unstably housed persons under age 24. This will help to bring needed resources into the region. To further discuss or share information, please give Social Services a call and one of us will respond.



More Resources!!!



AMERICAN JOB CENTER: New Milford Adult Ed will be hosting staff from this agency on the last Wednesday of each month from 4 – 6:30 pm. **Any NM resident is welcome** to meet with a job counselor for guidance on finding jobs, how to revise your resume and more. Contact Adult Ed at 860-350-6647 x1170. (Note: there will not be a Job Center rep coming in January; resumes Feb.28.)

THE NEW MILFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY: has a variety of awesome offerings if you are looking for entertainment (like free movies twice each month, "Victoria and Abdul" at 6pm on 1/10—it's terrific!), a creative outlet (like a basic "learn to sculpt" class on 1/17, or Operation Gratitude for knitters to help our armed services people); companionship through a range of clubs (game playing, cookbook, etc.) or help with all this blasted technology (various workshops or one-on-one assist). The library is SO much more than a place for books, and the price is right—check it out!!

AMAZON PRIME, MORE AFFORDABLE: Amazon Prime is making its membership available to anyone receiving government benefits on an EBT card (i.e. SNAP or Cash Assistance) for approximately half price, or \$5.99 per month. People with Amazon Prime get free shipping on Amazon orders, free book and movie downloads and a number of other benefits. Amazon also accepts SNAP for online grocery orders. Contact Amazon directly for details.

FREE TAX FILING SITES: As we've discussed in the Financial Tip, you can file taxes for free. Get a timely appointment and you'll have your return just as fast! VITA sites in our area: The *NM Public Library* has had VITA staff every Friday, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. and three sites in Danbury offer day and evening appointments: *Community Action Agency of Western CT*, 203-744-4700; *Western CT State University*, 203-797-4500; and *Danbury VITA*, 203-826-9517 (also scheduling NMPL appts). With electronic filing and depositing, you will not wait longer for a return through one of these agencies, and ALL of the money is **yours!**

"LESS: Talking, Planning, Soda, Junk Food, Complaining, Worrying, Doubting, Lazing Around, Frowning, Insecurity, Weakness, Ignorance, Hate, Ungratefulness

MORE: Listening, Doing, Tea, Salads, Encouraging, Hoping, Believing, Working out, Smiling, Trust, Confidence, Understanding, Love, Gratitude"



"What if you simply devoted this year to loving yourself more?"



Counseling Resources



GREENWOODS COUNSELING

REFERRALS: If you would like to enter into counseling for a problem, life transition or other issue in your life, Greenwood is a great place to start. They offer a free clinical assessment (which can take place in New Milford) and then you will be provided with a list of three local therapists qualified to help you. If you lack insurance, Greenwood can help cover the fees. If you have insurance, Greenwood will find a therapist who accepts yours. Start by calling them at 860-567-4437; you'll be given a timely appointment!

THE WOMEN'S CENTER OF GREATER DANBURY:

offers free, confidential counseling and a number of support groups including "Women Thriving" to help women focus on sustaining positive changes after leaving unhealthy relationships. Weekly groups are offered in their Danbury office. For more info call 203-731-5200.

NEW MILFORD HOSPITAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH:

Located at 23 Poplar St., NMHBH provides mental health services for adults, including psychiatric assessment, med. management, individual and group therapy. Groups offered focus on women's support, anxiety and depression, pain management and DBT (dialectical behavioral therapy). Those interested need to have an assessment prior to joining a group. Call 860-210-5350 for more information or for an appointment.

FAMILY & CHILDREN'S AID:

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

INTERFACE is a private practice located in the annex of the First Congregational Church. Experienced staff with many sub-specialties. Call 860-354-5116.

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

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

FOOD BANK:

**Every THURSDAY
from 9am-4pm.**

[This is a residency-income eligible program: pre-registration required]

Please bring in your own reusable bags!!

**SPECIAL NOTE:
FOOD BANK CLOSSES IN SEVERE WEATHER**

Chicken Soup:-

A wonderful go-to soup that can be kept simple or added to- to make it your own. Cook it quickly on the stove or slowly in a crock pot. Serve it right away or freeze it and save for a colder day!

Ingredients:

- 2 tsp **vegetable oil**
- ½ of a medium **onion**, chopped
- 3 large **carrots**, chopped
- 1 tsp **thyme**, ground
- 2 garlic **cloves**, minced
- 2 cups **water**, or no sodium chicken broth
- 1 can (15 oz.) **diced tomatoes**, no sodium added, drained
- 1 cup **chicken, cooked, skinned and cubed**
- 1 cup **whole wheat pasta**, cooked (or brown rice)
- 1 cup **kale**, chopped, about one large leaf

Directions:

1. Heat oil in a medium sauce pan. Add onion and carrot.
2. Sauté until vegetables are tender, about 5-8 minutes.
3. Add thyme and garlic. Sauté for one more minute.
4. Add water or broth, tomatoes, cooked pasta or rice, chicken and kale.
5. Simmer for 5-10 minutes.



January 2018						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Happy New Year!



MOBILE FOOD PANTRY:

WEDNESDAY, Jan 3 and Feb 7; 5:30pm-6:30pm at the parking lot of Faith Church

Our office will be closed on Monday, January 1st in observance of New Year's Day and Monday, January 15th in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day

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



860-355-6079
NEW MILFORD CT. 06776
40 MAIN ST. 2nd FLOOR
NEW MILFORD SOCIAL SERVICES