Congresswoman Lowey Announces Cost of Living Increase for Older Citizens

Congresswoman Nita Lowey (D-Westchester/Rockland) recently visited senior citizens in Port Chester to announce they will receive an average increase of approximately $50 per month in Social Security benefits in 2012.

“Senior citizens and all hard-working families know that the cost of living continues to increase for basic necessities like housing, health care, transportation, and more,” said Congresswoman Lowey. “I am pleased these higher costs will be reflected with a cost of living adjustment (COLA) benefitting nearly 55 million Social Security beneficiaries nationwide, including more than 115,000 in New York’s 18th Congressional District.

115,213 Social Security beneficiaries in the 18th Congressional District will receive an average COLA of $47.21. Of those, 84,898 beneficiaries who are retirees will receive an average COLA of $50.50.

Congresswoman Lowey also alerted senior citizens in Port Chester that Medicare open enrollment runs through December 7th, which is an earlier open season period than in previous years.

“As costs continue to rise for basic necessities, I will continue working to ensure Social Security benefits are protected for current and future generations,” said Lowey.

Long retired, Dr. Hooker received her Ph.D. from the University of Rochester and worked as a psychologist in Yonkers schools and was a professor at Fordham University. She also has served as a board member and adviser to the NAACP Education Committee, and was a member of the board of VNSWP from 1988 to 1994. She was a pioneer in other ways as well, being the first African-American woman to enlist and go on active duty in the U.S. Coast Guard during World War II.

Today, Dr. Hooker likes taking part in senior programs at the Theodore D. Young Community Center in Greenburgh, reading and attending concerts at Carnegie Hall.

Mae Carpenter, DSPS Commissioner, said that the Hall of Fame is a special opportunity to recognize and thank the seniors for their selfless work.

“They are truly role models, whose spirit and outreach to others enhances our quality of life,” Carpenter said. “Their positive, can-do attitude and community service is an example for people of all ages.”

Five seniors will receive “special recognition” at the luncheon:

Joan DiPalma, RN, of Rye is a former operating room nurse, who has always been a strong advocate for giving senior citizens access to health-related information that they can play a greater role in their own care. She launched and expanded the “Ask the Visiting Nurse Program,” a community outreach initiative that provides seniors with health screenings and one-on-one health discussions and counseling with nurses from VNSWP. The program began in 1988, and today has operations at more than 60 senior residences and community sites. DiPalma served on the VNSWP board from 1984 to the present, and was chair from 1999 to 2003. She also was a board member of Hospice and Palliative Care of Westchester from 1986 until the present day.

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Wartburg’s Home Care Programs Relocate to New Rochelle

The Wartburg Adult Care Community has announced that effective November 18, 2011, both Wartburg Home Care Programs have moved from The Wartburg’s Mt. Vernon campus out into the community to new space in New Rochelle. This location, in the center of their service area, will enable the staff to service clients better.

The Wartburg Long Term Home Health Care Program (LTHHCP) and Licensed Home Care Services Agency (LHCSA), “No Place Like Homecare”, will be located at 56 Harrison St., Suite 503, New Rochelle, 10801. The new phone number for the LTHHCP is (914) 278-9131 and the fax number is (914) 278-9141. Wartburg’s LHCSA’s new phone number is (914) 278-9140 and the fax number is (914) 278-9142.

“The relocation of our home care offices to New Rochelle will allow us to further expand our services in the community and continue The Wartburg’s 150 year tradition of caring,” said David Gentner, President & CEO of The Wartburg Adult Care Community. “The Wartburg has positioned itself as a resource to keep seniors in their homes as they age. We are moving forward with our campus expansion. A new building planned for the Mt. Vernon campus offers 50 private rooms and expanded therapy areas for short term in-patient rehabilitation and a new expanded space for adult day programs. Soon we will be breaking ground for a second building, an affordable independent supported senior living residence. These projects, in conjunction with a more accessible and central location for home care positions the Wartburg to provide services that allow seniors to age in place safely.”

Myrlyne Descollines, RN, MPA, Home Care Administrator said, “For over 20 years, our Long Term Home Health Care Program has provided in-home care for Westchester County residents with chronic illness or disabilities. Our social work staff, therapeutic professionals, nutrition counselors, home health and personal care aides deliver in-home services, coordinated by our Registered Nurses with a twenty-four hour nurse available to all clients.”

“Our Licensed Home Care Services Agency, which serves clients in Westchester and the Bronx, provides individually tailored temporary or ongoing assistance in consultation with patients, their families, and their physicians,” added Ms. Descollines. “We provide personal care and home health aides, companion services, escorts to medical appointments, meal preparation, nursing services, social work support and physical, occupational and speech therapy services. We also take pride in training new aides, graduating several classes each year. Our new location in New Rochelle is convenient to mass transit and highways, which is helpful to achieve our goal to provide a wider community reach with both of these important programs.”

The Wartburg Adult Care Community is a not-for-profit Lutheran ministry, serving people of all faiths with a full range of residential options and health-related services for older area adults and their families. The Wartburg offers skilled nursing care, rehabilitation, Alzheimer’s and dementia care, assisted and independent living, adult day services, home care, memory care, pastoral care and monthly caregiver support.

Residents Enjoy Intergenerational Olympics

High spirits and fun prevailed as United Hebrew of New Rochelle and Willow Towers Assisted Living residents and local students recently teamed up for an afternoon of Olympics-style competitions recently at the 2nd Annual Intergenerational Olympics in Westchester County. Over fifty residents and thirty students participated. The event was coordinated by United Hebrew, the New Rochelle Office for Aging, and the Westchester County Southeast Regional Livable Communities Connection in United Hebrew’s nursing home and rehabilitation pavilion, which is part of UH’s Harry and Jeannette Weinberg campus of residences and services for older adults. Residents from Willow Towers Assisted Living, part of the United Hebrew campus of services, also participated.

Students from Ursuline School, New Rochelle High School Key Club and Honors Society, Academic Pathways, and the New Rochelle Youth Bureau dedicated their time to do community service by interacting with residents and escorting them to the many activities. Bowling competitions, wheelchair races, a gum ball shake, card games and relays took place at stations around the first floor of United Hebrew’s new Skaleit Pavilion. “We are committed to programs that allow our residents to interact with young people while participating in healthy exercise,” said Rita Mabli, President/CEO of United Hebrew. “Intergenerational activities enhance the lives of both seniors and teens.”
End-of-Year Tips from the IRS

Plan now and be ready for tax time, the Internal Revenue Service says.

“With less than a month to go before the end of the tax year, you may want to set aside a few moments before the busy holiday season to consider some quick IRS tips that may give you the gift of time and money saved next year,” said Dianne Besunder, IRS spokeswoman for New York.

With the current tax year “winding down,” the Internal Revenue Service is encouraging taxpayers to gather and organize their tax records now to reduce stress at tax time. You should consider setting up a filing system before year end and when your tax documents (W-2’s, 1099s, etc) arrive; file them together so you won’t have to search when you begin to file your tax return. You should keep any and all documents that many have an impact on your tax return. Generally, tax records should be kept for three years, but some documents, for example, records relating to a home purchase or sale, stock transactions, IRAs, rental property or a business, should be kept longer. For more information see IRS Publication 552, Recordkeeping for Individuals.

Are you maximizing your contributions to your retirement accounts? This year, you can contribute up to $5,000 in an IRA, as well as another $16,500 to a 401(k) employee plan. If you’re 50 or older, those numbers go up to $6,000 and $22,000, respectively.

To be deductible on your 2011 tax return qualified charitable contributions must be made before year end. You must itemize deductions on your tax return to claim charitable contribution and you must have a bank record or a written communication from the qualifying charity showing the name of the charity and the date and amount of the contribution. A bank record includes canceled checks, bank or credit union statements and credit card statements. More information can be found in IRS Publication 526, Charitable Contributions. IRS publications are available at www.irs.gov.

Are you wondering if you might benefit from the Earned Income Tax Credit, which is available to low and moderate income workers? Use the EITC Assistant on the IRS website which helps determine eligibility for the credit. The program will also assist you in determining your correct filing status, determining whether your child meets the tests for a qualifying child, and estimating the amount of credit that you may receive. Taxpayers who earn less than $49,078 in 2011 may be eligible for a refundable tax credit of up to $ 5,751.

If you are married or divorced in 2011, make sure you report any name change to the Social Security Administration before you file your tax return. If your name doesn’t match your social security number, your refund can be delayed. To get more information about updating your name change visit the SSA Website at www.socialsecurity.gov or call 800-772-1213. And, report any address change to the Postal Service, your employer and the IRS to make sure you get tax-related items.

There are two federal tax credits available to help you offset the costs of higher education for yourself or your dependents. These are the American Opportunity Credit and the Lifetime Learning Credit. To qualify for either credit, you must pay postsecondary tuition and fees for yourself, your spouse or your dependent. The credit may be claimed by the parent who is not the student, but not by both. If the student was claimed as a dependent, the student cannot file for the credit. The American Opportunity Credit can be up to $2,500 per eligible student. And it is available for the first four years of post-secondary education. Lifetime Learning Credit can be up to $2,000 per eligible student and is available for all years of postsecondary education and for courses to acquire or improve job skills. Income limits and other restrictions apply. For more information about these credits see IRS Publication 970, Tax Benefits for Education. “For more information on these topics and many others that may save you time and money come tax time, visit the official IRS website. Make IRS.gov your first stop for all your federal income tax needs and questions,” Besunder said.
ONGOING

Keys to Safe Driving is a series of five Free Programs sponsored by Westchester County’s Department of Senior Programs and Services during Older Driver Safety Week, December 5-9 as follows: December 5 at City of White Plains Recreation and Parks Community Center, 65 Mitchel Place, from 1-2pm. Call 422-1423 to register. December 6 at Rye Recreation, 281 Midland Avenue, Rye from noon to 1pm. Call 967-2355 to register. December 7 at Hugh A. Doyle Senior Center, 94 Davis Avenue, New Rochelle from 1 to 2pm. Call 235-2365 to register. December 8 at Atria Woodlands, 1017 Saw Mill River Road, Ardsley from 2 to 3pm and 7 to 8pm. Call 693-7700. December 9 at The Center at Lake Isle, 660 White Plains Road, Eastchester from 12:15 to 1pm. Call 337-0390 to register.

From December 11-17, Empire City Casino in Yonkers will host a Charity Drive where patrons can donate used or new toys or coats. Items will be donated to Catholic Charities. Donations will be accepted at the Gotham Palace Promotions Booth. From December 15-17, Empire City Casino will host a Holiday Shopping Event in The Good Time Room from 2 to 9pm. For more information on all events call 968-4200.

Until December 15, The Grandparents Coalition of Westchester County’s Department of Senior Programs and Services is looking for sponsors including caring individuals, social organizations and corporations to buy a holiday gift for a particular child or children. For details call Corina Sonara at 813-6393.

The Burke Rehabilitation Hospital’s Fitness Center, 785 Mamaroneck Avenue, White Plains, Billings Bldg. will hold a series of free Tai Chi classes for the general public on the following dates: December 12, 14, 16 and 19 at 11am, December 13 and 14 at 7:30pm, December 17 at 10am and December 21 at 7:30pm. For additional information call 803-2632 or email EmpireTaiChi@gmail.com.

WJCS Pathways to Care sponsors a support group for people living with serious chronic illness such as Parkinson’s Disease, COPD, end-stage renal disease, advanced heart disease, cancer or Multiple Sclerosis. The group meets on Mondays from 11:30am to 1pm at WJCS, 141 North Central Avenue, Hartsdale. For further information, contact Nicki Weiss at 761-0600, ext. 142.

St. Paul’s National Historic Site, 897 S. Columbus Avenue, Mt. Vernon will hold the following events: For complete details call 667-4116 or visit www.nps.gov/sapa.

A support group for people who are dealing with retirement, aging, handling free time, family relationships, health and other issues will meet bi-monthly on Mondays from 1 to 2:30pm at the Mamaroneck Town Center, 740 Boston Post Road. Call 834-7174 for details.

WJCS offers the Breast Cancer Navigator Program, where women who have been newly diagnosed with breast cancer have mentors for help and support through breast cancer diagnosis and treatment. For additional details, call 761-0600, ext. 144.

The Greenburgh Arts and Culture committee have put together a program entitled, “Learning to See,” a series of monthly ekphrastic (poetry and writing that takes its inspiration from visual art) workshops to be held at several Greenburgh venues in the fall 2011 and spring 2012. The workshops are free and open to established writers as well as beginners. For more information go to www.greenburghartsandculture.org and click on “Learning to See.”

WJCS Pathways to Care sponsors a support group for people living with serious chronic illness such as Parkinson’s Disease, COPD, end-stage renal disease, advanced heart disease, cancer or Multiple Sclerosis. The group meets on Mondays from 11:30am to 1pm at WJCS, 141 North Central Avenue, Hartsdale. For further information, contact Nicki Weiss at 761-0600, ext. 142.

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Veterans who work during the day can take advantage of free or discounted medical services through the VA Health Care System with the addition of evening appointment hours. To make appointments at the FDR Montrose campus call 737-4400 and press “3”. To make appointments at the Castle Point Campus call 845-831-2000, and press “2”.

Here & Now, a social group for people with early-stage memory loss or MCI will meet the 2nd and 4th Fridays of each month from 10 to 11:30am at the Alzheimer’s Association, 2900 Westchester Avenue, Suite 306, Purchase. An interview is required. For more information call 253-6860.

Seniors and the Arts cultural programs take place every other Wednesday at the Hudson River Museum, 511 Warburton Avenue, Yonkers, from 1:30 to 3pm. For further information call 963-4550, ext. 6.

Veterans can find out more about the benefit they are entitled to by attending a program held the first and third Thursday of every month at the VA Office at 112 East Post Road, 4th Floor, Room 442, White Plains. If you would like to attend a registration day, call 995-2145.

DECEMBER

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From 7 to 9pm, the Osteoporosis Awareness Group will hold their Annual Holiday Party at Burke Rehabilitation Hospital, Bldg. #4, 785 Mamaroneck Avenue, White Plains. Martin Gordon will discuss the exercise groups in Westchester. Attendees are asked to bring a calcium rich dessert. Free admission. For additional information call 725-5229.

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At 1pm, St. Paul’s Church National Historic Site, 897 S. Columbus Avenue, Mt. Vernon will hold a presentation by author Richard Borkow entitled, “George Washington’s Westchester Gamble.” For additional information, call 667-4116 or visit www.nps.gov/sapa.

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At 10am, The Westchester County Genealogical Society presents a lecture with Patrick Raftery entitled, “The Cemeteries of Westchester County,” at the Westchester County Archives, 2199 Saw Mill River Road, Elmsford. For additional information call 953-9173.

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From 4 to 6pm, Historic Sherwood House, 340 Tuckahoe Road, Yonkers presents a Candlelight Tour, seasonal greenery, holiday cookies and hot cider. For more information call 961-8940.

At 3pm, the Male Glee Club of Yonkers will perform at the Saunders School, 185 Palmer Road, Yonkers featuring guest soloist tenor Richard Asbell. The concert is free and open to the public. For additional information call 607-3153.

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At 8pm, the Bedford Chamber Ensemble will perform a Holiday Concert featuring violinist Sean Lee and Yoon Kwon along with musician Anthony Newman in the Fellowship Hall of St. Matthew’s Church, 382 Cantitoe Street, Bedford. For additional information visit www.bedfordchamberconcerts.org.

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Ruth Keeler Memorial Library, 276 Titticus Road, North Salem will conduct a Daytime Knitting Group at 10:30am. For more information call 669-5161.
The Board of Directors of Westchester Visiting Nurse Services Group, Inc. (WVNS Group), the governing board of Visiting Nurse Services in Westchester & Putnam (VNSWP) and its affiliate Westchester Care at Home (WCAH), recently announced the election of Elias M. (Lou) Nemnom as its new President and Chief Executive Officer. VNSWP is the largest independent not-for-profit Certified Home Health Agency in Westchester and Putnam Counties; WCAH is a New York State Licensed Home Health Care Agency.

Prior to his new role, Nemnom served for six months as VNSWP’s interim Administrator, succeeding former President and CEO Carol Weber. According to WVNS Group Board Chair, Patricia W. Siebecker, “The Board recognizes the outstanding contributions Lou has made since his appointment as interim Administrator in May. Against a backdrop of dramatic regulatory changes affecting the home health care field, he has applied his business acumen and extensive knowledge of our industry to create a dynamic roadmap for the agencies’ future. The Board applauds his leadership and his commitment to delivering the highest level of cost-effective, quality care to meet growing community needs.”

Before joining VNSWP, Nemnom served for 30 years in a wide range of senior executive roles in the health care industry. Most recently, he was Interim Chief Financial Officer (CFO) at Alliance Care, a leading home health company. Prior to that, he was Senior Vice President and CFO for Patient Care, another home health care agency. He was CFO at First Medical Group and MEDE American Corporation, and also held leadership roles at Continuum Health Partners and Saint Vincent Catholic Medical Centers.

“I am delighted to take on this new leadership position to help chart our agencies’ growth in the years ahead,” said Nemnom. “Despite reduced payments and other state mandates that are changing the landscape of our industry, I see enormous opportunities for helping patients thrive in the home setting. To achieve our goals, we are stepping up our efforts to embrace the latest home care technologies and expand our specialty services in areas of greatest need, such as chronic disease management. In today’s environment, collaboration is key, and we are forging strategic partnerships with other health care providers and community agencies to coordinate care for patients throughout Westchester and Putnam.”

A Certified Public Accountant, Nemnom earned his undergraduate degree from New York Institute of Technology and his Master’s degree from St. Joseph’s Institute. He resides with his family in Bedford, NY.

Founded in 1901, Visiting Nurse Services in Westchester & Putnam, the Group’s not-for-profit, Medicare-certified community home health care agency, serves Westchester and Putnam residents of all ages, their families, and caregivers. VNSWP provides a wide variety of services, including skilled nursing care, physical, occupational and speech therapy, medical social work services and community education programs. The agency, in collaboration with academic institutions and other community health care agencies, participates in research targeted at improving patient outcomes. It is the largest not-for-profit Certified Home Health Agency in Westchester and Putnam Counties, and is accredited by the Community Health Accreditation Program (CHAP).

Since 1988, Westchester Care at Home, the Group’s New York State Licensed Home Health Care Agency, has provided hourly and live-in home health aide services to the community, serving residents of Westchester and Putnam Counties. WCAH services meet the Community Health Accreditation Program (CHAP) National Standards of Excellence in Home Health Care.

Littman Krooks Selected Among U.S. News “Best Law Firms”

Littman Krooks LLP has been selected among the 2011-2012 U.S. News – Best Lawyers® “Best Law Firms” in the New York metropolitan area. The firm, with offices in New York, White Plains and Fishkill, received Tier 1 ranking in the area of Elder Law. This high ranking is a special distinction that signals a unique combination of excellence and breadth of expertise.

The U.S. News - Best Lawyers® “Best Law Firms” rankings are based on a rigorous evaluation process that includes the collection of client and lawyer evaluations, peer review from leading attorneys in their relevant practice areas, and a review of additional information provided by law firms as part of the formal submission process. An unprecedented amount of data was collected in the project’s second year and this combined data resulted in the 2011-2012 “Best Law Firms” rankings.

To be eligible for a ranking, a law firm must also have at least one lawyer who is included in Best Lawyers® as part of the annual peer review assessment. Bernard A. Krooks, a founding partner of Littman Krooks LLP, was selected by his peers for inclusion in the Best Lawyers in America® 2012 in the field of Elder Law earlier this year. He is the Chair of the firm’s Elder Law and Special Needs Department.

“The firm is honored to be part of this prestigious group. We appreciate being recognized by all those participating in this evaluation process,” says Mr. Krooks.

Littman Krooks provides sophisticated legal advice and the high level of expertise ordinarily associated with large law firms along with the personal attention and responsiveness of smaller firms. These ingredients, which are the cornerstone of effective representation and are necessary to a successful lawyer/client relationship, have become the foundation of the firm’s success.

Littman Krooks LLP offers legal services in several areas of law, including elder law, estate planning, special needs planning, special education advocacy, and corporate and securities. Their offices are located at 655 Third Avenue, New York, New York; 399 Knollwood Road, White Plains, and 300 Westage Business Center Drive, Fishkill. The firm’s website is at www.littmankrooks.com.
Pastiche 49: A Multimedia Exhibit

Pastiche 49, a multimedia exhibit of 49 pieces by Hudson River artist Cathi Locati of Tarrytown, will be on display in the 2nd Floor Gallery at Greenburgh Town Hall 2011 until January 5th, 2012. A meet-the-artist reception will be held at the gallery on Sunday, December 11, 2011 from 2-4 pm. There is no charge for admission, and the public is invited.

Locati’s career spans more than twenty years and her works have been widely exhibited. This year, she was one of very few Americans whose paintings were included in the European market’s exclusive Art Monaco 2011. With a strong background in realistic portraiture and character studies, she has recently branched out into new areas. Pastiche 49 introduces her StreetPicker Pears and Florals series. In the StreetPicker series, she painted on recycled, long-stem rose boxes discarded by a Scarsdale flower shop in a sidewalk garbage pile. “By doing this, I created lightweight, affordable, 3D artwork as my newest form of expression,” says Locati.

Another of her series, Comfortable in My Skin: A Sign of Our Times, is an interlocking, puzzle-like study in racial coexistence. In the paintings, she creates original characters, with different skin colors, who mingle and intertwine in a sensual display of rapture and connectedness. The series exemplifies Locati’s belief that “regardless of gender, race, or ethnicity, all people need each other to survive and every human being is connected to the other.”

As a creator of landscapes and murals -- including one 75 feet long in the Rivers’ Edge Casino in Montana, and an 18 foot long image of the Hudson River, Tappan Zee Bridge and Palisades skyline in the lobby of the Hudson Harbor Development Stone House in Tarrytown -- she is often commissioned to create paintings which enhance public and private spaces. On a smaller scale, she creates custom-made fine art for non-profit and retail organizations, schools and businesses. The cover of the 2011/2012 Chamber of Commerce Business Directory for Sleepy Hollow and Tarrytown features her specially commissioned montage of the two villages.

Visitors to the exhibit at Greenburgh Town Hall can purchase The Cemetery Souvenir Bundle which includes sketches of Sleepy Hollow Cemetery and the Tappan Zee Bridge. Examples of Locati’s work can be seen at www.cathilocati.com.

Greenburgh Town Hall is located at 177 Hillside Avenue, White Plains. It is accessible and has free parking. The building is open to the public from 9am - 5 pm, Mondays – Fridays. For more information, contact Sarah Bracey White, www.bracey0114@aol.com or 682-1574.
There are 950,400 veterans living in New York State. According to the Westchester County Veterans Service Agency, 80,000 veterans of all wars, including the current Middle East conflict, live in Westchester County.

The second annual inter-hospice countywide breakfast, For Those Who Have Served, recently commemorated Veterans Recognition Month and honored Westchester County residents who have served in the United States Armed Forces.

Nearly 200 people attended the breakfast, which was co-sponsored by Westchester County’s hospice organizations: Hospice & Palliative Care of Westchester (HPCW); Hospice Care in Westchester and Putnam; Jansen Hospice and Palliative Care; and Phelps Hospice.

After William Dawe, Hospice Community Representative and Community Relations/Professional Liaison, HPCW, welcomed the guests, an invocation by Rev. Suzanne Hope Graham, Hospice Chaplain, followed. Presenters included Vito Pinto, Director, Westchester County Office of Veteran’s Affairs; Al Ramsey, Chief Master Sgt., USAF (Ret.), City of Yonkers Veterans Affairs; Joanne Melina, M.D., Chief of Staff, VA Hudson Valley Healthcare; and Cornelia Schimert, RN, Hospice Community Representative. The event concluded with a Benediction provided by Rev. Ervin R. Graves, Hospice Chaplain, Hospice & Palliative Care of Westchester.

In addition to a remembrance and recognition ceremony and a musical tribute by Ossining High School Choir, the event featured a discussion about Veterans Administration benefits.

“This was a great opportunity to recognize these outstanding individuals for their honorable service,” said Mr. Dawe.

“It also provided an opportunity to inform them of the important healthcare and benefits they deserve and to provide them with tools that will help them plan for their futures accordingly,” Dawe added.

Among the attendees were New York State Assemblyman Robert J. Castelli, New York State Assemblyman Steve Katz, Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Christopher Arnold, Chief of Staff, New York State Assembly. Hospice & Palliative Care of Westchester is located at 311 North Street, Suite 204, White Plains. For additional information, visit www.hospiceofwestchester.com or call 682-1484.

Wartburg Cares Team Participates in 2011 Memory Walk

The Wartburg Adult Care Community was pleased to be a Bronze-level sponsor of the Alzheimer’s Association of the Hudson Valley/Rockland/Westchester Memory Walk, which took place in October at White Plains High School. In addition to corporate sponsorship, The Wartburg Cares! Team, which consisted of staff, community members and care givers, has raised another $1400 in donations to the Alzheimer’s Association to be used for research for prevention, treatment and a cure.

The Wartburg Cares! Team laced up their walking shoes and joined the crowds of others traveling the 5K route who wanted to help the 5.3 million Americans battling the disease. The Wartburg offers a variety of memory care programs and caregiver support for residents and those living in the community.

“The Alzheimer’s Foundation is an important resource for families struggling with the illness,” said Janet Palazzolo, Administrator of Meadowview Assisted Living at The Wartburg and Team Captain. “Every day at The Wartburg, we help people with dementia with their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. It was very meaningful for our staff to be at the walk to show support for the Alzheimer’s Foundation.”

The Wartburg Adult Care Community is a not-for-profit Lutheran ministry, serving people of all faiths with a full range of residential options and health-related services for older area adults and their families. The Wartburg offers skilled nursing care, rehabilitation, Alzheimer’s and dementia care, assisted and independent living, adult day services, home care, memory care, pastoral care and monthly caregiver support groups. The Wartburg is a member organization of the National Center for Creative Aging. For more information about The Wartburg Adult Care Community, call (914) 699-0800, email info@thewartburg.org or visit www.thewartburg.org.
Call For Dramatic New Strategy to Stop Alzheimer’s Disease

More than 40 of the nation’s leading voices and organizations in Alzheimer’s research, drug discovery and care announced a series of aggressive and innovative recommendations to transform the current trajectory of Alzheimer’s disease, now slated to kill millions of Americans and to cost the nation over two trillion dollars in the coming decade. The recommendations by Leaders Engaged on Alzheimer’s Disease (LEAD) are directed to the Congressionally-mandated Advisory Council on Alzheimer’s Research, Care, and Services – the committee tasked with advising on the first-ever national action plan to deal with the growing Alzheimer’s disease crisis.

“Alzheimer’s is a progressive neuro-degenerative disease which is uniformly fatal and for which there are no effective treatments,” said Howard Fillit, MD, who is Executive Director of the Alzheimer’s Drug Discovery Foundation, which is a member of LEAD. “The Obama Administration has a unique opportunity to set the nation on a new course with Alzheimer’s disease. An entire generation of baby boomers will be turning 65 at the rate of 10,000 per day for the next 19 years, and we have no sustainable long-term answer for them to this disease epidemic. It cannot be emphasized enough that we are in a race against time to stop Alzheimer’s disease before it becomes America’s single largest public health, fiscal and economic threat.”

Alzheimer’s disease currently affects an estimated 5.1 million Americans and, absent disease-modifying treatments, that number is expected to rise exponentially in the coming decades. To significantly advance progress in Alzheimer’s research, care and prevention, experts who prepared the LEAD report propose the following vital recommendations:

• Triple the amount of funding for Alzheimer’s disease research, while reducing the current duplication of research efforts as well as spurring innovation through a new outcomes-oriented research strategy.

• Create incentives to drive investment in new Alzheimer’s disease therapies through enhanced market exclusivity for companies delivering treatments to market, development of large-scale patient registries to reduce the time and cost of recruiting thousands of individuals to clinical trials, and focusing attention on the development of qualified biomarkers to shorten the time needed to assess the effectiveness of new drug candidates.

• Reduce healthcare costs and improve quality of care for people with Alzheimer’s disease by implementing at a national level proven models of caring for individuals with the brain disorder and their caregivers, developing critical assistive tools and services for family caregivers, and adequately reimbursing healthcare professionals for improved high quality care.

• Establish a dedicated fund at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to invest with private investors in new startup drug discovery companies that are developing innovative treatments and therapies with the best likelihood for reducing Medicare and Medicaid spending on Alzheimer’s disease care.

• Prepare for the explosion in Alzheimer’s cases by building a healthcare workforce skilled in the care of people with the disease and by ensuring that adequate and effective services and support care are accessible to all families coping with the disease.

“Families have borne the financial and emotional toll of this disease for far too long. Now is our once-in-a-lifetime chance to give them relief, and to relieve future generations from the threat of this disease hanging over them.”

“Incremental steps and half measures are not enough to confront the growing Alzheimer’s crisis,” said George Vradenburg, co-founder of US Against Alzheimer’s, a co-convenor of LEAD. “Instead, the Advisory Council should consider the daring directives outlined in this new report. From the day John Kennedy told America we would land on the moon, it took eight years for the Apollo 11 to touch down. With a transformational national plan, we could be on the verge of another giant leap for mankind.”

“This is a crisis situation that calls for a crisis-like response,” said Eric J. Hall, founding president and CEO of the Alzheimer’s Foundation of America, a co-convenor of LEAD. “Families have borne the financial and emotional toll of this disease for far too long. Now is our once-in-a-lifetime chance to give them relief, and to relieve future generations from the threat of this disease hanging over them.”

Development of an integrated national plan to defeat Alzheimer’s disease is mandated under the new National Alzheimer’s Project Act (NAPA), signed by President Obama early this year.

LEAD was founded in 2008 and includes nationally renowned experts, advocacy groups and others involved in the Alzheimer’s community. Participants in LEAD actively supported the passage of NAPA and are prepared to serve as a resource to the Advisory Council as it moves forward with its review of a strategic plan to defeat Alzheimer’s disease.
The holidays are here and that means busy days ahead for families across the nation: gift shopping, preparing for guests, sending out holiday greetings, and more. Many people have found an easier way to manage many of their activities of the holiday season by going online. Some even look up recipes for favorite traditional dishes, checking those credit card and bank account balances.

Many people have found that shopping online is a convenient way to manage many of their activities of the holiday season. This year’s honorees are:

BEDFORD: Dr. Marian Rose, PhD;
BEDFORD HILLS: David F. Brown;
BRIARCLIFF MANOR: Douglas Paddock;
BRONXVILLE: Dr. Joan O’Gorman,
PHD.; CHAPPAQUA: Betsey Casey Metz;
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This holiday season, do you want to...
Blended families, in which one or both spouses have children from previous marriages, are becoming the norm, outnumbering traditional nuclear families. It’s estimated that 50 percent of the children born since 1970 will become members of merged family entities. This significantly complicates financial and estate planning, which must now address a constellation of relationships that includes the couple, ex-spouses, offspring from various marriages and multiple sets of grandparents.

Estate law is playing catchup, and caution is required to ensure that current spouses and all children—“mine, yours and ours”—are safeguarded. Delaying discussion of this often touchy subject can lead to unforeseen consequences, hurt feelings and lawsuits.

Protecting All Parties

Each spouse should, at least, have a will that explicitly addresses disposition of all assets. Aside from avoiding a lengthy and expensive probate estate administration, this ensures that your wishes will be respected. It may be best to distribute family heirlooms during your lifetime. Leaving everything to a spouse, under the assumption that they will “do the right thing,” is a dangerous gamble that could end up disinheriting your kids.

Leaving everything to the kids is tricky, too. Unless specifically addressed in a pre- or post-nuptial agreement, your current spouse is entitled to $50,000 or one-third of your estate, whichever is larger.

Providing for young children from a former marriage can be more complicated. Unless you take appropriate legal action, your former spouse will usually be named by a probate court to manage their inheritance. Consider a Long-Term Discretionary Trust for the children, to be administered by a trustee of your choosing, who will ensure that your assets are distributed in accordance with your wishes.

Family Dynamics

When there’s distrust or hostility among step-siblings and step parents, the situation becomes even more complex. Dreading additional conflict, couples sometimes delay estate planning until it’s too late, increasing the likelihood of future dissension. Far better to talk things through and consider the diplomatic skills of potential executors, trustees and other representatives. It will be their role to navigate between family factions in order to avoid the type of estate battle that can leave permanent scars.

Even in the most harmonious situations, family dynamics should be considered when formulating advance directives or planning for the contingencies of long-term care. Health care, especially, is an emotional subject, and serious disagreements can flare.

Later Marriages

Late-in-life marriages pose different problems. What happens to the family home? Putting it in both spouses’ names may not be a good idea. While a newly married couple may want to ensure that the surviving spouse can continue to live there, children who grew up in it will likely have opinions about its disposition. Consider placing the house in trust, which protects your spouse for life, after which it can be left in further trust for your children.

Social Security and pension benefits that may have been the foundation of an earlier estate plan may take a hit. Remarriage before the age of 60 cancels rights to collect retirement based on the Social Security record of an ex-spouse to whom one was married for at least 10 years. Survivor’s pensions, too, may disappear.

Medicaid, often considered a safety net for individuals facing annual nursing home costs of over $200,000, doesn’t recognize pre-nuptial agreements. That means that substantially all the assets of both parties must be “spent down” before either one of them is eligible for benefits. With preparation, though, couples can avoid the loss of their nest eggs.

Merged families face an array of financial challenges and an ever-evolving body of law, but candid discussions and an experienced estate planning attorney can smooth the way.

Bernard A. Krooks, Esq., is a founding partner of Littman Krooks LLP and has been named a “New York Super Lawyer” every year since 2006 and one of the top 25 lawyers in Westchester County. He has been honored as one of the Best Lawyers in New York and America since 2006. A past president of NAELA, SNA, a CELA, and a fellow of ACTEC, Mr. Krooks may be reached at (914) 684-2100 or (212) 490-2020, or visit the firm’s website at www.littmankrooks.com.
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