

# New Face of America (Continued from page 1)

Alicia. “To decide that things are so desperate where you live that you are willing to send your 6, 7, 8 year-old in the hands of a stranger ... across a desert not knowing what waits on the other side. That is an act of sheer desperation that any mother, any father, can only imagine.” Yet the issue of family reunification remains what Alicia calls “the most contentious and problematic part of the debate.”

She calls the need for immigration reform “an American issue, a major American challenge” that has not been comprehensively addressed since



The Latin Links Presentation and Luncheon on “Women, the Immigrant Experience, and the Media” explored timely topics and engaged attendees in thought-provoking conversation.



**“TELLING A STORY ABOUT A PERSON IS DIFFERENT THAN TELLING A STORY ABOUT AN ISSUE.”**

—BARBARA FEDIDA, ABC NEWS

1965. The shaky U.S. economy and job market have compounded the problem. “There’s a fear that people won’t be able to give their kids what they had,” Alicia noted. And with 11.5 million on a path to citizenship, there’s also the question of “Who will they vote for?”

Work opportunities are what lure immigrants to the U.S. “We tell people don’t come, but then we hang out a help wanted sign. It’s a mixed message.” She said, “We have American businesses that are knowingly soliciting and then hiring undocumented workers. That’s the reality of what is pulling people across the border.”

The speakers agreed that there is a need to prepare communities with the skills to accept immigrants. Commenting on Neighbors Link’s efforts towards healthy integration, Barbara said, “Our hats are off to you ... the work you do is meaningful and inspiring to all of us.”

Barbara and Alicia spoke at Old Oaks Country Club in Purchase, New York before a group of about 200 attendees. Two Neighbors Link clients, Maria Lopez and Gilma Acosta, echoed how valuable the organization’s programs have been in their assimilation to their new home. ■



## Workers Available Now

**Need help raking leaves or planting?** For general labor, come to our Hiring Site at 27 Columbus Avenue in Mount Kisco or call our Hiring Site Manager at 914-666-3410 ext. 21. Open 7AM–10PM, 365 days a year.

**Painting your house or building a garden shed?** For masons, carpenters, painters, and other skilled labor, please call Nicole at 914-666-3410 ext. 17 or fill out a request through our online form.

**Planning a party?** Experienced housekeepers and party help available. Call Nicole at 914-666-3410 ext. 17 or fill out a request through our online form.

—No fees charged to you or the worker—  
Visit us at [neighborslink.org](http://neighborslink.org) and like us on Facebook!  
Neighbors Link Northern Westchester is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

# THE HAND THAT FEEDS

SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO MAKE YOUR OWN JUSTICE | NOVEMBER 19, 2014



## LATIN LINKS FILM SERIES @ JACOB BURNS FILM CENTER

In *The Hand that Feeds*, shy sandwich-maker Mahoma Lopez sets out to end abusive conditions at a popular New York restaurant chain. The epic power struggle that ensues turns a single city block into a battlefield in America’s new wage wars.

The film will be followed by a panel discussion about the film, labor and immigrant employment in Northern Westchester.



6:15PM | PRE-FILM RECEPTION | Media Arts Lab | 405 Manville Road | Pleasantville, NY

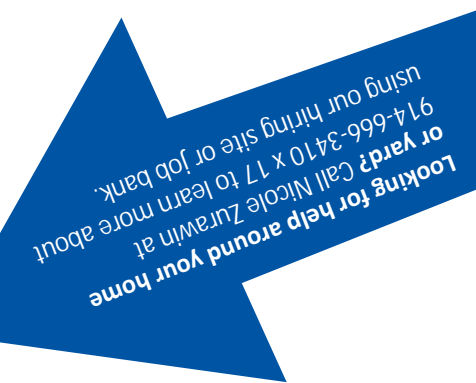
7:30PM | FILM, PANEL and Q&A | Jacob Burns Film Center | 364 Manville Road | Pleasantville, NY

Tickets available at [neighborslink.org/events](http://neighborslink.org/events) or by calling Laura Newman at 914-666-3410 ext. 14

Current Resident or:

Non-Profit Org  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
White Plains  
Permit No. 49456

27 Columbus Avenue  
Mount Kisco, NY 10549  
Tel: 914-666-3410  
[www.neighborslink.org](http://www.neighborslink.org)



Fall/Winter 2014

# Neighbors Link



VOLUME 22

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

## Network Pioneers Discuss the New Face of America and the Media

“Accepting diversity is important for all the right reasons. It’s also good business,” said Barbara Fedida at the recent Latin Links presentation and luncheon organized by the Friends of Neighbors Link on the topic of “Women, the Immigrant Experience, and the Media.” Barbara is Senior Vice President at ABC News, responsible for hiring and development of their on and off-air talent worldwide.

She was joined by Alicia Menendez, anchor of “Alicia Menendez Tonight” on Fusion, a news, pop culture and satire TV and digital network launched in 2013 by ABC-Disney and Univision. Menendez’ brand of smart, witty news analysis attracts 18-29 year-old millennials including second and third generation acculturated Latinos to the quickly growing Fusion network. The cable channel is young and vibrant, broadcasts out of Miami, and only in English.

“This is America now,” said Barbara. She noted that there are 11.5 million undocumented immigrants currently living in the U.S. By the year 2030 one in four Americans will be Hispanic, a major consumer and voting segment. “Alicia has been able to remove a lot of the stereotypes,” said Barbara.

Of Cuban heritage, Alicia Menendez was raised in the vibrant immigrant town of Union City, New Jersey. “Growing up, there were no Latinas on TV that looked like me,” she said. Born in 1983 and graduated from Harvard in 2005, Alicia describes herself as an old millennial, the generation born into one of the worst economies and job markets ever, but “still so optimistic.”



To connect with Alicia’s generation of viewers, Fusion focuses on the “commonality” rather than the differences among people, using a dynamic mix of digital media, storytelling and analysis. To humanize the reality of the 11.5 million, Alicia said, “I believe in the power of stories.” She and Barbara shared two poignant video segments about the hardships and failures of border crossings. “Telling a story about a person is different than telling a story about an issue,” acknowledged Barbara.

Stories have been helpful in clarifying the phenomenon of the child migrant crisis. “Think about what that is like for a mom,” said

Continued on page 5

**“WE TELL PEOPLE DON’T COME, BUT THEN WE HANG OUT A HELP WANTED SIGN.”**

—ALICIA MENENDEZ, “ALICIA MENENDEZ TONIGHT”

**“SUMMER LINKS WAS A GREAT EXPERIENCE FOR ME! I LOVED WORKING WITH THE KINDERGARTNERS AND IT WAS SO REWARDING TO SEE THEM ALL GROW AS STUDENTS.”**

—HIGH SCHOOL VOLUNTEER, SUMMER LINKS





(Above left and above) Neighbors Link families enjoy our annual carnival.



(Above and right) Thank you to "Favors," a group of dedicated Neighbors Link volunteers who renovated the outside play area for the Family Center. While parents participate in educational workshops, staff and volunteers take the children to enjoy outdoor play time.



(Above and right) In partnership with Mount Kisco Elementary School, 107 elementary school children participated in our Summer Links program. The program provides academic instruction and curriculum including science, movement, nutrition, music, theater and gardening, as well as camp activities at The Boys and Girls Club of Northern Westchester. The children entering kindergarten received backpacks and school supplies donated by the Birchwood Swim Team.



## Do you know someone?

...who is interested in improving their English language and communication skills in the workplace? Neighbors Link offers the following:



**ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)**  
Through our partnership with WCC, Neighbors Link learners attend professionally-led ESL classes on site at the center. Offerings for beginners and advanced learners.

- Monday–Friday 9 AM–12 PM (No registration required, Free)
- Monday and Wednesday 7–9:30 PM (Registration required, Fee \$25 with free childcare)
- Saturday 9:30 AM–3 PM (Registration required, Fee \$25)

**ESL CONVERSATION AND TUTORING**  
Learn English through group conversation and one-on-one tutoring. (No registration required, Free)

- Monday 1–3 PM
- Tuesday 1–3 PM and 7–8:30 PM
- Wednesday 2–3 PM
- Thursday 1–4 PM and 7–8:30 PM

### ROSETTA STONE ENGLISH CLASS

Learn and practice English using the Rosetta Stone English language computer program. Levels 0–4. (No registration is required, Free)

- Call for dates



# Volunteers Enrich our Community One Opportunity at a Time

“Volunteers are the heart of any non-profit,” said Susan Aarhus, Neighbors Link’s new Volunteer Manager. Joining our organization after fifteen years with the American Red Cross, she notes, “Here their respect for each other and joy of working and volunteering could not be more apparent.”

Hundreds of community volunteers, from young teens to seniors, contribute to the success of dozens of Neighbors Link programs.

Managing the robust volunteer program at Neighbors Link is very rewarding for Susan. “I have the pleasure of interviewing and placing



a high caliber of volunteers—really amazing people.” She attributes the strong pool of volunteers to the organization’s reputation and its results. “We’re getting a wave of previous clients who are ready to volunteer their time to help new clients. That’s the best volunteer success story you could ever hope for.”

Examples of this evolution from client to volunteer include Family Center “graduates” whose children are now in the local elementary school, Pipeline Scholars who have become teen language tutors, and others who are sharing their job and life skills with recent immigrants. “It’s a full circle, with clients using Neighbors Link services and then giving back,” notes Susan.

Neighbors Link continues to welcome new volunteers with special abilities and backgrounds to help shape its roster of programs and services. Of special interest are people to serve as role models, and those who have unique skills. “Whether you’re an artist, architect, Lego master or a potential mentor to teens, you can share your tools for success and offer encouragement.”



**“WE’RE GETTING A WAVE OF PREVIOUS CLIENTS WHO ARE READY TO VOLUNTEER THEIR TIME TO HELP NEW CLIENTS. THAT’S THE BEST VOLUNTEER SUCCESS STORY YOU COULD EVER HOPE FOR.”**

—SUSAN AARHUS, NEIGHBORS LINK VOLUNTEER MANAGER

## Portrait of a Neighbor

**THE WORK OF NEIGHBORS LINK IS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE SUPPORT OF PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY LIKE YOU.** Volunteers at Neighbors Link serve in a variety of roles, range in age from students to retirees, and come from different communities in Westchester. At a celebration honoring over 300 actively involved volunteers, five people were recognized for their dedication and service to Neighbors Link.



### CARE GIVERS

Nancy Bauer and Josette Hochman won the Neighbors Link Outstanding Adult Volunteer Awards for their passionate volunteer work with the Parents as Teachers program and the Tuesday ESL (English as a Second Language) Conversation Class they run together. With Josette’s background in teaching and Nancy’s knowledge of Spanish, they have worked to create a comfortable environment that attracts ESL

### TEAM SPIRIT

The Mary Weiss Volunteer Spirit Award was presented to Nancy and Steve Mendelsohn. Nancy and Steve have been active volunteers for many years across programs at Neighbors Link and have been dedicated tutors in the Thursday Evening ESL Adult Tutors Program since 2010.

About the Thursday evening program, Steve says, “It is not really about the English. English is the link but the program is much greater. Forming bonds, being a resource to assist with questions, making learners comfortable with people outside their community, building trust, having fun, this is what we really do. It is the best hour and a half of the week and I look forward to it every time.”



### FEEDING FRIENDS

To honor the memory of Marc Silver, the Silver Family has fundraised and donated \$15,000 to Neighbors Link through the “Marc Silver Feed Your Neighbor” campaign. With the goal of eliminating hunger in our community, the fund provides breakfast to elementary children in the Summer Links program, assuring a nutrition “bridge” for those youngsters who qualify for free meals during the school year. The fund also provides Family Night community meals and grocery store gift cards to families in crisis.



### CAUSE CONSCIOUS

Samantha Regan (above and below, right), a senior at Horace Greeley High School, received the Agnes Hassell Youth Leadership Award for her dedication in the Neighbors Link High School Volunteer ESL (English as a Second Language) Tutors program. She has been a dedicated volunteer at Neighbors Link since seventh grade.



About tutoring at Neighbors Link, Samantha says, “For the last three years I’ve loved Tuesday nights, where we all come together to improve language skills and build connections with different people in our community.”

Meeting the men and women of the immigrant community has put a very human face on a situation that is not an “issue” but a collection of very personal stories and experiences,” Nancy remarked. “I hope I have made a small difference in the lives of the people I have met at Neighbors Link, because I can truly say they have made a huge difference in mine.”

