Volunteers and Student Interns Bring Resources, Support and Smiles to the Family Center

GLOBAL SCHOLARS ENRICH FAMILY NIGHT
As part of their work as Kathryn W. Davis Global Community Scholars at WCC, four students have made a commitment to Family Night at Neighbors Link Northern Westchester. After several planning meetings with Neighbors Link staff, the students created lesson plans for sharing science experiments and projects, cultural games, karaoke, and arts and crafts activities with the nearly 30 students who attended Family Night. All of the Family Night children’s lessons will be organized by students Nadine Brown, Gilecia Dias, Christelle Bechtold, and Shabda Zyaud. This is the second year students from the Global Scholars program have interned at NLNW, and their energy and ideas have contributed meaningfully to the program.

INTERNS LEND A HELPING HAND IN PARENTING CLASSES
The second group of interns is made up of three students in WCC’s Human Services program. As part of their social work, they are completing field work at Neighbors Link. Tania Brown, Gilecia Dias, and Christelle Bechtold have shared their lessons, and their ideas and skills have been on the Family Center’s wish list of exciting family activities.

THE WCC INTERNS CONTRIBUTE TERRIFIC ENERGY AND IDEAS TO THE FAMILY CENTER PROGRAMMING. WE ARE SO GRATEFUL TO HAVE THEM WITH US AGAIN THIS YEAR.” —CAROLA BRACCO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NEIGHBORS LINK NORTHERN WESTCHESTER

Family Center Campaign Over 90% Complete
In October of 2012, Neighbors Link launched a special fundraising campaign to generate $1.5 million in support of a new Family Center. Thanks to generous community members, we are pleased to announce that the campaign has reached over 90% of the goal.

“The Share the Vision” campaign aims true to the Neighbors Link mission of strengthening the whole community through integration of immigrant families. With this vision, the Family Center has already stopped over 500 parents and children in programming and is now moving toward creating a community where:
• All children are school-ready, equipped to learn and prepared to reach their full potential.
• There is no achievement gap between immigrant children and their peers.
• Where all children graduate from high school and are college-bound or career-ready.

“The success of the ‘Share the Vision’ campaign is extremely heartening because it affirms our community’s commitment to integration,” said Kim Manocherian, the Campaign Chair. “We’re confident that this fundraising effort will reach its final goal and that the Family Center will continue to grow and flourish.”

Neighbors Link is fortunate to have two groups of Westchester Community College (WCC) students volunteering during their second semester; a mutually beneficial opportunity to both intern and learn in the workplace for careers in social service.

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**FAMILY NIGHT CELEBRATES 8TH ANNIVERSARY**

In March, Neighbors Link celebrated the 8th anniversary of its Family Night program. Twice a month, families gather together for a communal meal, social networking and professionally facilitated workshops on issues critical to their unique situation—navigating the school system, family dynamics, educational opportunities and immigration rights.

**CONGRESSIONAL FUND-RAISING PICKET**

NeighborLink day workers and volunteers share their stories.

As what is keeping us free, immigration reform offers me a belief that possibly the opposition to reform will be less in face of emotion.

We have been drawn path before as a nation against our neighbors, and during the civil rights movement. There seem some critical practical issues that I believe the answer to address and reform will help us in this. For example, in this country we have millions of illegal immigrant citizens who have not one uninterrupted legal path into our country. There millions kids that are being raised by parents or parents who under current procedures are severed from their ability to integrate and raise their U.S. citizen children.

The decision to migrate is a decision that is forced on a family, forced by the conditions they live in and by the economic policies of governments in their home country and years of foreign policy in the U.S.; forced by this country to have a working class to be the backbone of our food, in our yard, and in the restaurants we frequent— and, combined, we have several conditions present that result in this.

To migrate, to leave family, home and culture in a way is a demands upon them.

I wanted to be here because Neighbors Link is here, this organization is which an important model for how we have to come together to work with the at risk of the immigrant.

**SEAN PATRICK MCKEOWN**

Congressman Maloney and Local Leaders Share Thoughts on U.S. Immigration Reform

Although now on the agenda of the last several U.S. Presidents, President Obama Comprehensive Immigration Reform remains elusive. Nonetheless, there is stipulation over its provisions, including the definition of a legal "status" for millions of immigrants living in the United States. Congressman Maloney, December Head hearing at Neighbors Link on the topics brought together a panel of distinguished community leaders, as well as immigrants who shared their stories.

Below are highlights from the remarks presented by Neighbors Link Executive Director Carlos Bracco.

Photo credits:  Neighbors Link archives.

**SNOW PATROL**

Neighbors Link day workers and volunteers share their stories at Neighbors Link.

Oxido is a primary school teacher in Guatemala. However, with many children of different ages in the evening classroom and limited resources, he was frustrated with the quality of education. He decided to come to the United States to give his family and children a better future. He is grateful for the opportunities he has received. Currently, his two daughters are in college studying to be teachers and his son is in high school.

Throughout the weekend, Neighbors Link volunteers joined thousands throughout the country as they marched and rallied in support of immigration reform. In an event organized by the Worker Center of Bedford Central School District, Neighbors Link Volunteers, together with the Bedford Central School District, Bedford Presbyterian Church and Bedford Village United Church of Christ, marched in Bedford Village to advocate for comprehensive immigration reform.

**LIFELONG LEARNER**

Georgia is a sixth grader who loves language; she decided she wanted to do a Second Language program that would bring her closer to her heritage. So the Souper Group formed.

The girls in the group expressed a desire to help their community teacher in Guatemala—however, with many children of different ages in one classroom and limited resources, she was frustrated with the quality of education. She decided to come to the United States to give her family and children a better future. She is grateful for the opportunities he has received. Currently, his two daughters are in college studying to be teachers and his son is in high school.

**ROSSETA STONE**

Jennifer and Amy volunteer at Neighbors Link, facilitating the Portrait of a Neighbor computer-based program to learn English. Amy came to Neighbors Link after retiring from teaching special education. “I enjoy volunteering here because the interest the men and women show in learning a new language and culture so they can fully integrate into this community.”

As a Jennifer, the learners’ progress has impacted her the most. “I find these men and women to be so brave. Many of them have never sat at a computer before and it takes a lot of courage to learn not only a new language, but a new technology.”