

PILLAR OPENS TWO NEW GROUP HOMES



Cutting the ribbon on the new group home in Morris Township

Pillar recently unveiled two new group homes that will provide support to a total of 10 adults with developmental disabilities. A ribbon-cutting for the agency's new home in Harding Township was held on September 16th. The home, made possible by a donation of property by Harding Township, will serve four adults with severe disabilities and medical challenges. "This was truly a win-win project," said Darren Burns, Pillar Care board member and Harding resident. "The Township earned affordable housing credits and we are able to provide care to people who desperately need it. Mayor Chris Yates, Deputy Mayor Tim Jones and the entire Township Council were a pleasure to work with."

The agency opened another home in Morris Township on October 7th. The home was made possible by a donation of property by real estate developer Joe Forgione and JMF Properties and by a generous grant from The Steven and Beverly Rubenstein Charitable Foundation, Inc. This is Pillar Care's first facility to include both a four-bedroom group home and an attached two-bedroom apartment.

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MARX EVENT RAISES OVER \$1 MILLION!



Kelly Marx with students at Pillar Elementary School

Pillar Care held its annual Steps to Independence Celebration fundraiser virtually for the first time ever on October 21st. The event, which honored Kelly Marx for his 60 years of service to the agency as well as staff who worked in the agency's group homes throughout the pandemic, raised more than \$1 million for the agency.

"Our event committee was concerned about whether a virtual event in the midst of a pandemic could be successful," said Clark Machemer, Chair of Pillar Care's board and a co-chair for the event. "I think the result speaks to how incredibly generous our supporters are and how committed they are to our agency. And what could be a more fitting way to honor the man who has been our chief fundraiser for 60 years than to break the \$1 million mark."

See pages 4-5 for more information on the event.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO



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Purna Rodman Conare,
President & CEO

Although this has been a year of many challenges, Pillar Care Continuum has continued to expand our services to meet the needs of the people we serve.

Our main story highlights two group homes we developed this year in Harding Township and Morris Township. We are thankful to Harding Township and to real estate developer Joe Forgione for donating the properties for these homes and for partnering with us to provide the housing that is so critical for adults with severe disabilities and medical challenges. We want to continue to develop new homes, so I invite anyone with an interest to please reach out to us to start a conversation and explore a potential project.

You will also read about our recent Steps to Independence Celebration honoring Kelly Marx, which raised more than \$1 million that will help us to weather a very challenging year in which we suffered significant financial losses due to the pandemic. Kelly has been a pillar of our agency for 60 years and, yes, inspired our new name, Pillar Care Continuum. And a very special thanks to board members Clark Machemer, Bob Murray and Mike Petillo for their tireless efforts to ensure this year's event was so successful.

It has been an exceptionally difficult year for everyone. That is what makes the support we have received throughout the last few months that much more meaningful.

Thank you to all of you for your ongoing kindness and generosity and for helping us to continue to fulfill our mission even under the most trying of circumstances.

Enjoy the issue!

Warmly, Puma Rodman Conare

CONTACT US

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PLEASE NOTE OUR SITES HAVE CHANGED!

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VOLUNTEER PROGRAM LAUNCHES SPECIAL NEEDS BOOK CLUB



ZOOM MEETING

Bette Hanauer (top row, center), Kathy Morales (2nd row, far left) and Corry DeMarco (3rd row, far right) discuss the latest book with club members.

When members of the Book Buddies sign on to their weekly Zoom call, you can see the anticipation on everyone's faces. Each member is excited to share his or her thoughts about the latest book about Helen Keller.

The participants are all adults attending one of Pillar Care's three day programs. There is some socializing among the group before an intense discussion of the story and the illustrations and members vying for the opportunity to read aloud to the group. At the center of the action are volunteers Bette Hanauer and Kathy Morales.

"We knew from the beginning we wanted this to be about more than books," said Bette, who was a teacher and principal with Pillar Schools for more than 20 years as well as a member of the Board of Trustees. "A book club should offer participants the opportunity to socialize with peers and a sense of belonging and we've worked very hard to provide that."

Each book is selected by members of the club and everyone receives a copy of each book in the mail to keep as well as a membership card when they join. *(Thank you to volunteer Oded Levitt, who donated and fundraised to support the purchase of all the books for the current program year!).* And the co-leaders focus on the interests of participants and encouraging everyone to share their thoughts and to learn from one another.

"I'm so glad I got involved in this program," said Kathy. "Members share with us about their lives and their interests and you get to see what amazing people they are." Kathy is a member of two other book clubs in her town and also volunteers with the local public library, so she jumped at the opportunity to get involved with Book Buddies. "When members wanted to read about huskies, we found a book about dog sled teams and even had a guest speaker who ran her own dog sled team. It's been so much fun and I enjoy every minute of it."

"Volunteers allow us opportunities to create innovative programming," said Corry DeMarco, Pillar Care's Director of Volunteers. "And thanks to Bette and Kathy, we have a new program that our participants are excited to be a part of; they truly feel special to be part of the group, and that makes all of our efforts worthwhile."

MARX EVENT RAISES OVER \$1 MILLION

Pillar Care's first-ever virtual Steps to Independence Celebration was held on October 21st and raised more than \$1 million for the agency. The event honored Kelly Marx for his 60 years of service on the agency's Board of Trustees, as well as the organization's healthcare heroes- the staff members who worked in Pillar Care's group homes throughout the pandemic.

The event was hosted by Barry Ostrowsky, CEO of RWJBarnabas Health and longtime Pillar Care board member. Speakers included Pillar Board Chair Clark Machemer and Pillar CEO Purna Rodman Conare. Event committee member John Crimi again spearheaded the "text for the cause" segment of the event, generating more than \$130,000 in donations for specific items requested by the agency's programs.

"We are so thankful to Kelly, to all the members of the event committee, and to all of our generous donors," said Clark. "And we are all looking forward to celebrating in person in 2021."



Kelly and Nancy Marx with the 2020 Kelly Marx Award

2020 STEPS TO INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATION COMMITTEE

EVENT CO-CHAIRS

Clark Machemer, Crow Holdings
Barry R. Mandelbaum, Mandelbaum Salsburg P.C.
Philip Monaco, Peerless Concrete Products Co.
Bob Murray, Alston Construction
Barry H. Ostrowsky, RWJ Barnabas Health
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THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR MAJOR SPONSORS FOR YOUR CONTINUED GENEROUS SUPPORT.

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Mandelbaum Salsburg/Barry
& Leslie Mandelbaum
Joseph & Cheryl Marino Family
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Meeker Sharkey Associates, LLC
Jeff & Judy Milanaik
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Phoenix Tube Company, Inc.

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Stover Excavating Inc.
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Triad Coatings
Ultra Commercial Interiors, Inc.
Valley Bank

Thank you to the event committee for their exceptional leadership.

VOLUNTEERS DELIVER HOLIDAY CHEER

Pillar volunteers once again supported the annual holiday drive for Pillar families, donating thousands to assist families in need. Funds supported the toy drive for Pillar Elementary students and volunteer Santas even delivered to those students who are not attending school in-person. Funding also supported grocery gift cards for families in all of the agency's programs.

"This was a very tough year for these families," said Corry DeMarco, Pillar's Director of Volunteers. "We so thankful to all of the Board members and other volunteers whose generosity allowed us to help so many families."



Santa (Bob Murray of Alston Construction) and his elf (Jeff DeOliveira of Alston) deliver a toy to David from Pillar Elementary

PILLAR SUPPORTS FAMILIES FOR THANKSGIVING



Natasha McCall (left) and Teresa Hatch organize and pack after weeks of shopping for the Thanksgiving distribution.

Pillar Care continued its longstanding tradition of helping program families in need for Thanksgiving. With donations received during the "text for a cause" portion of the Steps to Independence fundraiser, Pillar was able to provide Thanksgiving food baskets for 144 families from across all of its programs. The baskets included a turkey as well as all of the sides needed to provide a full Thanksgiving meal for a family.

"Our agency serves quite a few families who have a special needs child and are also struggling financially, especially in a year like this," said Natasha McCall, the Events Specialist at Pillar Care who organizes the Thanksgiving program in conjunction with fellow employee Teresa Hatch. "So we are happy to have this opportunity to help them in some small way."

Once donations are received, Natasha and Teresa launch a massive shopping drive at a wide range of grocery stores to ensure they can maximize their funds. "Even a 25 cents per item difference matters when you are trying to help so many families," said Teresa. "And we always ask each store to help out by donating or reducing their prices for us." The two then coordinate with volunteers to package each box and arrange for deliveries.

"The Thanksgiving program is a wonderful example of how we push ourselves to do as much as possible for our families," said Pillar Care CEO Purna Rodman Conare. "It involves a great deal of work, but it is a tradition to which we are deeply committed as an organization."

TRIBUTE GIFTS

If you would like to remember someone with an “in memory of” gift or celebrate a special occasion with an “in honor of” gift, please contact the CPNJ development office at (973) 821-8036. We will notify the person of your choosing with a special card telling them that a gift was made.

IN MEMORY OF

- For:** **Millie Zuckerman**
By: Barry & Leslie Mandelbaum
Kelly & Nancy Marx
David Bishop

For: **Alex Mutz**
By: Nolan Lehman

For: **Bernice Caspert**
By: Derek & Anne Burke

For: **Kathleen P. Young**
By: Kevin Poli
Tom Kerrigan & Family
Amanda Heter
Barbara Briggs
Sharon Andesohn
- For:** **Aida D’Avella**
By: Anthony D’Avella
Martha Moreno
Arlene Mirsky
Joseph Rizk
Madeline Korf
William Mitchell
Jonathan Shaw

For: **Maxine Myers**
By: Deborah Schutzbank

IN HONOR OF

- For:** **Kelly & Nancy Marx’s 30th Wedding Anniversary**
By: Barry H. & Bobbi Ostrowsky

For: **Scott Berendes**
By: Clark Machemer

For: **Kelly Marx’s 60 Years of Service**
By: Angelica Diaz-Martinez

For: **Barry Ostrowsky’s Birthday**
By: Wayne & Jill Canastra

For: **Puma Rodman Conare**
By: Shawna Seed



Opening the new home in Harding Township

Continued from page 1

“This project was a wonderful collaboration among so many different folks,” said Pillar Care Board Chair Clark Machemer. “Joe Forgione has a deep personal commitment to homes like this and helps to make them possible and the Rubenstein Foundation is a critical supporter of projects for the special needs community.” Pillar CEO Purna Rodman Conare added that “We are also deeply thankful to Mayor Catherine Wilson, Township Administrator Timothy Quinn, and all of the members of the Morris Township Committee for helping us to be part of this amazing community.”

Both housing projects were supported by the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency and the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities.

“With these two new homes, we are now operating 17 group homes,” said Kent Dettlo, Pillar Care’s Director of Residential Services. “And we have several others under development. There is such a great need for this service and we’re doing all we can to help meet it.”

SUMMIT FOUNDATION/ANNUAL WALK SUPPORT NEW POWER WHEELCHAIR

The Summit Foundation provided a \$20,000 grant to Pillar Elementary School to support the purchase of a power wheelchair that will be utilized to assess and train students in need of a power chair. Additional funds for the chair were provided by the school's annual Wheelin'-n'-Walkin' Challenge.



Pillar Elementary School student Mekhi trials the new power wheelchair funded by The Summit Foundation

More than half of Pillar Elementary's students require a wheelchair and many of these students are best served with a power wheelchair. "A more physically involved student often needs a power chair," said Pillar Elementary School principal Hetty Kintiroglou. "Power mobility has the ability to increase a young student's independence and opportunity to access their environment. This new power chair provides our team of therapists with a demonstration chair that can be used to assess students' abilities and to help them to develop the skills they will need to operate their own chair. We are so grateful to The Summit Foundation and for the donors to our annual walk for making it possible to get this chair, which will impact our students for years to come."