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## Nursing Home Deaths from COVID Is an Investigation Warranted?

Astorino Calls for Probe

By Dan Murphy



By Dan Murphy

Governor Andrew Cuomo has been praised for his management of the Coronavirus pandemic in New York State, which has resulted in 32,000 deaths. Included in that number are 6,300 senior residents who lived in New York nursing homes, and if there is a blemish on the Governor's oversight of COVID, it would be the decision to return COVID seniors to Nursing homes at the end of March.

On March 25, the state Department of Health (DOH) issued a directive requiring nursing homes to admit individuals who tested positive for COVID-19. The Governor stopped the policy on May 10, after nursing home organizations claimed that it was contributing to a clustering affect and more deaths. Veterans homes were also affected, including the state Veterans Home at Montrose in Westchester, which had 22 resident deaths to the COVID-19 virus.

Republicans in New York State and in Washington DC, are calling for an investigation into what happened and why the decision was made. Republican members of the House of Representatives sent a letter to NY asking for the number of senior patients that were discharged from hospitals to nursing homes. Because republicans are in the minority in the House, they cannot hold hearings or call witnesses.

It is important to note that the high number of nursing home deaths from COVID also occurred in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, California and Michigan, and in New Jersey, Gov. Phil Murphy also made the same decision to return COVID seniors to nursing homes. Estimates have 4,500 senior, COVID, patients discharged from the hospital and sent to nursing homes across the state.

Governor Cuomo has defended the March 25 decision, claiming that New York State followed guidance from the CDC, Centers for Disease Control. Other New York Democrats claim that the calls for investigation are politically motivated. And while NY Attorney General Letisha James has started an investigation into NY nursing homes, others have called for an independent investigation.

Stephen Hanse, President and CEO of the New York State Health Facilities Association "In order to further protect our residents and staff, we are grateful that hospitals can no longer discharge new patients into nursing homes that have tested positive or were suspected to have COVID-19."

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## Did You Know That Westchester Had an Autonomous Zone?



By Dan Murphy

For more than three weeks in June, Americans watched on TV as a group of protestors representing Black Lives Matters and Antifa took over a six block neighborhood in the middle of Seattle, Washington. A police precinct in the Autonomous Zone called CHAZ, Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone, was burned and left empty from June 8 until July 1.

Most of our readers may not know that a similar, Autonomous Zone was built in White Plains. The Lower Hudson Democratic Socialists opened the site around July 4, in the Battle Hill neighborhood in White Plains in a small park.

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## What Does Back to School Look Like?

Some Catholic Schools close for good



Elizabeth Seton School in Shrub Oak, one of many Catholic Schools that will close for good

By Dan Murphy

Bad news for Catholic School children and their families came last week from the Archdiocese of New York, in a statement which read:

"The Office of the Superintendent of Schools of the Archdiocese of New York today announced 20 Catholic schools will be unable to reopen in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Three schools will merge. The coronavirus public health crisis has had a devastating financial impact on Catholic school families and the greater Archdiocese. Mass unemployment and continuing health concerns have resulted in families' inability to pay their current tuition, and a significantly low rate of re-registration for the fall; while months of cancelled public masses and fundraising for scholarships have seen a loss of parish contributions which traditionally help support the schools.

"Children are always the most innocent victims of any crisis, and this COVID-19 pandemic is no exception," said Timothy Cardinal Dolan Archbishop of New York. "Too many have lost parents and grandparents to this insidious virus, and now thousands will not see their beloved school again. I've kept a hopeful eye on our schools throughout this saga and my prayers are with all of the children and their families who will be affected by this sad news. Given the devastation of this pandemic, I'm grateful more schools didn't meet this fate, and that Catholic schools nearby are ready to welcome all the kids."

"Much deliberation and analysis went into the final determination of which schools would not reopen. It is expected these changes, which will impact approximately 2,500 students and 350 staff, will have the positive effect of ensuring the overall fiscal stability and strengthen the vitality of New York Catholic schools for decades to come.

"The reality of these schools being lost is painful, and it was only accepted reluctantly after a detailed study was conducted of their respective fiscal standing in the wake of the coronavirus public health crisis," said Superintendent of Schools Michael J. Deegan. "I have been a Catholic school educator for more than 40 years, and could never have imagined the grave impact this pandemic has had on our schools. If more assistance is not forthcoming in the longed for HEROES Act now

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## Cancel Goya? Cancel Hamilton?



By Dan Murphy

Last week, Goya CEO Robert Unanue was invited to the White House by President Trump for a discussion and announcement about a 'Hispanic Prosperity Initiative.' At the ceremony in the Rose Garden, Unanue said, 'We are all truly blessed to have a leader like President Trump who is a builder. And that's what my grandfather did, he came to this country to build and grown and prosper. We have an incredible builder and we pray for our leadership, our president, and our country to continue to prosper and continue to grow.'

Shortly after his comments, a boycott began against Goya Foods, the largest, Hispanic-owned food company in the United States. Joining the boycott were Congressman and former Presidential candidate Julian Castro, who tweeted, "Free speech works both ways. @GoyaFoods CEO is free to support a bigoted president who said an American judge can't do his job because he's "Mexican", who treats Puerto Rico like trash, and who tries to deport Dreamers. We're free to leave his products on the shelves. #Goyaway." Congresswoman AOC, also added her name to the boycott, as did Hamilton creator Lin-Manuel Miranda.

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## Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins Gives out 40,000 Masks



**Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins with a representative of Doctors United, with locations in Yonkers, White Plains, and Ardsley**

NYS Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins is distributing masks in bulk to local community organizations, nonprofits, religious groups, and businesses that are located in Yonkers, White Plains, New Rochelle, Scarsdale, and Greenburgh—the 35th Senate District she represents.

After announcing the program a week ago, 137 institutions have responded and are in the process of picking up their allotment from the Senator’s District Office in Yonkers.

“As the county begins Phase 4 and as businesses and organizations continue to re-open, it is important that they have the resources needed to keep everyone safe. With the governor’s assistance in procurement, I am proud to be able to distribute this massive amount of masks to these local groups so that they can protect their employees as well as their customers, clients, and congregations,” said Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins.

The requests—both large and small—range from 20 masks for local businesses to 1,000 for area nursing homes and other large, nonprofit agencies. Churches, synagogues and other faith-based groups have also requested masks as they look to open up their buildings to more congregants. Restaurants, doctor’s offices, and childcare organizations are also receiving masks, which are washable, reusable and made out of cotton. They are not for medical use.

“I am hopeful that this mask distribution effort will help everyone to stay healthy. It is precisely because we continue to practice social distancing and wearing masks that Westchester’s (and New York State’s) active COVID-19 cases continue to decline. We all want to keep it that way,” said the Senator.

There is a small amount of masks still available for bulk distribution. To place a request, please email [mannara@nysenate.gov](mailto:mannara@nysenate.gov) or call the Senator’s District Office at (914) 423-4031. Unfortunately, the office cannot promise to fulfill all additional requests.

## Lions Scholarship Given to Anashelvy Maldonado from Mamaroneck HS



**LM Lions Diane Oldham with Scholarship recipient Anashelvy Maldonado**

Mamaroneck High School senior Anashelvy Maldonado was the winner of The Larchmont Mamaroneck Lions Club High School scholarship essay contest and presented with the \$1,000 award to help cover college expenses. Jonathan Marcuse of Rye Neck HS and Madeline Silverstein of Mamaroneck HS received honorable mentions.

For over 20 years this annual scholarship has been awarded to a Larchmont/Mamaroneck graduating senior who has performed meaningful local community service.

Candidates submitted an essay describing their charitable work and the impact it had on the community. The panel of judges, made up of LM Lions and local community members, included Lauringle Mitchell, Meg Kaufer, Carey Federspiel, Nora McMillan, and Jhonastan Regalado. All personal information was removed so essays were in effect anonymous. Essays were judged on the applicant’s breadth and depth of service and how that service embodied the Lions’ motto “We Serve.”

In reflecting on the review of the essays, Margaret Käufer, Committee Leader, said “What our committee really saw in these essays was the incredible dedication of so many teens in our community. Many people can give things to help others. But they gave of their time, extensively. It is just so impressive. We applaud all of them and encourage them to keep at it.”

In all 15 essays were submitted. In addition to the winner and two runners up, we would like to acknowledge the other entries: Mamaroneck HS: Keiry Lopez, Sophia Autorino, Lisa Toudic, Madison Leira, Maximus Perez, Matt Segal, Kaitline Spiridellis, Cristina Costin; Rye Neck HS: Lisa Engelen, Sonia Finkenberg, Adesuwa Carlton, Grace West

We would also like to thank the counselors of the students for their support: Mamaroneck HS: Ashley Martinez, Cathy Quackenbush, Jennifer Lichtman, Lanie Lichtenstein, Laura Kearon, Marsha Genwright, Rob Schwartz; Rye Neck HS: Amanda Mahncke, Frank Gizzo, Susan Hannon.

The Larchmont Mamaroneck Lions are part of the International Lions Clubs, the largest service organization in the world. The Lions motto is “We Serve”.



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## As Teen Unemployment Soars, Groundwork Expands Green Team



As teen unemployment rates soar due to the pandemic, Groundwork Hudson Valley is stepping up with the help of its funders to increase how many young people get a paycheck this summer through its award-winning youth program, the Green Team. In a typical year, between 12-15 youth would be hired and the program would include a transformative service trip to Yellowstone National Park after local projects are completed. This year 20 youth have been hired and the Yellowstone excursion is not happening.

"Our youth are truly the life blood of the organization," says Executive Director Brigitte Griswold, a long-time champion of positive youth development. "And while it is a transformative experience for them," she says, "the paycheck is also a huge help at home and even more so this year with so many local jobs lost and families in our community turning to food banks and social services."

With additional funding from The City of Yonkers, The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, The Thomas and Agnes Carvel Foundation, The St. Faiths Foundation, The Environmental Protection Agency, The Westchester County Youth Bureau, and The Fish and Wildlife Service, the organization has been able to both sustain existing youth jobs and open up 5-7 additional positions. The unemployment rate nationally due to the pandemic is highest among young people, the Pew Research Center reported in May using U.S. Labor Department statistics. And among all demographics, Latino and Black workers are the most affected by layoffs. Nearly all of the participants in this program are drawn from Southwest Yonkers, which has a high concentration of Black and Latino families.

While the organization feels fortunate, its ability to carry out community projects at this time is complicated due to Covid-19 restrictions. The staff and youth are adapting, however. The number of youth in the field at any one time is being limited and masks and social distancing are being practiced rigorously. The usual meetings in the downtown Yonkers office to go over projects and engage in a dialogue about environmental issues have moved on-line.

Typically, they conduct community outreach, use tools they have never seen before, camp at wildlife refuges hundreds of miles away from home, and address conservation issues for wolves, bears and bison at one of America's greatest National Parks. "This is one of the biggest downsides this year," says Victor Medina, the Youth Program Manager at Groundwork, "but personal and community resiliency has been an underlying theme of the program for many years and this is a teachable moment."

The work being carried out in a Covid-safe way this summer includes developing the Yonkers Greenway near the border with Van Cortlandt Park in New York City, promoting local biodiversity by removing acres of invasive plants, and restoring habitat along the Saw Mill River, one of the region's most significant tributaries to the Hudson River. In addition, the Green Team will help grow more produce on the Science Barge, a sustainable farm on the Hudson River, for distribution to local shelters during the pandemic and will help identify heat islands in the community as part of Groundwork's Climate Safe Neighborhoods program. Heat hazards affect many of the same high-risk populations as Covid-19, such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions.

"The most important thing," says Ms. Griswold, "is that we continue to provide opportunities for these talented young people so they can get jobs that contribute to the local community." She adds, "Our ability to pull this off this year points to the strength of the program, the flexibility of our participants, and the donors who stepped up in a time of crisis. Yellowstone,

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## The Hills of Yonkers Alive With the Sound of Fireworks

By Eric Schoen



Another 4th of July in Yonkers, the City of Hills where nothing is on the level! Despite promises from our elected officials that they would stop the blasting off of illegal fireworks, the noise emanating from these dangerous devices gets louder and louder every year.

I am usually out of town for the 4th of July and am not blessed with hearing and seeing the Yonkers sky come to life until 2 o'clock in the morning. When I was young the family would go out to celebrate my parent's anniversary, July 4, and we wouldn't be home until after 10 p.m. when most of the fireworks were over. Back then, the fireworks were concentrated on our nation's birthday and didn't start a week before and end several days after.

I was surprised when I heard that Yonkers Police only confiscated 12 cases of fireworks. Not being Johnny Rocket and understanding the packaging of fireworks, hearing what went off by my house seemed like much more than 12 boxes of fireworks. I live near 3 parks: Sullivan's Oval, Fleming Field and Tibbetts Brook Park. I think that fireworks were going off in those parks as well as at individual people's homes.

An idea. The Yonkers Fire Department has 10 fire engines, 6 ladders, a rescue pumper and a rescue company. Divide the city into 18. Send all the rigs out on the 4th of July, sirens blaring. The Engines Have water capacity and the other vehicles could be outfitted relatively inexpensively with devices that could snuff out illegal fireworks displays.

The blaring sounds of the fire vehicles would hopefully scare away those illegally exploding devices. If not, fire companies observing illegal fireworks could spray water on the devices making them useless.

We lost two homes in Yonkers this year due to illegal fireworks. Let's not forget that there is a lot of old housing stock in Yonkers made of wood. If we don't do something soon we can expect to lose more homes. What a tragedy that would be!

All the brilliant ideas to suppress fireworks are not working. How many more homes will we have to lose Before we come up with creative, inexpensive ways to stop the illegal use of fireworks in our fair city? I'd love if you would share your ideas with us at [risingmediagroup@gmail.com](mailto:risingmediagroup@gmail.com).

Since this is a yearly problem, the Mayor should set up a task force before 'rockets red glare' reaches the sky headed up by the Yonkers Fire Commissioner to deal with this already out of hand issue!

### Wear Your Mask!

How difficult is it to wear a mask when there is less than 6 feet between you and the next person? I get it, masks are not the most comfortable thing to wear, particularly when you are like me and you wear glasses. No matter which mask I try my glasses get fogged up when I put my mask on making it extremely difficult to see.

But let's face it (no pun intended) one thing that has stayed constant in a medical world where things change by the minute is that the use of masks save people's lives during this pandemic. No one is asking you to put the heavy masks firefighters use on as you shop or get your nails done. There are plenty of different types of masks out there. I am sure you can find one that works and is comfortable for you.

Do you really need a mask when you are alone in your car driving? When you are alone at the park like Tibbetts where the closest person is probably at least 24 feet away. Or when you are out walking the dog at 6 in the morning when no one else is around? I'll leave that up to you.

But taking off your mask to smoke cigarettes? You shouldn't be smoking particularly in the middle of this pandemic. Oh how I wish there was a mask to cover over your cigarette and face so I wouldn't have to breathe in cigarette smoke and you could see how it feels when you blow smoke from cigarettes on your loved ones, friends and neighbors

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Send us your letters, comments, photos, opinions, announcements and story ideas to [dmurphy@risingmediagroup.com](mailto:dmurphy@risingmediagroup.com)

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## County Board Announces 15 Jandon Scholarships for 2020



**Jandon Scholar Ebany Tapia, Peekskill High School**

The Westchester County Board of Legislators and the Jandon Foundation recently announced the recipients of scholarships in the 2020 Jandon Scholars program. The program awards \$12,000 over four years to Westchester public high school seniors who meet certain academic requirements and financial eligibility guidelines, to help them complete their college education. One of the distinctive aspects of the Jandon Scholars program is that it follows students through their college careers. Awards are provided in annual, increasing increments, and scholarship recipients have access to a network of hundreds of alumni who have come through the program.

Board Chairman Ben Boykin said, "Earning a Jandon Scholarship is a remarkable achievement under normal circumstances. To have earned such a distinction in this very difficult time, when the normal conventions of school have been disrupted by COVID-19, is a testament to the perseverance and strength of character of this year's Scholars. We congratulate them, and we know that this wonderful program – including the mentorship of previous scholars – will help these fine students continue to achieve, whatever circumstances the future may hold."

The Jandon Foundation's Alec Cecil said, "Our Jandon Scholars have achieved so much under unprecedented circumstances. We are proud to be making an investment in these Scholars, and to be in a position to provide them with financial support and mentorship. Seeing their determination, fortitude and commitment to their educations, I know that the investment we make in them is an investment in a brighter future for us all."

This year's Jandon Scholarships are the first to be awarded since the passing of Donald Cecil, who established the Jandon Scholars program in 1999 to help Westchester students from low-income families attend college. Chairman Boykin said, "Don Cecil was a wonderful man who did so much for the community and for so many deserving students for decades. While we mourn his passing, we know that the life and achievements of the students Jandon has helped, and the future students Jandon will help, will be testaments to Don's vision for generations to come."

Below is a list of this year's Scholars, the high schools they attend and the colleges they will be attending:

Sandy Salazar, Fox Lane High School – Barnard College, Crystal Padron, Lincoln High School – Lehman College, Michelle Portillo, Lincoln High School – SUNY Stony Brook, Kayla Fagan, Mount Vernon High School – Fordham University, Melane Tejada, Mount Vernon High School – SUNY Stony Brook, Aaliyah Wright, Mount Vernon High School – SUNY Binghamton, Litzy Valdovinos, Nellie Thornton High School – Lehman College, Okoe Garcia Toribio, Palisade Preparatory High School – Fordham University, Keyla Alarcon, Peekskill High School – Manhattanville College, Enoc Guartambel, Peekskill High School – Fordham University, Ebany Tapia, Peekskill High School – Pace University, Inmay Weinstein, Peekskill High School -- SUNY Albany, Lisbel Feliz Garo, Roosevelt High School – SUNY Binghamton, Jennifer Mora, Saunders High School – Manhattan College, Kimberly Mourao-Franco, Sleepy Hollow High School – SUNY Binghamton,

For a slide show of this year's Jandon Scholars click: <https://westchester-legislators.com/imag>

## Local Computer Enthusiasts Help Find Coronavirus Cure From Home



**Westchester PC Users Group member Joe Bruno**

Members of a Westchester County computer club are assisting researchers to battle the Coronavirus from the comfort of their homes and are looking for others to join. To participate, volunteers simply donate unused number-crunching power from their personal computers. In doing so, local residents help distant virus researchers, who stitch together "distributed" computing capacity for bio-molecular research into "folding."

The local club—Westchester PC Users Group ([www.wpcug.org](http://www.wpcug.org))—will conduct a free open Zoom workshop July 27-Monday at 7pm for others who want to join the effort. Anyone interested should email [veep@wpcug.org](mailto:veep@wpcug.org).

Sleepy Hollow-resident Joe Bruno is one of four locals already "folding" who are members of WPCUG. The home computer club for enthusiasts was founded in 1981 that today has 170 area members. Bruno lets distant researchers tap six computers in his home. "It's great to take something that I enjoy—playing with computers—and use it for the good of mankind," says Joe Bruno, who is a retired computer consultant.

The national research—run by the non-profit Folding@Home Consortium (FAHC)—studies the molecular structures of human protein and seeks a cure for related diseases. Under a microscope, the human proteins look like ribbons dotted with balls that naturally combine in what is called "folding." But sometimes they "mis-fold," activating malignant cells such as cancer cells. Scientists run vast number of simulations—which require the distributed computing capacity—to understand protein architecture and sequencing, to design cures for mis-folding. Promising simulations are then subject to later-stage experiments.

The folding project website <https://foldingathome.org/covid-19/> explains: "By using distributed computing, we can split up the simulation, run each piece through a computer, and then combine them together afterwards. This really sped up our results." Researchers from Stanford University and Washington University in St. Louis take the lead.

To participate locally in folding requires downloading computer software that takes under a half hour to install. Bruno says that donating computer time is fairly seamless, although participants will use more electricity and generate more heat because their computers will be working harder. Bruno adds that participants have the option of donating computer time when their computers are not in use or all the time.

The Zoom online workshop on folding is part of a WPCUG initiative offering free summer membership through August 31, where computer enthusiasts can plug in to the club's 15 monthly workshops to sample activities. Workshop topics include digital photography, photo editing, mobile devices, upgrade & repair, Windows, macOS and the web show. Annual membership is only \$50/year. For further information, contact membership@wpcug.org..

## LATIMER OFFERS PLAN TO HELP ENSURE SMOOTH VOTING ON ELECTION DAY 2020

In the wake of a primary election day filled with issues, Westchester County Executive George Latimer released a four-point plan aimed at offering assistance to the state-directed Westchester Board of Elections (BoE) in advance of Election Day 2020. The plan, which has already been given to Board of Elections Commissioners Reginald Lafayette and Douglas Colety, includes assistance with additional polling place inspectors, replacement polling sites, additional temporary staff for absentee ballot counting and early voting.

Latimer said: "Our nation was founded on the principle of free and fair elections – without them nothing else truly matters. The Board of Elections are a state-directed entity but what I am offering is a way to utilize the strength of our County government to assist in the democratic process."

Among the new procedures is utilizing Westchester County employees, who already have Election Day off, as polling place inspectors. Latimer said utilizing these workers, along with also securing new polling sites to keep a reasonable number of locations open but avoid the use of nursing homes and other high Covid-19 risk areas, is simply streamlining our government workforce and utilizing County connections.

Latimer said: "While the Westchester Board of Elections is state controlled we are all in this together. This is our County and we have an American duty to make the voting process as accessible as possible to those who want to exercise their civic rights. I want people to vote, I want them to be engaged – and we are here to help."

Additionally, the last two points of the plan are to provide resources to the BoE to hire part-time poll workers to count absentee ballots as well as open up early voting locations so that any duly registered Westchester voter can vote at any early voting location site.

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## Letters to the Editor:

Do What I Say, Not What I Do.

What a shock reading a letter from life-long New Yorker, Rob Astorino, complaining so much about our beautiful, diversified and exciting state. Just read "13 Reasons Why Living In New York Is the Best – And Everyone Should Move Here."

But the complaining of someone who 'would be Governor' tries to focus on fiscal issues. This too is shocking once you learn that when he was in his last year as Westchester County Executive 'Standard and Poor's global ratings downgraded its outlook for Westchester's debt from "stable" to "negative," while citing a reliance on so-called "one-shot" revenues to balance its annual county budgets.'

To be fair, when Astorino took office in 2010, he was faced with significant debt. Well everyone was in debt in 2010. The recovery from the 2008 Great Recession was just beginning in 2010. What a great opportunity. Take over during a recovery.

Apparently poor financial management led to Astorino borrowing (more debt) to pay for expenses and pension costs. Borrowing to cover expenses is usually frowned upon because it implies, you're spending more than you're earning. The borrowing only adds to your costs due to the interest charges to cover the added debt thus increasing your annual expenses further. If you have credit card, or any other debt, you understand this.

At the end of Astorino's final year as County Executive he left an operating deficit of more than \$32 million. And this was during the growth years as his mentor Trump was claiming the economy was having "the best of times."

Birds of a feather because the Federal deficit now hovers around \$26 trillion.

Lastly, I would like to proudly state that according to Adam McCann's "Best States to Live In" on June 11, 2019 he rated New York State as #1.

Stay Safe and Help Flatten the Curve,  
**Mark A. Lieberman, Yorktown**

To the Editor:

I want to compliment you for your well-written article appearing in the July 10, 2020 issue of Westchester Rising ("State and Local Budgets Waiting and Hoping for President Joe Biden"). I agree that more Federal aid is needed to help state, local and municipal governments in New York State deal with the severe economic effects of the corona virus pandemic. I also believe that a Joe Biden Administration will look more favorably upon requests for such assistance.

In my view, we will also be looking to a Biden administration to "right the ship" in such areas as environmental regulation, immigration and criminal justice policy reform, as well as greater respect for the rule of law, the judiciary and the Constitution.

Elections are about public policy choices that we as citizens make. As a life long Republican, and one who has supported the candidacies of Presidents George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush, Senator John McCain, Mitt Romney, Governors John Kasich and Bill Weld as well as New York Republicans George Pataki, former Representatives Bill Green and Susan Molinari, I will be crossing party lines this fall to vote for former Vice President Joseph Biden on the Democratic Party ticket.

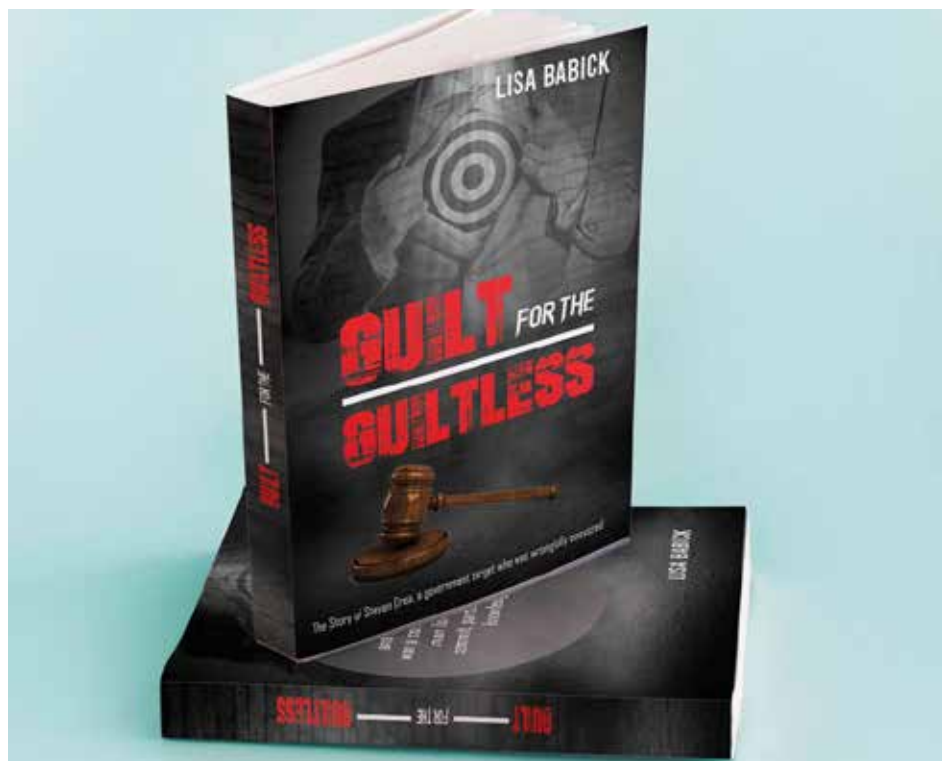
I did not support President Trump's candidacy in 2016, as I believed then that he did not possess neither the temperament nor experience to successfully assume the responsibilities of the Presidency of the United States. I had hoped in 2017 that he would "grow into the office," as other inexperienced Presidents in our history were able to do. Unfortunately, this has not been the case, as his tepid response to the current Covid-19 pandemic has clearly shown. And there are many, many other examples that I can point to.

In my view, the issues facing our nation are too great for me to vote to re-elect him. I look to a Biden administration to usher in a government of national unity that will restore respect for our nation among our allies abroad, bring back competence and integrity in the Federal government, and begin the process of healing so desperately needed now in our nation.

I hope many of my fellow Republicans will do likewise this fall.

**Stephen R. Rolandi, Larchmont**

## New Book "Guilt for the Guiltless, Story of Steven Crea Available Free



Steven Crea, who has recently made headlines due to a November 2019 conviction is the subject of a new book authored by an investigative journalist. At first glance of the investigation, it appears that justice won and a criminal was put behind bars to serve his time for the acts he committed. For Lisa Babick, author of "Guilt for the Guiltless, The Story of Steven Crea, A Government Target Who Was Wrongfully Convicted," she thinks differently and sets out to prove why. Babick says,

"Through the years, I have taken an interest in how the scales of justice are out of whack in many areas, but particularly in the area of organized crime. I believe that everyone should receive a fair shake according to the laws outlined in our Constitution. No matter what labels the government attaches to anyone to prove any case, it should be done fairly and impartially, and based on evidence only. In the case of Steven L. Crea, he was denied his Constitutional rights. This story exposes the truth of what really happened."

The book "Guilt for the Guiltless: The Story of Steven Crea and the Murder of Michael Meldish and Other Tales" delves into the case of Steven Crea. He was accused and eventually convicted of the murder of a man by the name of Michael Meldish and touches on some other accusations against Crea, which he was acquitted and another charge which was dropped by the government before the trial. Babick says,

"It truly is a case study as I uncover what the government presented as evidence and how the prosecutors presented their case against Crea. What I discovered is things aren't always what they seem to be, and often those arrested are tried and found guilty in front of the media long before the trial begins."

"Guilt for the Guiltless, The Story of Steven Crea, A Government Target Who Was Wrongfully Convicted" is now available for free in eBook and audiobook at [guiltfortheguiltless.com](http://guiltfortheguiltless.com).

## County Clerk's Office Re-opens to the Public

All visitors to make an appointment along with other safety measures.

In the face of the global pandemic COVID-19, the Office of the Westchester County Clerk has remained operationally open for the processing of documents received electronically, by mail, or via dropbox, but we have been closed to entry by the public since March 31.

With Westchester County moving into Phase 4 of re-opening, the County Clerk's Office is now open to the public by appointment. Appointments may be made by phone(914-995-3080) or online using the office's new appointment scheduling software at <https://www.westchesterclerk.com/appointments>.

When scheduling an appointment online, the customer will select the specific service they require. An appointment will be reserved for the appropriate amount of time for the service needed. For certain services, the scheduling software will request additional information, which will allow our staff to prepare documents in advance of the customer's visit, guaranteeing the public's appointments will be as brief as possible. While scheduling appointments, the software will also provide information to the customer so that they know what documents, payments, identification, or other materials are required for the particular service.

"While in the past walk-ins were a common way the office assisted customers, prioritizing the safety of our staff and the community during this ongoing pandemic has forced us to make changes," stated Westchester County Clerk Timothy C. Idoni. "The office was able to develop a user-friendly and straightforward software to make appointments; this will allow us to protect everyone while still providing the high-quality service the office is known for."

Many other precautions are taking place to ensure the public and staff are safe, and we are continuing to prevent the spread of the virus. Customers will still enter our office through the courthouse and will be screened by security. The security screening will also involve a health screening, including taking the visitor's temperature and asking questions regarding exposure to COVID-19, as mandated by the County and State. Masks are required to be worn at all times by anyone entering the building. There will be no exceptions. Staff will have the right to refuse service to any individual refusing to wear a mask correctly and that person will be told to leave the building. Additionally, Plexiglas has been installed and our staff has been moved to have appropriate social distancing within the office.

We have also marked the floor in the office's public areas to provide for social distancing while receiving services. Appointments are for those services that can only be done in person; all other services will still be conducted electronically, by mail or via drop box located in the County Courthouse lobby (111 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard in White Plains) as it has been since March.

### Schoen, continued from pg 3-

#### Soap and Water vs. Hand Sanitizers

Hand sanitizers made in Mexico have been recalled due to dangerous chemicals put in them. Make sure you are using an approved hand sanitizer off the respective government agency list.

And what did the press release put out by the government on hand sanitizers say? Your best bet is to use soap and water to keep those hands clean and sanitary. It's that simple!

#### Who Won the Primary Elections?

It's now almost 3 weeks and have we heard a peep about who won the Congressional primary for the 16th Congressional District. Up to date counts? Litigation taking place?

When we had a real local newspaper in Westchester, by now we would have known what is taking place in this district and received notification along the way as to which way the vote was going. News 12 with the numerous staffing changes that have occurred would keep us up to date on the election counts. Now, nothing!

Are we going to have to wait this long in November for the results? Democracy? Voting by Mail? Scary stuff! Sadly, maybe we all have to go to the polls, risk our lives, risk the lives of the poll workers, stand on long lines and vote on unreliable machines to get election counts in a shorter time frame!

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE YONKERS PUBLIC LIBRARY FOR A SUCCESSFUL REOPENING. As Albert Einstein once said, 'The only thing that you absolutely have to know, is the location of the library.'

Reach Eric Schoen at [thistooisonkers@aol.com](mailto:thistooisonkers@aol.com). Follow him on Twitter @ericyonkers. Listen to Eric Schoen and Dan Murphy on the Westchester Rising Radio Show Thursday's from 10-11 a.m. On WVOX 1460 AM, go to WVOX.com and click the arrow to listen to the live stream or download the WVOX app from the App Store free of charge.

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## Legal Notices

Notice of formation of DiSySv, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 5/14/20. Office: Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 153 E Devonia Ave, Mt Vernon, NY 10552. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.08/07

**Notice of formation of C Squared Consulting, LLC. on 03/16/2020 with the SSNY. Westchester County office. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 15 Hudson Street, Ossining, NY 10562. Purpose: To provide consulting services to new and existing specialty cafes. 07/24**

Notice of Formation of Sweet Pea Hospitality LLC. Articles of Organization filed with Secretary of State of New York (SSNY) on 04/06/2020. Office location: Westchester County. SSNY is designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail a copy of any process against the LLC served upon him or her to: 315 East Grand Street, Mount Vernon, NY 10552. Purpose: any lawful act or activity--07/10

Notice of Formation of BIZYist LLC. Art. of Org. filed with Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 6/10/2020. Office: Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to: P.O. Box 472, Bronxville, NY 10708. Purpose: any lawful act or activity./ 08/14

## Support Connection Announces Virtual Team Captains Meeting

Support Connection announces a virtual meeting for anyone interested in forming a Team for their 2020 Support-A-Walk for Breast and Ovarian Cancer. The virtual "Team Captains Meeting" will be held via ZOOM on Wednesday, July 22, at p.m. To learn more, or to receive login info for the meeting, contact Melissa Higgins at walk@supportconnection.org, or call 914-962-6402.

The theme of this year's Support-A-Walk, scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 4., is "Walk With Us, Wherever You Are." In lieu of gathering by the thousands in the park, Support Connection invites people to walk wherever they are, near and far.

During the ZOOM meeting on July 22, Support Connection will share information about what the Walk will look like this year, and how to form or join a Team. There will be announcements about new and exciting activities geared towards enhancing virtual participation in the Walk. There will also be ideas and tips about ways to stay connected and raise funds.

The Support-A-Walk is Support Connection's most important annual fundraiser. Proceeds provide funding for their year-round breast and ovarian cancer support services, which have helped thousands of people since the organization was founded in 1996.

To learn more, visit supportconnection.org/support-a-walk, or contact Support Connection: 914-962-6402, walk@supportconnection.org. ABOUT SUPPORT CONNECTION: Support Connection's mission is to provide emotional, social and educational support services to women, their families and friends affected by breast and ovarian cancer. Services include peer counseling, support groups, wellness and educational programs, referral and information services, and a toll-free cancer information and support hotline (800-532-4290.)

## Groundwork HV Continued from pg 1-

unfortunately, will have to wait till next year for all of us."

Griswold also recently emailed to supporters of Groundwork to highlight the organizations' adaptation to change.

I am writing to share two of Groundwork's latest efforts to adapt to change:

First, while the Science Barge is on PAUSE as a public education center, we are uniquely positioned to address growing issues of food insecurity in Southwest Yonkers. The Science Barge utilizes hydroponic, aeroponic, and aquaponic systems to grow produce faster than soil-based farming. Our growing systems, combined with our unique nutrient cycling system, enable us to quickly grow over an acre of food in a much shorter growing season.

Instead of growing small numbers of many types of produce for educational purposes, we are changing course to grow fewer varieties at a much larger scale to support increasingly food insecure residents in our community. We will focus on growing organic, pesticide free, high yield varieties of greens, cucumbers, and tomatoes that are increasingly difficult to source locally, responding to a need that Groundwork is uniquely equipped to address. To support growth at scale and extend our growing season into colder months, Groundwork secured a new greenhouse heating system for the Science Barge in 2019.

Partners on this effort include the YWCA of Yonkers, which provides shelter, meals, and other critically needed wrap around services for up to fifty women each day, and every night. All produce grown on the Science Barge will be donated to the YWCA and other communities in need. Second, we are transitioning our sustainability and climate change educational programming, previously delivered through field trips on the Science Barge, into virtual platforms to support our teachers, parents, and caregivers in need of remote learning opportunities for young people.

Please contact our Sustainability Education Manager, Joel Rodriguez, at joel@groundworkhv.org to learn more about these exciting opportunities. There are many!!! We will adapt, change course, and ultimately weather this storm, together," writes Griswold.

This is another worthy, local organization that makes a difference every day. Consider volunteering your time or making a donation. You can help keep our team going, and growing, by making a donation to our Resiliency Campaign, or mailing a check to 22 Main Street, Yonkers, NY 10701.

Notice of formation of Core Cleaning Solutions, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 05/08/2020. Office: Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 7 Odell Plz Ste 130 #562 Yonkers, NY 10701. Purpose: Any lawful purpose. 08/21

## WESTCHESTER RISING

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**Goya boycott, continued from pg 1-**

Those who called for a boycott of Goya ignored the announcement that Unanue made last week, that the company was donating millions of cans of food to help Americans across the country suffering from the Coronavirus. This donation comes after Goya has made thousands of food donations in the NYC Metro area to low income families and students in New York City schools.

Unanue, who also accepted an invitation to the White House by President Obama, asked "So, you're allowed to talk good or to praise one president, but you're not allowed to aid in economic and educational prosperity? And you make a positive comment and all of a sudden, it is not acceptable?"

Shortly after the Goya boycott, supporters of the President and those opposed to the Cancel Culture that now exists in our country led an effort to support Goya, a USA company that employs ten of thousands. 27-year old Casey Harper began a GoFundMe page to support Goya Foods and the money raised would buy Goya products and donate them to food banks. So far more than \$172,000 has been raised.

Harper said, "... I'm not surprised we have raised so much because people are tired of having to walk on eggshells in political discourse." "The Left is trying to cancel Hispanic culture and silence free speech. #Buy-Goya," Tweeted Senator Ted Cruz

It is interesting to note that Lin Miranda's support of the Goya Boycott comes at a time when a boycott of his play Hamilton has also begun. That movement, #CancelHamilton, is based on the fact that President George Washington and Thomas Jefferson are portrayed favorably in the play, while not prominently highlighting the fact that both were slaveowners.

And while Alexander Hamilton himself was not a slaveowner, and disavowed slavery and was a proud abolitionist, his wife's family did own slaves. In the play, Hamilton challenges Jefferson in a debate about owning slaves, saying

— "Your debts are paid 'cause you don't pay for labor/ We plant seeds in the South. We create. Yeah, keep ranting/ We know who's really doing the planting."

Miranda has responded to #CancelHamilton politely, saying "All the criticisms are valid. The sheer tonnage of complexities & failings of these people I couldn't get. Or wrestled with but cut. I took 6 years and fit as much as I could in a 2.5-hour musical. Did my best. It's all fair game."

As a lover of the musical Hamilton, which can now be viewed on Disney with a monthly subscription, I would say that the cancel crowd has either gone too far, or missed the point of Miranda's masterpiece.

'Hamilton' the play, and the book by author Ron Chernow is about how someone who came from nothing rose to become a Founding Father. It is an inspirational tale, and most of the play's actors and actresses are people of color. After watching the play, send us your comments to dmurphy@risingmediagroup.com

**Nursing home deaths, continued from pg 1-**

"The State's action today acknowledges the concerns providers voiced over the March 25th Department of Health advisory and we must continue to work together to implement solutions to assist long-term care providers.

Democratic State Senator Alessandra Biaggi, who represents Pelham, introduced legislation that will repeal blanket corporate immunity to nursing home owners, shareholders, and trustees during the COVID-19 pandemic, and will enable families to pursue a legal pathway that could uncover evidence of poor care. By repealing the Governor's provision to shield nursing homes and other healthcare facilities from liability, we can at least provide impacted families with the transparency and accountability they deserve. Our elderly are not disposable, and our laws must reflect that," said State Senator Alessandra Biaggi

Calls for an independent investigation of Cuomo's actions have also come from Republicans and Conservatives. Westchester's most prominent republican, former County Executive Rob Astorino, who is running for State Senate in November, criticized the New York State Health Department for its "cursory" findings on the catastrophic death toll, and called on Hudson Valley State Senator Peter Harkham to "do his job for the hundreds of thousands of Hudson Valley residents who deserve real answers."

"A state health department shouldn't be able investigate its own deadly mistakes without rigorous questioning from representatives of those affected by them, but that's exactly what's going in Albany," the former County Executive said. "Every administration needs to be held accountable for its actions, but this state legislature is unwilling to do that. Nursing homes were literally ordered by the state to accept Covid patients, with catastrophic consequences. Pete Harkham should be joining me - and some of his fellow Democrats - in calling for an independent analysis of what went wrong. God knows the families who lost loved ones deserve the truth — but he's nowhere to be found. His silence is inexcusable."

Mr. Astorino, who governed with a bipartisan coalition of legislators in Westchester, said government works best when checks and balances are in place. "Neither a governor nor a county executive is a king. Legislators have a responsibility to weigh in strongly with them; it's how we get accountable government and optimal results. Sadly, we're looking at a one-man show in Albany these days for partisan reasons, and that's coming at the expense of all of us. An independent investigation over the nursing home scandal would be responsible public policy, and Mr. Harkham should be joining me in demanding one."

Assemblyman Kevin Byrne, who represents northern Westchester, said, "The threat of an outbreak in adult-care facilities was evident early, and the state's policies placing patients and staff in harm's way reek of negligence. This is wholly unacceptable," said Byrne, who is the Minority Ranking member on the Committee on Health. "Relying solely on the state attorney general's investigation into nursing homes is a mistake and ignores the inherent bias the state has toward itself. In the interest of openness and transparency, the Legislature owes New Yorkers a hearing into this mess. These aren't just statistics, these were people's mothers, fathers, grandmothers and uncles. We demand an explanation; families deserve answers."

Another republican state senate candidate in Westchester, "Dr. Liv" Saimovici, (37th District), also called for an independent investigation. "It is truly unconscionable for Andrew Cuomo's administration to be forcing nursing homes to take in COVID-19 positive patients," said Dr. Liv. "With thousands of lives already lost in nursing homes across the state, an independent investigation must be launched to ensure this never happens again."

"Our seniors in nursing homes deserve better than to be put at incredible risk by the state. How many lives have been lost due to this misguided policy? Bringing Governor Cuomo's medical advisers to his daily press conferences to answer for their recommendations must be the first step in this process," said Dr. Liv, who is challenging Senator Shelley Mayer.

**White Plains Autonomous Zone Continued from pg 1-**

"The Battle Hill Autonomous Zone broke ground today. We repurposed tires that we found dumped near by turning them into vegetable beds. We've decided to build raised beds next. If you can help, come on by, and donations can be sent via Venmo," stated the organizers, who added a demand that White Plains strip funding for police to be used for other means, including helping pay for or cancel rent payments due and to provide assistance to those hid the hardest by the Coronavirus. A community garden in the neighborhood was also requested.

On July 6 and 7, The Hudson Valley Democratic Socialists, posted a schedule of events that included, Yoga, Art, Dinner and Board Games. The following day, a community garden session and an open mic in the evening were on the agenda.

The White Plains Autonomous Zone did not have the support of residents who lived nearby or next to the protest. Homeowners wanted the park back for their own use, and to get out of there homes during COVID for a breath of fresh air, or to walk their dog.

Three days after opening on July 5, the City of White Plains evicted the group, with a statement that read, "The unlawful occupation of city property by a small group of protesters has come to an end. The small number of people who were there were asked to leave. They did so and there were no arrests. "

Two of the winners of their Democratic primaries on June 23 also had the support of the Hudson Valley Democratic Socialists and will almost certainly now become Westchester's two members of Congress.

Mondaire Jones, who is way ahead of the other six democrats trying to replace Nita Lowey in the 17th District, has continued his call for Medicare for All, as a way to make sure everyone in the district and the country has health insurance.

Jamaal Bowman, who became this year's AOC with his upset over Eliot Engel in the 16th District, is calling for Universal Basic Income, UBI, or additional stimulus checks for all Americans.

**Back to School, continued from pg 1-**

before Congress, I am afraid even more might close. This is a very sad day for everyone in the extended Catholic school community. I send my love and prayers to the families, teachers, principals and staff of the affected schools."

The following Westchester Catholic schools will not reopen: Holy Family School, New Rochelle, Our Lady of Perpetual Help School, Pelham Manor, St. Ann School, Yonkers, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, Shrub Oak, St. Patrick School, Bedford, St. Paul School, Yonkers.

State Senator Shelley Mayer and Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano wrote a letter to Michael Deegan, Superintendent of Schools, Archdiocese of New York. "We write as the State Senator and Chair of the NYS Senate Committee on Education, Yonkers Mayor, and Yonkers City Councilmembers, respectively, serving many of the parents of children attending these two schools in our district in Yonkers.

We, along with our constituents, were profoundly disappointed by the sudden news that these two schools were slated to close, effective immediately. As you know, these schools have been strong educational and social centers of their communities, serving multiple generations of Yonkers children with a high quality Catholic education that their parents sacrificed to provide.

Of course, we are mindful of the challenges faced by the Archdiocese with respect to these and other schools during this pandemic, and its impact on all private schools. The abrupt notice, however, provided no opportunity to address and seek a resolution to the underlying fiscal issues that gave rise to this decision. We are asking to meet with you to determine if a merger of schools or some other alternative is possible that modifies the plan that was released and preserves at least one of these schools, hopefully so that children attending either school will have either St. Ann or St. Paul available to them for the coming year.

We believe this moment requires creativity and determination to find a solution; we want to work with you to achieve that. Thank you in advance for working with us on behalf of these families and children."

As Catholic students and parents across Westchester search for a new school to attend in September, tens of thousands of Westchester parents and their children await a decision on what type of back to school will happen in their schools in less than two months.

Governor Andrew Cuomo offered hope this week that schools could open if they are in a region with a low rate of Coronavirus, and that they have a plan to bring students back safely.

But a recent interview on the Sunday TV Talk shows with Randi Weingarten, from the American Federation of Teachers, said that schools will need an additional 20% in funding to open, and that opening could mean three days a week for younger students, and 1-2 days a week for older students.

Other school scenarios for this fall across the country include:

I-Students with last names A-M, go to school in the morning, and students with names N-Z go in the afternoon.

II-Half of students attend school on Mondays and Wednesdays, and the other half attend on Tuesdays and Thursdays, with each half attending the Monday every other week.

III-If 25% of parents and students decline to attend school in person and prefer online, school districts might be able to find enough classroom space for the remaining 75%, if gymnasiums and cafeterias are also put to use.

IV-The other contributing factor in trying to get schools open by Labor Day is how online learning negatively affects low income students. With some households without a computer or with no Internet service, getting those students onto a Zoom call with their teacher becomes a challenge. Recent studies have shown that online learning presents a challenge even under the best of conditions, for families and students.

Most Westchester families have two parents in the workplace, making it more of a challenge to get one or more of their children onto the computer to try and learn.

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# Something to Cheer About! The Return of the Bulldogs



**A photo of the Yonkers HS Varsity Cheerleaders from February competition. We hope to see all of Westchester's great Cheerleading teams back soon!**

The Yonkers High School Varsity Cheerleaders returned to New York State Section 1 Competitive Cheer after a long four year absence when seniors Kaylyn Sierra and Devonnie Webster got together to create a cheer squad to perform for their schools pep rally. In doing so, they were required to have a coach supervise any practices, so they reached out to past coach Kevin Macdonald to help them out. Coach Macdonald oversaw practices and the students were able to put on an exciting pep rally routine. After pep rally the girls asked if they could possibly try and put the cheer team back together. Coach Kevin Macdonald along with past cheer alumni daughter Jessica Macdonald agreed to coach them and with the blessing and support of Principal Jade Sharp the team quickly got to work. Starting late in the season with limited practice areas and missing most of their practice mats the team began creating their routine. All involved had to sacrifice tremendously while having to practice very long hours to make up for lost time. With only two weeks of practices on only three out of the seven mats required the team entered their first competition which resulted in a bit of a rough outing. But With Coach Jessica, Captains Devonnie Webster and Kaylyn Sierra driving the team even harder and some newly found old mats the Cheer team rebounded the next week with a second place finish. With three competitions under their belts the team got an invite to the Sectionals. Family support at all the events was outstanding. The team was recently rewarded for all their hard work when senior Captain Kaylyn Sierra was recognized for her incredible efforts by the Westchester-Putnam-Dutchess-Rockland Cheerleading Coaches Association where she received the Tier One scholarship award.

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