



Community Connections

Spring 2009 Newsletter Volume 2, Issue 1

Executive Director's Corner

Welcome back to our spring edition of *Community Connections*. It is impossible not to feel frustration and fear during these times of economic uncertainty.



Although I have the same fears as everyone else, I am optimistic about the future. I truly believe recent events have affected each of us in some capacity, regardless of zip code or status. We have a greater compassion for the plight of the low-income or unemployed family, understanding that our livelihood depends on a collaborative

effort. Many of the individuals coming to the LBC help welcome the generosity of friends, but, first and foremost, seek our resources to empower themselves. It is the strength and services of the LBC that make it possible for our persistent and caring staff to assist our clients to better themselves, their community, and by extension the nation.

As the LBC celebrates its Fifth Anniversary we can appreciate our amazing progress. It would not have been possible without your friendship. Since the beginning, we have been blessed with community outreach in the forms of knowledge, volunteers, and contributions of all kinds. In honor of our Fifth Anniversary, this spring we are launching a membership drive and asking our friends to "Make Cents for the Community" by helping the LBC sustain its programs with your annual donation of \$30 or more. Your \$30 can change a family's life! Membership contributions will serve as the foundation of community support that is essential to our continued growth and success, allowing us to help families and connect communities.

We will kick off our membership drive at our next community event, Picnic with a Purpose, a free family day at Jerry Morgan Park on May 31st. Come join us and learn more about our services as we have fun with the kids, give away books for summer reading, and relax with refreshments. As our neighbors, your ideas and feedback are always welcome. Please see the inserted note card for more information on our membership drive or visit our website at www.lbc4help.org.

We hope to celebrate with you on May 31st!

Darcy Dobens, Executive Director

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The LBC Participates In New Jersey's 2009 Project Homeless Connect/Point In Time Survey

For the second straight year, the LBC participated in *Project Homeless Connect/Point in Time Survey*, an annual census of New Jersey's homeless population, held on January 28, 2009, at St. James Episcopal Church in Long Branch. Each year, the state enlists the aid of county Human Services Departments and nonprofits to coordinate local survey sites and help provide various essentials, resources, health screenings and more to the survey participants. The resources provide needed aid to individuals and are necessary in attracting homeless individuals to the census site for a more accurate survey. The entire LBC staff and many volunteers and interns worked throughout the day-long event by setting up stations, handing out clothing and resource information, serving food, cleaning up and more.



Project Homeless Connect volunteers help a participant find a warm coat.

LBC Outreach Director Emma J. Cabán was designated by the Monmouth County Division of Human Services (MCDHS) and the Monmouth County Comprehensive Emergency Assistance System (CEAS) to act as the official Site Coordinator for the city of Long Branch. Cabán helped organize a subcommittee of individuals from participating organizations who in turn reached out to the local community for volunteers and donations. Due to their efforts, more than 140 census takers received warm clothing such as coats, hats and scarves, home-made lunches, toiletries, H.I.V. tests and information on housing, employment, government programs, utility programs and city resources.

"We are delighted to be working with the Long Branch Concordance and the success of Project Homeless Connect could not have happened without the support of Emma J. Cabán and that of the LBC and the community," stated Laurie Duhovny, MCDHS, Human Services Advisory Council Coordinator, and Virginia Edwards, MC Planning Department, Community Development Director. *(continued to page 3)*

Join the LBC for Picnic With A Purpose A Free Family Fun Day in Long Branch



On Sunday, May 31 from noon to 2 p.m. in Jerry Morgan Park in Long Branch, the LBC will host a *Picnic with a Purpose* where local families will learn about the LBC's essential services and enjoy exciting games and activities from potato sack races to fun with bubbles.

While some families leave the area for spring or summer getaways, others are grateful to our staff and supporters for free events like our picnic to provide them with stress free memories with family and friends. The event will celebrate the environment, community, and summer. Highlights include tips on energy conservation from New Jersey Natural Gas, summer book giveaway donated by Bridge of Books, refreshments donated by Grand National Market, children's games and crafts and more.

At the event, Emma J. Cabán, LBC Outreach Director, staff, and families look forward to honoring the hard work and dedication of Ranney Upper School students (see article on page 3). Awards will be presented at 1 p.m. Through their successful uniform drive, dozens of local families were able to prepare themselves for school and learning.

Please contact us at 732.571.1670 if your company or family is interested in donating time, services, or goods to help us continue to provide the community with free events like our Family Picnic.



President's Message

Star Trek is not the only place to experience "warp speed." As the Long Branch Concordance prepares to celebrate its 5th year of service to the community, I wonder where the time went even though I have been personally involved for almost 4 of those 5 years. Every day for all of that time, we've put our shoulders to the wheel and pushed forward the work of helping people in need. Only when I look back, do I realize how far we have traveled in so short a time. I am genuinely astonished.

The LBC started with an idea, a charismatic director and a group of dedicated volunteers. With the help of startup grants from Monmouth Cares, the Pascale Sykes Foundation and others, we rented office space and were up and running.

We are now an agency with seven employees and an expanded office housing our Family Success Center which includes a Guest Business Center, Family Room, Learning Institute and more. We've achieved United Way of Monmouth County Certification and won a three year \$600,000 contract from the State of New Jersey. By year-end, we estimate to have assisted over 5,000 unduplicated guests since we opened our doors—1600 to 1800 in this past year alone.

Another important measure of our growth and success has been the growing diversity and community standing of the men and women whom we have attracted to Board service. From the start we were blessed with nonprofit experts, educators and social service administrators. As we grew and realized our pressing need for financial, business management and marketing expertise, we were able to attract committed and talented local business men and women. Our most recent success has been in expanding our Board to include broader representation among important stakeholders in our community. We have recently added representatives from city and county governments and the Long Branch School System. Monmouth County Freeholders, city mayors and staff, councilmen and women are routinely taking time to visit our offices to learn about our organization and services.

All totaled, the current Board of Directors of the LBC consists of 11 hardworking, creative and civically committed men and women. In very large measure, I owe our recent success to their direct efforts and that of our current Executive Director, Ms. Darcy Dobens, MBA, MSW.

As I complete my time of board leadership as president, I would like to thank every board member for their invaluable contributions to the agency and the personal courtesy, loyalty and affection they've showered on me as their Board President, colleague and friend.

Joe Garipoli, Board President



Third Annual Brewsips Brings in Over \$18,000

On November 6, 2008, the LBC held its third annual Brewsips fundraiser at SICA (The Shore Institute for Contemporary Arts) in Long Branch. The evening's recipients of the LBC's Community Service Award were Dr. Mary Jane Celli of Long Branch's City Council and the late Rev. Alfred Acer, former Senior Pastor, Lutheran Church of the Reformation, West Long Branch. Mayor Adam Schneider also presented Dr. Celli with a Proclamation from the City of Long Branch recognizing her distinguished career of service.

The night was a resounding success with more than 150 guests enjoying a tasting of unique beers provided by Court Liquors, West End, and the Hunterdon Brewing Co., as well as sumptuous hors d'oeuvres prepared by My Kitchen Witch Café, Monmouth Beach. A Cool Blues Duo provided the jazz, perfectly complimenting the art exhibition (which included a painting by the LBC's own Jennifer Watson). The night featured an Arts & Entertainment Silent Auction; 50/50 cash raffle and the first Brewsips Balloonacy game of chance.



From left, Martha Chamberlain, LBC Board member and event coordinator, and Monica Mazurczyk, Esq., BrewSips Lambic Sponsor

Eco-friendly handbags and specialty items from locally operated nahuioillin were included in many of the silent auction gift "bubbles" courtesy of the Abadi family owners. Nahuioillin handbags and specialty items were also available for purchase at the event with a percentage of sales generously donated to the LBC.



Thank you to everyone who attended and helped to make the night possible. If you are interested in getting involved with Brewsips 2009 as a sponsor or volunteer, please contact the LBC at 732-571-1670.

2008 Brewsips Lambic Sponsors: KSI Professional Engineers, Monika Mazurczyk, ESQ., Monmouth Medical Center and Monmouth University.

From left, Darcy Dobens, LBC Executive Director, and Adam Schneider, Mayor of Long Branch

LBC to Dispense Farmer's Market Vouchers to Monmouth County Seniors

This June, the Long Branch Concordance will again partner with New Jersey's Office on Aging to distribute Farmer's Market Vouchers to seniors in Monmouth County. Last summer, our agency distributed vouchers to over 75 older adults, including many who had migrated to the United States from Italy, Poland, the Ukraine, the Czech Republic, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Central and South America. Vouchers were distributed and redeemed countywide and many participants were linked with additional resources such as Food Stamps and senior housing.



Hunger among the elderly and disabled is a complex issue; many frail and older adults rely on institutional based meals. While others are able to live independently and prepare their own meals on a fixed income, adequate nutritional needs are often unmet. The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program provides locally grown fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs to older adults in New Jersey who are living on a fixed income.

The program reinforces the importance of using locally grown products for the nutritional health of New Jersey's seniors and expands the awareness and use of local farmers' markets. The program also promotes the financial growth of local farmers. The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program started in 1997 as a collaborative effort between the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services and the New Jersey Department of Agriculture.

LBC Spotlight: Ranney Students

Katherine Weinstein, Allison Lyttle & Jesse Feldmus



Gathered from Left, Katherine Weinstein, Allison Lyttle, and Jesse Feldmus

President John F. Kennedy once said, "One person can make a difference and every person should try." At the LBC, we've seen just how much individuals can do, starting at a young age. On Sunday, May 31 from noon to 2 p.m. in Jerry Morgan Park in Long Branch, the LBC will host a *Picnic with a Purpose* where local families will learn about the LBC's essential services and enjoy fun-filled children's activities. The Picnic theme will celebrate the environment, community, and summer. At the event, we look forward to honoring the hard work and dedication of Ranney Upper School students

Katherine Weinstein, Allison Lyttle and Jesse Feldmus. Through their successful uniform drive, dozens of local families were able to prepare themselves for school and learning.

Two years ago, Katherine, Allison and Jesse started the uniform drive in the high school. Uniforms were distributed during the LBC's annual Back to Basics Fair in August. In 2008, they expanded the drive to include the entire school. Katie, who is a member of the National Honor Society (NHS), has enlisted the NHS in taking on the uniform drive as one of the group's annual community service initiatives. It is acts of kindness like this that make a large difference in the health of a community and we look forward to recognizing the efforts of these amazing students before they leave for college. As the honorees graduate, they leave behind a legacy of generosity.

"The Long Branch Uniform Drive is just one small part of a larger effort to help a community in need of a little; a little which can go a long way. It is the toothbrush that gives someone the confidence to go to a job interview or having a uniform that allows a child to go to school safely. It's these little things that can unexpectedly make a huge difference in someone's life and I am so happy to be a part of this project with Long Branch Concordance." – Katherine Weinstein

Conserve to Preserve with New Jersey Natural Gas (NJNG)

Wasting energy means wasting money. New Jersey Natural Gas (NJNG) is driven to help you save energy dollars with a guide to practical energy-saving tips and its **Conserve to Preserve Dashboard** giving you customized conservation tips. You'll learn that it's easy to reduce your home energy use and lower your energy bills while doing many things yourself with minimal expense and maximum results.

Visit the NJNG **Conserve to Preserve Dashboard** at www.njng.com to start saving energy and to learn more on New Jersey Natural Gas.



Carmen Quigley, LBC Family Success Worker, holds child of LBC Parenting Class student

The First Baby Pantry for Long Branch?

In our efforts to find resources for people and create community well-being, we often hear great ideas from the community. One such great idea came from the Long Branch Ministerium. They suggested that Long Branch create a "Baby Pantry" for infant specific items. We like this idea a lot! We are often referring families with new infants who find themselves out of formula or diapers to the local food or clothing pantries. Unfortunately, these are not stock items. Donations of this sort are inconsistent. For a family making a trip to the pantry for these necessities, it can be hit or miss.

So how would the community of Long Branch go about creating a Baby Pantry? Firstly, we would need a location. The location would have to be centrally located within walking distance for community residents. A church, hospital, clinic or storefront would be optimum sites. Secondly, we would need sustainable donations of formula, breast-feeding accessories, diapers, wipes and infant clothing. There are many ways to secure corporate, private and government commitments for these necessities. Most importantly, this initiative would require volunteers to handle the administration, staffing and sustainability of keeping the Baby Pantry open. We would also need customers. Our initial research indicates that this would not be a problem.

The Long Branch Concordance is willing to donate staff, intern, and volunteer time to help organize resources and develop this idea into a real Baby Pantry with the help of community partners. Please contact Darcy Dobens, LBC Executive Director, at darcy@lbc4help.org or 732.571.1670 ext. 301 if you are interested in helping Long Branch create its very own Baby Pantry.

Project Homeless Connect

(continued from page 1)

The LBC would like to thank all of the businesses that donated items for Project Homeless Connect, including food donated by Bar Anticipation in Lake Como, McCloone's Pier House in Long Branch, What About a Bagel in Ocean Township, Hot Bagel Bakery in Oakhurst, and Fa Nagle the Bagel in Long Branch.

Other donations included blankets from Holiday Express, toiletry kits from the Arc of Monmouth Work Opportunity Center and The Salvation Army, clothing from Dignity U Wear, and winter coats from One Warm Coat. The Monmouth University Community Service Club and Psychological Counseling Department also donated clothing items and coats, according to the release.

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Drop-ins welcome, appointments are preferred:

Monday|Lunes|Segunda-feira.....1 - 4pm

Tuesday|Martes|Terça-feira.....10am - 4pm

Wednesday|Miércoles|Quarta-feira.....Appointment Only
Solo citas

Thursday|Jueves|Quinta-feira.....9:30am - 12pm

Friday|Viernes|Sexta-feira.....9:30am - 2pm

Saturday|Sábado|Sábado.....By appointment
Por cita/Por nomeação

Please call for appointments at other times. Bilingual appointments always Available

The Long Branch Concordance finds resources for people in need, fosters individual and family development and creates partnerships for community well-being.

Did you know...

- All of the LBC's services are FREE OF CHARGE!
- The LBC is United Way of Monmouth County (UWMC) Certified. This certification ensures community residents, partnering agencies and funding entities that the LBC adheres to its programming goals and mission and upholds its fiscal responsibilities.
- Our Youth Task Force comprises of local residents dedicated to generating positive youth development in Long Branch. The Task Force is currently researching formal and informal activities and work opportunities available to youths after school and during the summer.
- The LBC staff helped register thousands of runners for the NJ Marathon held on Sunday, May 3, 2009.
- We are an application site for **New Jersey SHARES**, a nonprofit organization charged with a mission to provide assistance to individuals and families living in New Jersey who are in need of temporary help in paying their energy bills.
- You can help the LBC "*Make Cents for the Community*" during its **Spring Into Action Membership Drive**. See the enclosed card and envelope for more information.
- The LBC Parent Advisory Board was established in July of 2008 to create a support system for parents in the Long Branch community and help families achieve and maintain healthy and financially stable environments. The Board is currently planning a Community Garden project for local residents that will encompass education, nutrition, and field trips in an effort to strengthen family and community relationships.

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Upcoming Events

- **Picnic with a Purpose**
A free family fun day celebrating the environment, community, and summer.
Sunday, May 31st, 12-2 p.m., Jerry Morgan Park, Long Branch
- **Parent Advisory Meetings**
Meet the third Tuesday of every month.
6-7:30 p.m., St. James Church, Long Branch
- **LBC Youth Task Force Meetings**
Meet every other Wednesday starting June 3rd, 2009
Location TBA
- **Free Beach Volleyball and Soccer**
Tuesdays and Thursdays on the beach in Long Branch, starting in June 2009
Ages 10 and up, snacks and refreshments will be provided.
- **Enter the LBC Poster Contest: "Celebrate Your Heritage"**
Deadline: Friday, August 7, 2009
Drop-Off: LBC Offices, 279 Broadway, Ste. 301
Open to all school-aged children. Pick-up poster paper at the LBC or use your own 11" x 17" paper.
- **Back to Basics Fair**
Providing local residents with FREE information about 30 participating community and health organizations, back to school supplies & uniforms, children's books, health screenings and more
Saturday, August 22nd, Tentative, Slocum Park, Long Branch
- **September Monthly Meeting: Welcome Back and Networking**
Wednesday, September 16, 2-4 p.m.
Long Branch Higher Education Center
- **BREW SIPS Fundraiser and Beer Tasting**
Fall 2009, TBA, SICA in Long Branch