

small package – BIG GIFT



Janet Sharma

A couple of weeks before Christmas I was flipping through incoming mail. It had been a challenging year for the Volunteer Center, as for many nonprofits, but I remained positive, thinking “... maybe today is when the big check will come in!” I noticed an envelope from a prior generous donor and opened it. Inside was a check. I read and, disbelieving, re-read the amount: one zero zero (comma) zero zero zero (dot) zero zero. Spelled out, it read one hundred thousand dollars.

To say that I was stunned is an understatement. I contacted the donor, who said “Well, I wanted to give some money to a good organization, and I know you will put it to good use.”

Ideas of how to spend the funds abounded, and we could have spent it ten different ways in no time at all. However, prudence prevailed. Our Board and staff leadership met and developed a plan that provides for investing in ongoing programs (recruiting and training mentors, equipment for our home repair service, expanding our business and leadership training services), immediate needs (technology upgrades), restoring cuts necessitated by the recession, and saving for the future.

However, much of what the Volunteer Center does relies not just on money. We leverage the time, talent and good intentions of people for the benefit of our community, and that’s something money alone cannot buy. Our wonderful benefactor knows this and understands that when the Volunteer Center invests in our community, it creates a ripple effect that multiplies good works many times over.

Those closest to the Volunteer Center know that this is an organization worthy of investment and that we are fully accountable. This gift signified that we are doing things right, and that the Center is worthy of big gifts.

And small packages are just fine.

Janet Sharma
Executive Director

Applications due April 8

Applications for the Bergen LEADS Class of 2012 are due on Friday, April 8, 2011. 30 applicants are selected on a competitive basis. For details and to complete the online application process, go to

www.bergenleads.org

Bergen LEADS

This year’s Bergen LEADS class is immersed in policy, politics and budgets. Participants in the intensive community leadership program are delving into such critical issues as health care, education, local government, the justice system, environment, economic development and the broad range of diversity that affects each. Home rule, shared services and high property taxes resonate through every topic.



Class Project to Focus on Education Reform

Each year a rigorous class project further explores of one topic. This year’s project is:

Re-design the way that schools in Bergen County do BUSINESS to decrease the cost per student.

William “Pat” Schuber, the former Bergen County executive who serves as the director of the Bergen LEADS monthly seminars, observes “With government at every level struggling to provide more service with fewer resources and with extraordinarily high property taxes the primary means by which education is funded, it is imperative that costs of providing education be reduced.”

Yet the prospect of changing the status quo of 74 local school districts causes great anxiety. “Emotions – instead of facts – guide the discourse, preventing exploration of creative solutions,” continues Mr. Schuber. “We are charging the Bergen LEADS class to come up with viable solutions.”

Team findings will be presented on June 14, at a public forum at Bergen Community College. Elected officials, as well as education leaders, parents and students will be invited — and encouraged — to attend.

Following the forum, the Class of 2011 will graduate and the Class of 2012 will be introduced.

Recruitment for next year’s Bergen LEADS is in full swing, with several open houses scheduled up to the April 8 application deadline. Complete information about the program, together with the online application form, is available at www.bergenleads.org

* * *

In addition to providing an intensive curriculum on critical issues and leadership development, **Bergen LEADS is posting impressive results**—see page 5 for details.

Connect in the Cloud

We'll soon go "live" with HandsOn Connect, an online database created specifically for affiliates of the HandsOn Network. The software will make it easier than ever to link prospective volunteers with opportunities and for agencies to recruit volunteers.

Agency Members** of the Volunteer Center will receive enhanced services. Watch for announcements!

**** Agency Member Benefits**

The Volunteer Center offers valuable benefits to Agency Members:

- ◆ Agency contact information and mission posted on our website and in the *Guide to Volunteering*
- ◆ Unlimited number of volunteer positions listed on the website and in the Guide
- ◆ Unlimited updates of volunteer position listings throughout the year
- ◆ Listing on our "HOT JOBS" web-board and blog as well as email notification to our volunteer pool regarding your current and immediate volunteer projects
- ◆ Discount on select trainings
- ◆ Free attendance at the monthly Volunteer Managers' Roundtable, a premier networking opportunity
- ◆ Listing as an Agency Member in the Volunteer Center's Annual Report

The fee to become a member is \$50 per year. Agencies that choose not to become an Agency Member still receive without charge a listing, but without information about your mission and volunteer positions. Non-members do not receive discounts on training.

Thank You 3,529 Times!



Our **All Wrapped Up** holiday giving program generated gifts for 3,529 people, including 826 seniors and people with disabilities living alone plus 783 families with 2,703 family members. Altogether 724 volunteer donors from the community stepped up to help our neighbors in need, providing nearly \$300,000 in gifts and gift cards that went a long way towards making the holidays merry and bright.

Case in point: the Englewood Housing Authority wrote the following to us:

All 15 families were adopted and I cannot begin to tell you of the generosity of donors. It was above and beyond what we expected in this time of economic crisis. Some of the children told me that it was the best Christmas they ever had. Our goal is to continue to make a difference in the lives of children and with the help of supporters such as you, we will continue to see improvements.

Your commitment to helping in our community is most appreciated.

Food Drive Honors MLK

The Volunteer Center hosted a food drive in mid-January to commemorate the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., National Day of Service. Despite horrendous weather, generous donors dropped off nearly 1,000 items.



Students from Palisades Regional Academy take a break while sorting and packing food, which was given to the Centers for Food Action.

More Trucks = More Service

With a third crew on the road, our Chore Service has been able to provide home repairs that keep 18% more seniors and people with disabilities safe in their homes. In 2009 we helped 1,612 clients; in 2010 we helped 1,895.

TD Bank and a private family foundation provided funds to purchase two new vans. We still have 12-year-old van on the road and are seeking funds to replace it. In the meantime, our crews of amiable Chore volunteers are performing home repairs throughout the County!



A Chore Wednesday crew: Neil Lyman (left), Ralph Riese and Bill Hrycak.

Lifetime of Experience Experience of a Lifetime

People age 55+ have a lifetime of experience. Now many are ready to put their unique interests, talents and expertise to work in the community, enriching their own lives in the process. Volunteers with RSVP choose what they want to do at more than 45 local agencies. Mileage reimbursement is offered for travel to and from the volunteer assignment. "We encourage people to 'RSVP' - to respond to needs in our community," says Barbara Wiederecht, program director. For information, call 201-489-9333.



RSVPers Earlene Smith and Linda Gould

Initiatives Help People in Need

Throughout the year, the Business Volunteer Council of Northern New Jersey (BVC) sponsors initiatives that benefit low-income children, families and individuals in and around Bergen County.



Employee volunteers at 12 BVC member companies participated in Tools for School, contributing nearly \$27,000 in school supplies that were distributed through area youth-serving agencies. Sponsors of the initiative were BD, IKEA, MWW, Quest, Rockland Electric, State Farm Insurance and United Water.

BVC Helps the Homeless

On a snowy day in January, BVC members served up a great breakfast for more than 150 people during Project Homeless Connect, an annual event to determine how many homeless people there are in Bergen County and connect them to services. The event was part of a nationwide point-in-time count of homeless people. BVC sponsors were Hunter Douglas, Classic Residence, aVi Community and Eisner-Amper.



Employee volunteers from EisnerAmper, Cole Schotz and Hunter Douglas served breakfast and distributed clothing and personal care items at Project Homeless Connect.

Enhanced Literacy Initiative

The BVC is working with Quarles School in Englewood to enhance our long-standing Books in a Bag initiative that provides books free of charge to young children. On March 3, dozens of BVC employee volunteers read to all 377 pre-K and kindergarten students at the school. Each child received a copy of *Pet Show!* by Ezra Keats, and will receive a backpack filled with books in May. Volunteers will continue to read to children throughout the school year, and reading scores will be tracked to determine the program's effectiveness.

Books in a Bag sponsors include Pearson Education, Classic Residence, Community Bank of Bergen County, Orange and Rockland Electric, Spectra Laboratories and United Water.

Fighting Hunger with Community Gardens

Plans are underway with several member companies to develop community gardens in census tracts in Englewood, Hackensack and Garfield where there is a high incidence of family poverty. Working with selected non-profit organizations, employee volunteers at BVC member companies will create and maintain vegetable gardens with produce distributed to families and individuals. BVC companies already signed on as sponsors include United Water, PSEG Services Corporation, and Community Bank of Bergen County.

BVC Members 2011



Bank of New Jersey
BD
Bergen County's United Way
BMW of North America
CareOne at Valley
Classic Residence in Teaneck,
a Vi Community
Cole, Schotz, Meisel, Forman
& Leonard, PA
Community Bank of Bergen County
Compensation Solutions
EisnerAmper LLP
Hudson City Savings Bank
Hunter Douglas
IKEA
JD Communications
KPMG LLC
Modera Wealth Management
MWW Group
Pearson Education
PSE&G
The Reader's Digest Association
Rockland Electric Company
Sealed Air
Spectra Laboratories
State Farm Insurance
TD Bank
UHY Employee Benefits
United Water
UPS Information Services

The Northern New Jersey Business Volunteer Council is sponsored by the Volunteer Center of Bergen County. For information about membership, contact Tess Tomasi, BVC coordinator, at 201-489-9454, ext 114, or email ttomasi@bergenvolunteers.org

What's In A Name?

You can tell a lot by a name. For this reason, we recently adjusted the nomenclature of our mentoring programs.



MENTORING YOUTH
MENTORING MOMS

Bergen Mentors is the name of our mentoring department, which has two programs:

Mentoring Youth (formerly Volunteers in Protective Services) matches caring adult volunteers with troubled youth.

Mentoring Moms are adult women who serve as role models

to overwhelmed low-income mothers who need guidance in sustaining their families.

Hooray for Great Mentors!



Our Mentoring Youth program recently honored several long-standing volunteers:

Ruth Schneider (left), of Ramsey, has mentored seven children during her 19 years with the program. At age 83, one would think Ruth is ready to throw in the towel and relax a bit. Instead, she's patiently waiting to be matched with yet another child to whom she can provide friendship and support.

Ralph Rypkema, of Lodi, has the distinction of having been a mentor for 28 years, and has helped ten boys see and take steps to achieve a brighter future. Ralph believes that success in school helps establish a foundation that can change young lives.

Solange Griffith-Ruff of Teaneck has been a mentor for 15 years and has mentored three different children.

"All three of these outstanding mentors bring tremendous patience and understanding to their role as mentor," says Faith Samples-Smart, Mentoring Youth program director. "Each continues to make a difference in the lives of children."

Mentoring Youth volunteers are positive role models, providing guidance, friendship and support as well as advocacy, when necessary, on behalf of the children they are mentoring.

Be a Mentor

Being a mentor can be rewarding, interesting, challenging — and fun. Join the nearly 200 adults who are currently involved with Bergen Mentors, either through Mentoring Youth or Mentoring Moms.

A six-week training is offered for each program in the Fall, Winter and Spring, with topics covering child development, child maltreatment and resilience in children and families; effective listening and communication skills; and problem solving. Trainings are held in the evening at the Volunteer Center in Hackensack. All mentors must also successfully complete a comprehensive screening process which includes fingerprinting, background checks and written references. For further information, send call 201-489-9454 or send an email to mentors@bergenvolunteers.org



Wanted: A Few Good Men

Men are especially needed to be mentors in our Mentoring Youth program. We always need women to serve as mentors, too, but right now 90% of the kids waiting for a mentor are boys who could benefit from having a male role model in their lives.

Groups Help Bergen Mentors



Volunteers with Bethel Ministries (above) and Mocha Moms (below) delivered holiday cheer to kids and families mentored through our Bergen Mentors programs: Mentoring Youth and Mentoring Moms. Thanks to all for the great holiday parties!



Winter Trainings

Executive Directors' Roundtable:

Get on Board the Pro-bono Express

Tuesday, April 12, 8:30-10:00 AM

- David Warshaw - Founder and Principal, Vistas Volunteer Management Solutions
- Volunteer Center of Bergen County, 64 Passaic Street, Hackensack
- Free
- Register online at www.bergenvolunteers.org or call 201-489-9454, ext. 114

There's a new train leaving the station with the potential to bring additional energy to help nonprofits meet their critical missions. Call it "skills based" volunteering or pro bono, its power comes from utilizing volunteers for their specific professional knowledge coupled with training to augment management capacity or achieve operational goals. This workshop will explore what's firing the trend toward more pro bono volunteering, and how nonprofits can better organize to take advantage of this growing resource.

Volunteer Managers' Roundtable

(now monthly!)

Every fourth Thursday, 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

- First session is March 24
- Volunteer Center of Bergen County
- Free
- Register online at www.bergenvolunteers.org or call 201-489-9454, ext. 114

Join us for monthly lunchtime discussions on issues related to volunteer management. These sessions are informal yet interactive, so bring your lunch and be prepared to learn from and share with other local professionals in the field. We'll also have time for networking and group problem-solving activities. The Roundtables are "brown bag," so please BYO lunch – we'll provide soft drinks and cookies. Pre-registration is required.

Training Sessions for Non-Profit Professionals

The Non-Profit Training and Resource Center offers workshops on a range of topics relevant to the non-profit industry. Sign up today to receive our monthly calendar of training sessions—just send an email to training@bergenvolunteers.org

Further information about Training:

201-489-9454, ext 114

email: training@bergenvolunteers.org

Measuring Impact:

Program Boasts Impressive Results

A major challenge in many programs is measuring results. To honestly assess the effectiveness of our Bergen LEADS civic leadership program, we created a Civic Engagement survey that is being administered to each class of 30 participants just before they begin their seminar year and several months after completion. Judging from the first set of responses, the program is demonstrating impressive results:

- ◆ Pre-Bergen LEADS 48% had worked with members of the community to solve a community problem; after Bergen LEADS, more than 70% had done so.
- ◆ Pre-Bergen LEADS 55% of the class said they "always" voted in local elections; post-Bergen LEADS that number was 71%, with 100% reporting that they had voted in the most recent election.
- ◆ Pre-Bergen LEADS 10% volunteered for a candidate or political campaign; afterwards 24%.
- ◆ Pre-Bergen LEADS 48% tried to convince people to vote for or against a candidate; post-Bergen LEADS 76%.
- ◆ Pre-Bergen LEADS 29% had contributed to a political candidate, party or organization; post-Bergen LEADS 47%.
- ◆ Pre-Bergen LEADS 55% had contacted or visited a public official; post-Bergen LEADS 65%. Similarly, pre-Bergen LEADS 28% had contacted a newspaper or magazine to express an opinion; post-Bergen LEADS 47%. 21% had signed a written petition about a political or social issue before Bergen LEADS, and 41% had afterwards.
- ◆ The rate of volunteering in the past year increased from 83% to 94%. The rate of group membership (contributing time and money) rose from 50% to 71%, and the rate of actively raising funds for a charitable group jumped from 31% to 71%.
- ◆ In terms of ongoing involvement, 61% of graduates are members of Alumni of Bergen LEADS and 89% of alumni participate in committees and program events.

Looking ahead, all Bergen LEADS participants will be given the survey before they begin and each spring after completion. Results will be aggregated to provide a reliable measurement of the program's effectiveness in preparing leaders for civic participation.

Bergen LEADS Applications due April 8

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45 and Counting!

The Volunteer Center turns 45 this year, and we are planning a fabulous celebration, not only of the many years we have been serving the community, but also of the organizations and individuals that have helped us to thrive. Co-chairs of the festivities are Volunteer Center Board Members Susan Russ, of Readers' Digest, and Bill Diana, of Marsh & McLennan Agency, LLC.

"Heart of Gold" Honorees Announced

Our prestigious "Heart of Gold" award will be presented to one outstanding individual and outstanding corporate partners.

The individual is **William "Pat" Schuber**, former Bergen County Executive who, among other endeavors, is seminar director for the Volunteer Center's dynamic Bergen LEADS civic leadership program.

We will also honor corporate partners **BD, TD Bank and United Water**. "Each of these companies has provided significant philanthropic support for our work," says Janet Sharma, executive director. "More importantly, each has demonstrated in many ways and for many years its commitment to our community. Each encourages and facilitates active involvement of employees at all levels in volunteer activities that make Bergen County a better place in which to live and work."

Gala Celebration: Saturday, December 3

Our 45th anniversary gala will celebrate 1966 and the phenomenal music of The Beatles. Our theme is "With a Little Help From Our Friends" and we'll host a festive dinner dance on Saturday evening, December 3, at Dolce on the Palisades.

Watch for announcements. For information about sponsorship, virtual journal ads or tickets, contact Jane He, director of development, jhe@bergenvolunteers.org 201-489-9454 ext 125.

Planned Gifts Welcome

Nothing against serendipity, but planning ahead is usually a good idea, and this applies to one's personal assets. With this in mind, the Volunteer Center encourages every adult, of every age, to have a will so that plans for their legacy can be put in place as they wish.

Of course, we also encourage those believe in the power of volunteering and in the good work of the Volunteer Center to remember us in your will.

If you'd like assistance in developing language or setting up an instrument for a planned gift, please call Janet Sharma, executive director, at 201-489-9454, x 116 or email jsharma@bergenvolunteers.org

1966

It Was a Very Good Year!

The highs, the lows, the incessant drama — that was 1966! If you were around then, how could you ever forget! It was a seminal year that brought us the following:

Star Trek . . . Simon & Garfunkel's *The Sounds of Silence* . . . The Beach Boys' *Good Vibrations* . . . The Doors first album . . . The Troggs' *Wild Thing* . . . Pampers and Fibre Optics were invented . . . Ronald Reagan was Governor of California . . . Charles de Gaulle was President of France . . . Troops in Vietnam escalated to 500,000 . . . Anti-war protests increased . . . *Dr. Zhivago* . . . *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* . . . Metropolitan Opera House opens in Lincoln Center . . . Cindy Crawford, John Cusack, Halle Berry and Julianna Margulies were born . . . Miniskirts got shorter

The Beatles were all the rage and at work on "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely hearts club Band"...

...and the Volunteer Center of Bergen County was founded!

Join us Saturday, December 3

as we celebrate

With A Little Help From Our Friends

Mission: The Volunteer Center of Bergen County strengthens the community by connecting people with opportunities to serve, operating direct service volunteer programs, building capacity for effective volunteering, and participating in strategic partnerships that meet community needs. The Volunteer Center was founded by the Junior League of Bergen County in 1966 and is an affiliate of the HandsOn Network.



Friends . . . Funds . . . FUN!



Hundreds of riders and scores of volunteers turned out on a perfect autumn day for the 15th Annual Bergen Bike Tour. Nearly \$80,000 in proceeds were shared between the Volunteer Center and Tomorrows Children's Fund.

Special thanks to our sponsors:

Diamond Sponsor

TD Bank

Platinum Sponsors

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Eisner Amper

Jamis Bicycles

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Sharp Electronics Corporation

Topline Products Co., Inc.

United Water

WithumSmith+Brown

Global Assurance

Zerega Custom Pasta Company

Get Ready for Golf! Monday, July 11

This year's Bergen County Golf Classic is set for Monday, July 11, again at Ridgewood Country Club, Paramus.

The superb championship course established for last summer's Barclays Tournament will be in prime condition, and sponsors are now being signed on. PSE&G is presenting sponsor; other lead sponsors are HSBC as caddie sponsor, United Water as water hazard sponsor, and The Hertz Corporation as cart sponsor.

Proceeds of the event, which is one of the area's premier golf outings, are shared equally by the Volunteer Center of Bergen County and Bergen County's United Way.

For information and details, go to www.bergen golf classic.org or contact Amanda Missey at amissey@bergen volunteers.org



**Bike Tour 2012:
Sun., September 25**



Banks and other companies are big supporters of the Bergen Bike Tour. Above, TD Bank. Right, PNC.

See above for a list of ALL of our generous sponsors!



With increasing numbers and unbridled enthusiasm, Team Bederson has raised nearly \$17,500 for the Bergen Bike Tour in the past couple of years!



Volunteer Center Board members Mac Hight (left), of Ridgewood, and Mike Smith, of Park Ridge and KPMG, help out at the Bergen Bike Tour.



VOLUNTEER CENTER OF BERGEN COUNTY, INC.

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Editor: Janet Sharma Staff writer: Maureen McCormick
For information call 201-489-9454 or email
info@bergenvolunteers.org

Heads Up!

**Tip of the Hat to Volunteers
Community Celebration April 6**



Brenda Blackmon

Come one, come all to our annual community-wide salute to volunteers! This year's event is Wed., April 6, at the Bergen Academies Auditorium in Hackensack, with MY9NY's Brenda Blackmon as MC. The evening begins with a dessert reception followed by the inspiring program at 7:15 PM.

All non-profit organizations, hospitals, libraries, religious organizations, municipalities and schools in Bergen County are invited to bring their volunteers for a public "pat on the back." All volunteers will be personally recognized and presented with certificates of appreciation from the Volunteer Center and from elected officials. The cost is just \$10 per person.

"This is a great way for organizations to honor their volunteers," explains Janet Sharma, the Volunteer Center's executive director. "It's not a competition, and everyone is a winner!"

Reservations due by March 28. For information about reservations and/or sponsorships, call 201-489-9454 or email info@bergenvolunteers.org.

Derby Day

**Saturday, May 7—3:30-7:00 PM
White Beeches Country Club, Haworth**

Fabulous hats, mint juleps, sumptuous southern fare, incredible bluegrass music, outstanding auctions — **and the Kentucky Derby!**

Tickets are \$100. Call 201-489-9454, ext. 125 for information or email jhe@bergenvolunteers.org

SAVE THE DATE



**VOLUNTEER CENTER OF BERGEN COUNTY'S
19TH ANNUAL DERBY DAY PARTY**

SATURDAY, MAY 7, 2011 3:30 TO 7:00 PM