



# HEIGHTS AND HILLS

supporting brooklyn's older adults

57 Willoughby Street, 4th Floor  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

718-596-8789 • [www.heightsandhills.org](http://www.heightsandhills.org)

FALL 2017

# HEIGHTS AND HILLS

• at home •



## MUSINGS... from our Executive Director



On the first Wednesday of each month, the entire Heights and Hills staff comes together for a meeting and I always begin the meeting with the same statement: “You all make a difference in people’s lives every single day, in ways big and small. Thank you for doing that. Really. Thank you. Does anyone want to share an example of how you made a difference?” Usually, no one wants to be the first to speak. No one wants to boast. But sooner or later, the stories start pouring out. Some stories are dramatic:

“Mrs. S didn’t answer for her meals and no one seemed to know where she was. I called all of her contacts and no one was particularly concerned, but something didn’t feel right to me. She always answers her door or else calls me to let me know she won’t be there. So I called the police to go do a ‘wellness check’. Sure enough, they got the super to open the door and Mrs. S had fallen and had been on the floor since yesterday afternoon. She was rushed to the hospital, with a broken leg and dehydrated. Who knows what would have happened if I didn’t call the police?”

Other stories are more far-reaching, and less tangible:

“I was sitting in a local coffee bar, with my Heights and Hills tote bag on my lap. A child was sitting at the next table with his mom and got all excited seeing the tote bag with the logo and started to talk excitedly about the lady who came to his class to talk about what it’s like to grow old and how they played a game where they pretended to be old and how much fun it was to think about growing older.”

He was talking about our Intergenerational Aging 101 class. And still others seem like just business-as-usual:

“I got a phone call from a daughter-in-law, thanking us for arranging meals on wheels for her in-laws who are in their nineties.”

A simple “thank you,” but one that represents a huge improvement in a family’s quality of life and peace of mind.

Back in March there was uproar when Mick Mulvaney, the Director of the Federal Office of Management and Budget, released a budget that included cuts to Meals on Wheels, saying there is no proof that the program works. Mr. Mulvaney, come to a Heights and Hills staff meeting and hear from our staff. Better yet, I invite you to visit some of our clients.

Meals on Wheels, Senior Centers, and Senior Support Services all SAVE LIVES and improve quality of life for the oldest among us and their families. I have seen this over and over again. In addition to bringing a hot meal to thousands of people who might not otherwise be able to shop or cook, Meals on Wheels is also a link to those who may not see or speak to anyone all day, except the person who delivers their meal to them. And if the recipient doesn’t answer the door, we follow very strict procedures to make sure that the person is okay. Our staff do not leave for the day until everyone is accounted for. We have literally saved lives – finding people who have fallen, had a stroke, or are simply too weak to open the door. And we make sure that they get the attention that they need.

If anyone has questions about the effectiveness of these programs, I invite them to come talk to our staff and the people we serve. We are living in some very difficult times right now. It’s more important than ever to recognize and thank those who work to make a difference. So, thank you to our hard-working staff and volunteers, and thank YOU to our many supporters, without whom we could not do what we do every day.

Judy Willig, LCSW

## Heights and Hills CAREGIVER PROGRAM – October-November 2017

Caregiving is hard. We’re here to support you.



All meetings are free of charge. Please call 718-596-8789 to register, request information, and inquire about additional 2017-2018 meetings.

### SUPPORT GROUPS for those caring for a loved one age 60 or better

To attend, please register ahead of time by phone.

#### Caregiver Support Group (all welcome)

Wednesdays 3:00-4:30pm  
Oct. 11, Oct. 25, Nov. 8, Nov. 29  
NY Methodist Hospital - Wesley House,  
501 Sixth Street, Room 6A, Brooklyn, NY

#### Parkinson’s Care Partners

Wednesdays 12:00-2:00pm  
Oct. 11, Oct. 25, Nov. 8  
Mark Morris Dance Group,  
3 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn, NY

#### NEW Telephone Support Group – All Caregivers

Wednesdays 7:00-8:30pm  
Oct. 4, Oct. 11, Oct. 18, Oct. 25,  
Nov. 1, Nov. 15, Nov. 22, Nov. 29

#### Caregivers of Spouses/Partners

Next session begins in November – call for info.  
Heights and Hills,  
57 Willoughby St., 4th Fl., Brooklyn, NY

### WORKSHOPS for Caregivers

Please register ahead of time by phone.

All are held at Heights and Hills,  
57 Willoughby St., 4th Fl., Brooklyn, NY

#### Understanding Dementia

In Partnership with CaringKind  
Tuesday, October 17 – 1:00-3:00pm  
Call 646-744-2900 for information & to register

#### Coping with Anger

Thursday, October 19 – 1:00-3:00pm

#### How to Talk to a Loved One with Dementia

Monday, October 30 – 6:00-8:00pm

#### Caring for the Caregiver

Tuesday, November 28 – 6:00-8:00pm



Heights and Hills proudly meets all standards for charity accountability.  
[ny.give.org](http://ny.give.org)



# Park Slope Center for Successful Aging

## Renovated and Renewed

This summer, with funding from the NYC Department for the Aging, we embarked on a much-needed renovation of the Park Slope Center for Successful Aging. We anticipate Phase 1 will be completed in early October, with repaired and painted walls, new floors, modern ceiling fans, LED lighting, and renovated bathrooms, plus new electrical wiring, phones and high-speed internet. Still to come will be new kitchen cabinetry, and new computer workstations.

We’re looking forward to sharing the “after” photos with you – and hosting a festive reveal for the Park Slope Community. Our launch party will take place October 23rd.



Judith Stewart, Heights and Hills Case Management client, tries out a student-designed digital exercise program and gear.

## Aging Is Inevitable; How We Age Is Not

### Pratt Institute Industrial Design Students Take on the Challenges of Aging

Long time Friendly Visitor volunteer **Robert Langhorn**, an industrial design professor at Pratt Institute, has been inspired through his volunteer work at Heights and Hills to seek out new and innovative ways to address the design needs of older adults. Most recently he partnered with Heights and Hills to challenge college seniors in his course to focus their final project on applying great design concepts to products of assistance to older adults.

To counter cultural stereotypes of older adults and their needs, Heights and Hills provided an overview of the challenges faced by older adults, and connected students with several older Brooklynites served by our Case Management program. We also provided guidance in ensuring students received feedback from these prospective clients throughout the design process.

The results ranged from a flip-phone with voice-activated dialing, to a remotely-operated window opener, to a digital exercise program based on falls-prevention exercises that mirrors the client’s actions on-screen, correcting along the way.

## Our Board of Directors Is Growing

As we move forward into our 2017-2018 fiscal year, we are fortunate to be welcoming five new board members who add a wide variety of experience and expertise to our active board of directors. **Kim Reed**, Communications Director for the Batali & Bastianich Hospitality Group, has a Masters Degree in Social Work and began her career in the Case Management Program at Heights and Hills before moving into a career in communications and public relations. **Brian Ecclesine**, Director of Sales at Media iQ, brings a wealth of experience in the digital and social media universe. **Shana Wertheimer**, Assistant Vice President of Housing Operations at Breaking Ground, has spent her career in the nonprofit sector and has been a Heights and Hills Friendly Visitor since 2013. **Anne Zhu**, former Senior Associate Specialist at The Goldman Sachs Group, has a background in nonprofit fundraising, while **Shannese Sutton**, Quality Assurance Analyst for JPMorgan Chase, has an MBA in computer information systems. At the same time, we are saddened to say Good Bye to **Katherine Bartholomaus**, who has rotated off the board after 14 years of exemplary service. We will miss you, Kathy, and hope you won’t go far.

### 2017-18 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jeff Helfgott <i>President</i>	Sarah Jones
Michelle Grasparil <i>Vice President</i>	Scott Kleiner
Tracy Jackson <i>Secretary</i>	Dona Metcalf Laughlin
Deborah Juantorena <i>Treasurer</i>	Anne Perzeszty
Richard Anderson	Kim Reed
Gwenn Cagann	Shannese Sutton
Amanda Chessa	Patty Vigorita
Brian Ecclesine	Shana Wertheimer
	Anne Zhu
	Judy Willig, LCSW <i>Executive Director</i>

## Heights and Hills 46th Annual Spring Benefit

Over \$150,000 raised to support programs that promote successful aging!

More than 200 Brooklyn friends and neighbors came together on May 15th to support Heights and Hills and celebrate two honorees – **Lizanne Fontaine** and **Matthew LaSorsa** – who embody Brooklyn’s tradition of community spirit in action.

In honoring Lizanne Fontaine, Counsel and Compliance Officer of Morris Heights Health Center, we celebrated a woman dedicated to serving the most vulnerable among us. In presenting the Mary Ellen Critchlow Award to Matthew LaSorsa, Proprietor of Heights Chateau Fine Wines and Spirits, we applauded a businessman who always remembers to give back to his community.

Many thanks to all our friends, sponsors and supporters for making this such a festive occasion as well as a fundraising success. We look forward to celebrating with you again in 2018!



PHOTOS: 1) Honoree **Lizanne Fontaine** receiving her award from daughter **Whitney Buckholz**. 2) **Matthew LaSorsa** being presented the Mary Ellen Critchlow Award by **Dona Metcalf Laughlin**. 3) **Judy Willig** and **Jeff Helfgott** leading off the evening’s festivities. 4) Board Member **Patty Vigorita** and Benefit Committee Co-Chairs **Dona Metcalf Laughlin** and **Gwenn Cagann**.

## HEIGHTS AND HILLS Receives Innovative Cornerstone Award

Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce honors 46-years of serving Brooklyn’s older adults

On September 19, **Judy Willig** accepted the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce’s first Innovative Cornerstone Not-For-Profit Award for our 46-year history of serving Brooklyn’s older adults with innovative services and programs. The award was presented at the Chamber’s 6th Annual Not-for-Profit Summit that focused on Engaging an Aging Population.

True to form, when accepting the award, Judy had something important to say about aging. Instead of thinking about older adults, those age 60 and better, as “them” or “the other,” she suggested we would do well to realize that we are all “aging” – a process that begins from the time we are born. When we advocate for and create programs and services to assist today’s 60+ Brooklynites, we are supporting a culture that values older adults and provides the assistance they – and we – may need to remain vital members of our communities.



(L. to R.) **Rick Russo**, Sr. VP, Operations, Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce; **Jennifer Lancaster**, PhD, VP of Academic Affairs/ Academic Dean, St. Francis College; **Eda Sanchez-Persampieri**, Director, Center for Entrepreneurship, St. Francis College; **Jennifer Smith**, AVP, Community Development Officer, Investors Bank; **Judy Willig**, Executive Director, Heights and Hills; **Denise Arbesu**, Chair, Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, **Andrew Hoan**, President & CEO, Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce; **Dennis Anderson**, Management & Information Technology Department Chairperson & Professor, St. Francis College; and **Meg Helming**, Director, Membership, Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce.