

SPRING 2023

HEIGHTS AND HILLS • at home •



DEAR FRIENDS OF HEIGHTS AND HILLS,

When people in my personal life hear what I do, they often share information about their families

and about the challenges they face caring for an older adult in their lives. This is not surprising. AARP found that one in five people who care for an older adult report physical, emotional, and financial strain, with 21% reporting they feel alone. Caregivers often don't know that they can access support and even more, they don't identify as caregivers and so when they hear about programs, they think they are not for them.

We are very clear when we become a parent, a student, or an employee. Those roles have clear start lines. We celebrate these changes, and our communities recognize that we are taking on associated responsibilities. Because caregiving doesn't have a finite start, many people don't know that they are a caregiver until they are deep into that rewarding but difficult work. They may be struggling to take care of their own health and be facing increased financial hardship by the time they recognize that they need support.

Caregivers often discuss these stressors with their own physicians, clergy, and other "helpers" in their lives. As a result, our outreach efforts aim to reach both caregivers and the larger community so that we can better learn to identify caregivers and connect them with support. Our staff make presentations and set up information tables at houses of worship, food pantries, Community Board meetings, and more.

Recognizing the need to connect more with the communities we serve, we have recently expanded our outreach thanks to grants from the Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation and the New York Foundation for Eldercare.

If you have an event where you think we could reach caregivers, please let me know. Please call me, **(718) 596-8789 x304**, or send an email with your thoughts, ideas, and suggestions to **info@heightsandhills.org**.

Many thanks,

Carrie Zwiebel Bloss
Executive Director

DO YOU PROVIDE UNPAID HELP TO A FAMILY MEMBER, FRIEND, OR NEIGHBOR?

- Regularly check in to verify your loved one's safety and well-being.
- Coordinate medical care and/or medication management.
- Help with household maintenance and/or meal preparation.
- Assist with bill paying or other financial matters.
- Provide transportation to medical appointments and social outings.

OUR TEAM OF SOCIAL WORKERS CAN OFFER/ PROVIDE:

- Individual Supportive Counseling
- Ongoing Support Groups that educate caregivers about stages of illnesses and disease, especially dementia*
- Guidance with navigating the healthcare maze, long term care planning, and home care options
- Information on legal issues
- Assistance with benefits and entitlements
- Short-term respite care for qualified individuals
- Caregiver Workshops

SPRING BENEFIT RECAP

WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 2023



We were proud to honor **Debbie Juantorena** for her longstanding support of Heights and Hills and her service as former Vice-President and Treasurer of our Board.



We also bestowed the Mary Ellen Critchlow Award to **Yolanda Valverde** for her outstanding service at the Park Slope Center for Successful Aging.

We recognized our staff's hard work in meeting the needs of a diverse community in a special video. Most of all, we had fun connecting with old friends and new ones making it an unforgettable evening.

Thank you to all for making the evening such a spectacular success. We hope to see you at next year's benefit!

“I would like to acknowledge the incredible leadership, staff, and volunteers at Heights & Hills. Your unwavering commitment to elder care and your tireless efforts to improve the lives of our Brooklyn seniors, or as a friend called them, Brooklyn's wise residents, are nothing short of remarkable.”

– Debbie Juantorena

“I also want to applaud our Heights and Hills staff... many of whom are here tonight who approach their work with outstanding dedication and compassion.”

– Shana Wertheimer

“I am so proud to be a part of this organization where the passion and dedication of the board and staff is unparalleled and incredibly inspiring.”

– Ravi Ramchandani



CLIENT STORY

Heights and Hills serves a diverse set of neighborhoods. We work to ensure that our staff reflects the community we serve. Twenty-seven percent of our staff are multilingual. We have staff who are fluent in Spanish, Haitian Creole, French, Cantonese, Taiwanese, and Hebrew. Approximately twenty-two percent of our staff are immigrants. This diversity enhances our capacity to effectively support our clients.



Recently, Fitz-Gerald Dupont, one of our Case Managers, was working with a client whose son would not acknowledge the client's symptoms of dementia. Both Fitz-Gerald and the client are of Haitian Creole descent. The son expressed a distrust of western medicine and felt that holistic medicine and faith should be prioritized. Because of their shared background, the Case Manager was able to connect in a meaningful way with the son on his personal beliefs surrounding dementia and have a productive conversation surrounding the client's symptoms and how it is connected to their faith.

By taking an approach rooted in the client's culture, we were able to identify next steps that were acceptable to the client and his family, while also ensuring that the client received the support he needed.

REDI INITIATIVE

In 2020, we began a **Race, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (REDI)** initiative after conducting a staff survey to learn how we can better align our work and practices with racial equity. It is vital that we understand the connection of racial justice to our mission, core values, and strategic framework.

Our staff and volunteers work with, among, and in a very diverse community. It is critical that we continue to learn and expand our cultural competency so that the Heights and Hills team may engage in effective and respectful communication with our clients, community members, and within cross-cultural situations.

Looking ahead, we hope to include and update our Brooklyn community on our work towards achieving racial equity, diversity, and inclusion.

ANNUAL 5K FUN RUN



Lace up your running/walking shoes and raise money for older adults in Brooklyn! We will be kicking off our annual 5k Fun Run/Walk the last weekend in September. There is no registration fee to participate. You can run or walk the 5K any time from September 29th – October 1, on your own or with a group of friends. Because it is a virtual event, you can participate from anywhere.

Contact development@heightsandhills.org for additional information.



HEIGHTS AND HILLS

supporting brooklyn's older adults

81 Willoughby Street, Suite 302

Brooklyn, NY 11201

718-596-8789 • www.heightsandhills.org

ARTS AT PSCSA



Presented through a grant from the **Brooklyn Arts Council**, PSCSA partnered with the **Textile Arts Center** for a class that presented traditional and contemporary fiber crafts as an expression of culture, individuality, art, and design. The group ran for 16 weeks which led to our culminating event and showcase on February 8th.

Members showcased their own personal and cultural traditions and incorporated meaningful textiles scraps and artifacts from home to share the stories that these elicit.

For weekly class schedules and more information, please visit heightsandhills.org or call Matt Abrams, Center Director at (718) 832-3726.



OUR PSCSA MEMBERS WENT ON A FIELD TRIP TO MOMA.

THEY LOVED THE EXPERIENCE!



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