UUCSR Donates Funds for Transportation Assistance

JoAnn Hertman recently visited the Women’s Group at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock (UUCSR). The Women’s Group has generously donated funds towards the transportation needs of our families and veterans. Left to right seated at table: Jo-Ann Hertzman, Senior Grants Specialist & Community Affairs Liaison, New Ground and Maria Ceraulo, President, Women’s Group UUCSR with other members of the Board of the Women’s Group.

Investors Foundation Awards Grant for Education Assistance

The Estée Lauder Companies Reading All Stars Program

Roslyn High School - Athletes Helping Athletes General Donation

THE RONA JAFFE FOUNDATION READING ALL STARS PROGRAM

New Ground was awarded a generous $5,000 grant from the Investors Foundation to support our Education Assistance Program. This funding provides SAT study courses, graduation fees, musical instrument rentals, after-school activities such as debate club, sports and drama society, uniform costs, scientific calculations, fees for school trips, eye glasses, college application fees, and much more. These expenses are not covered by the school districts however they expand a child’s education and contribute toward a well-rounded academic experience that best prepares them for the future. Left to right: JoAnn Hertman, Senior Grants Specialist & Community Affairs Liaison, New Ground and Janet Dombal, Assistant Branch Manager at Investors Bank, Wattington Branch.

Message from Executive Director

Every New Ground resident first comes to us seeking a way out of their cycle of homelessness and poverty. After undergoing our intensive screening process and being accepted into the program, families and veterans outline their goals with their social worker and begin their journey. Although their path includes outstanding accomplishments, it is also full of setbacks. For almost ten years we have celebrated a 100% school promotion-graduation rate. This past June, two students could not reach this goal.

One, a seven year old boy with learning disabilities and mild behavioral issues, is repeating the second grade. After many meetings with his school, medical and developmental providers, it is clear that his repeating the grade will allow him more time to mature and master the skills necessary for the third grade. Although disappointed, his parent and all of us want what is best for him.

Our second student entered New Ground with just a few months left of high school. He was already failing every subject; his parents believe this was a direct result of their homelessness. Their most recent place to stay after two years of constant moves was a rundown trailer full of setbacks. For almost ten years we have celebrated a 100% school promotion-graduation rate. This past June, two students could not reach this goal.

New Ground is committed to providing the necessary educational supports, but also the security of a place to call home and a stable future for his family. In September he saw his school year he is attending the evening school program to complete the required courses to be awarded his diploma. And we are providing not just the necessary educational supports, but also the security of a place to call home and a stable future for his family. In September he saw his father begin a GED program and his mother start college, both demonstrating just how important education is to future independence.

These students as well as their families and all of us are committed to the hard work and diligence needed to overcome setbacks and continue on their paths to success.
To assist our families and veterans achieve their goals, you can make a difference in the lives of those we serve:

- **Adopt-A-Family for Thanksgiving and/or December holidays** - Please help make this time of year special for those in our program who cannot afford these celebrations. New Ground will provide a specific wish list for the family you adopt. General donations, at this time include turkeys, roasts, hams, fresh produce and gift cards to local supermarkets.
- **Organize a food drive in your neighborhood** - Help keep our food pantry stocked with nutritional items to help supplement our families’ very tight budgets.
- **Consider donating your time as a volunteer** - Various ways we can utilize your time and expertise to benefit those we serve include tutoring, homework help, or join one our fundraising committees.

For further information on volunteering, supporting any of our programs or to receive this newsletter in electronic format please contact: CPanzarella@newground.org

**Celebrating our Successes**

At New Ground, we have been very busy with the usual back to school tasks. Our students continue to make academics strides and we are happy to share some updates with all of you who make this possible. In June, a few New Ground staff members attended the high school graduation for Tom* and Tina*, a brother and sister who have been a part of our program for many years. Both graduated with honors, all set to pursue their different future careers through college placements this fall. Tom first came to us reading 3 grade levels below his peers. Through their participation in our Reading All Stars Program both students significantly improved their silent reading skills. Tom fully reached and surpassed his appropriate grade level. Through our Education Assistance Program, Tom and Tina obtained assistance with SAT prep courses, college application costs, and graduation fees to ensure that they successfully finished high school and secured college placements. Both students also received services from our Education Advocacy Program, helping the family to navigate the very difficult process of college decisions, financial aid, and scholarship applications. Tina is now enrolled at a local college working toward a degree in Psychology while Tom is pursuing his degree in Engineering. Their mother is extremely proud of their accomplishments and grateful to New Ground for all of the opportunities and assistance we provided.

The past year has proven very successful for many families in the Long Term Housing Program as they have achieved their goals. We celebrated five families moving on to various independent housing situations, of which Tom and Tina’s family was one. They moved into their own home when their mother became a homeowner. This past May, another family graduated from New Ground into a market rent apartment in Suffolk County. After five and a half years with us, this single mother improved her household income and credit score to be able to afford a place of her own. The entire family accomplished a great deal toward education goals as well. In the spring, mom graduated from college with her Associate Degree in Paralegal Studies. In June, her daughter graduated from high and her son from the eighth grade. They are thrilled with their new schools, new home, and for mom, a new career path which she worked so hard to achieve.

Thanks to all of you for your continued support of our parents, children and veterans. Thank you for helping Tom, Tina and so many others on Long Island who are caught in the cycle of poverty and homelessness.

*Names have been changed to protect confidentiality