



CLUSTER

20 South Broadway, Suite 501, Yonkers, NY 10701 ♦ 914-963-6440 ♦ www.clusterinc.org

CLUSTER provides services in four major program areas:

- ♦ Mental Health Residential Services
- ♦ Westchester & Rockland Mediation Centers
- ♦ Youth and Family Programs
- ♦ Housing Resource Center

Tom Roth

President,
CLUSTER Board of Directors

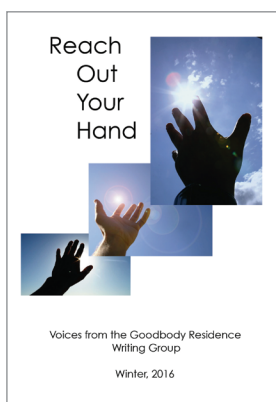
Toni Volchok

Executive Director

Diana M. Campos

Newsletter Editor

“Voices and Images”



On Thursday, March 16th CLUSTER celebrated the poetry and artistry of residents of the Goodbody and Goerlich residences. Through CLUSTER's partnership with Arts Westchester, Writer-in Residence, David Surface and several residents read poetry that they had written and published, in an anthology “Reach Out Your Hand”. David worked with residents over a seven week period, encouraging them to write and express themselves, resulting in the published anthology. There was also an exhibit of visual art, some of which was created by residents during an Artist in residency, with Terri Kessler Schwarz.

In addition to the readings that afternoon, the group was joined by representatives of the Westchester County Dept. of Community Mental Health, and Arts Westchester along with members of the CLUSTER Board of Directors, staff and friends. Residents also received certificates, commemorating the occasion.

CLUSTER's Mission is “to provide services and programs that assist residents in Yonkers and Westchester & Rockland Counties to build a better future for themselves and their communities.”

CLUSTER Study Buddies Debate “Raise the Age”

“We know at 16 they can't even see an R-rated movie without a parent, yet we're sentencing them to prison, that's wrong.” —

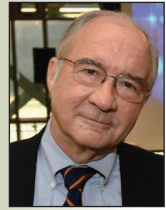
Sen. Carlucci

In mid-February, CLUSTER's Study Buddies, held a debate on the topic of “Raising the Age” from 16 years old to 18 years old for youth convicted of non-violent felony crimes. The change would mean that 16 year olds would not be sentenced to serve time in adult prisons. The teens held a spirited debate, carefully articulating the pros and cons of the subject and giving everyone present a lot of information and food for thought.

This debate was a very timely discussion, as the following week, Tajae Gaynor, Director of the Westchester and Rockland Mediation Center, and Vicky Khazamm, Coordinator for the Restorative Justice Program participated in a roundtable panel discussion with other Westchester County community leaders on this subject. The Raise the Age roundtable panel was organized by NYS Senators Jeff Klein and David Carlucci. Both Senators are working to raise the age of criminal responsibility from 16 to 18 years old in order to keep children out of prison when they commit nonviolent crimes.

Moving young people who commit crimes out of the adult criminal justice system and into the juvenile justice system gives them a better chance for a positive future, and it makes our communities safer by reducing the number of re-offenders. New York and North Carolina remain the only states where all 16 and 17 year-olds are automatically prosecuted as adults. This process goes against brain science that reveals adolescents are still developing and should be treated in ways appropriate to their physical and mental health.

“Yes we want to hold them accountable for bad choices, but we support the level of change they need in their own lives,” said Tajae Gaynor. Sen. Carlucci added, “We know at 16 they can't even see an R-rated movie without a parent, yet we're sentencing them to prison, that's wrong.”



Spring is here –
At last!

At last!

I hope you will pay special attention to the information in

this newsletter, particularly about CLUSTER’s Mental Health programs. On March 16, I was privileged to attend the Voices and Images presentation and art show at the Riverfront Library to celebrate CLUSTER’s artists and writers. The invitation stated that this will be an “inspirational afternoon.” That was an understatement. This event was a unique window into the overall excellence of CLUSTER’s Mental Health programs

The story of funding for Mental Health programs is evolving at the state and federal levels, but there is no doubt that CLUSTER will face significant challenges. On a national level, the embrace of programs like Meals on Wheels is impressive. Thinking about CLUSTER, I am hopeful that funding for Mental Health services and programs will attract a similar level of passionate support.

Now more than ever, we need to build the community of CLUSTER supporters. If you are not already a CLUSTER supporter, I invite you to join us; our web site, www.clusterinc.org, explains how you can do this. If you are already a CLUSTER supporter, I sincerely hope you will consider an incremental step in your support. And, just as important, please tell a friend about your support for CLUSTER and ask them to join us. Together we accomplish so much.

Tom Roth
President, Board of Directors

Thank

CLUSTER would like to acknowledge and

express our appreciation to the many individuals, foundations, corporations and other organizations that supported our work in 2016. Your support has made a difference in the lives of many.

Thank you for your commitment.

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(\$15,000 +)

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(\$5000+)

- Anbinder Family Foundation
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(\$2500+)

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- People’s United Community Foundation
- Thomas & Margaret Roth
- Temple Israel Center
- Steven & Nancy Kliot Straus
- Lucille Werlinich

Goodbody Residence gets a Kitchen Makeover



Residents of the Goodbody Residence are cooking up a storm in their beautiful new kitchen. Over the winter, demolition happened and the new kitchen took shape. The footprint of the kitchen didn’t expand, but it became much more functional, with new cabinets, countertops, lighting, flooring and appliances including a new stove, an extra oven, a built in microwave and a dishwasher. There is even a new pantry and a built in buffet for additional storage.

The kitchen is still in need of a few items to complete the makeover. Items on the “Wish List” are: a new large French door refrigerator, industrial size pots and pans, a countertop mixer, large serving utensils and platters, as well as a new set of matching dishes. Please contact Diana Campos, dcampos@clusterinc.org or Kristina Yamin, kyamin@clusterinc.org at CLUSTER if you would like to make a donation.

you!

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The names listed above are those of our many contributors. CLUSTER has made every effort to ensure that this list is complete and correct. If we have inadvertently omitted your name, please let us know immediately. We are extremely grateful for every gift and every donor, large and small. Thank you



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CURRENT OCCUPANT

Tech Center *at the Riverfront Library*



Children from the CLUSTER After School Program experienced the new Tech Center at the Yonkers Riverfront Library. They were able to choose different rooms to work in, which are all very hands on: the Computer Room, where they could learn about computer hardware and software, the Engineering Room, where they could learn about building, and the Media Room where they could place themselves anywhere in the world via the green screen.

