NEW COMMUNITY OF SOME SERVING THE PEOPLE OF THE NEW COMMUNITY NETWORK SINCE 1968

NEW COMMUNITY HELPS YOUNG WOMAN FROM HOMELESSNESS TO A MEDICAL CAREER

lene Villanueva has always wanted to work in the medical field. She said even as a child, people would seek her out for help translating or other tasks when she would go to doctor appointments or the emergency room.

Her hopes of becoming a doctor seemed out of reach when she became a mother at a young age and was unable to finish high school. She worked for a catering service and at a pharmacy in New York before moving to New Jersey. She found herself in a situation where her landlord only wanted rent payments in cash and he wouldn't provide a lease. He changed the locks and she ended up homeless with her children.

Villanueva then found Harmony House, New Community's transitional housing facility for homeless families. She spent time there in 2017 and 2018 before moving to permanent housing. Harmony House employees informed her that New Community Career & Technical Institute (NCCTI) offered a High School Equivalency (HSE) program, which was conveniently located right next door. She took advantage of the opportunity and earned her GED in 2018.

While in the HSE program, Villanueva learned about the accredited post-secondary medical programs NCCTI offered. She decided to enroll in the Medical Assistant Clinical (MAC) program to put herself on the path to a career.

The recent death of Villanueva's father renewed her interest in a medical career.

"I thought, I really want to go into the medical field so that I can be able to be one person to change it, to be there for the people," she said.

She completed the MAC program in 2020 and began working full-time at University Hospital in April of this year as an ambulatory care technician. In that role, she takes patients' vitals; provides customer service to patients; schedules, cancels and reminds patients about appointments; and discharges patients.

Villanueva said she enjoys the first job of her medical career.

"I've gotten way farther than other people that have been working there for years. And that's all thanks to the school because they taught me," she said.

At age 29, Villanueva hopes to continue her education and become a registered nurse.

Her journey shows how NCCTI can serve as a bridge to get students where they ultimately want to be.

"NCCTI provides the stepping stones for students to create a foundational layer for them to expand upon or build up from," said NCCTI Director Dr. Sylvia McCray. "The work we do here is to blow life back into a dead dream or a buried goal. We know the way to improve one's life and circumstances begins with education and training. That is our main goal. Our mission is to push students so they can see what we see: opportunity, growth and choice for themselves."

Odette Phillip was one of Villanueva's HSE instructors who

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Ilene Villanueva is currently working at University Hospital as an ambulatory care technician. She spent time at Harmony House, New Community's transitional housing facility for homeless families, where she learned about the educational programs offered at New Community Career & Technical Institute. She earned her GED and completed the Medical Assistant Clinical program to start her career. *Photo courtesy of Ilene Villanueva*.

FROM INTERNS TO LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS: TWO FSB CLINICIANS SHARE THEIR JOURNEYS



Kimberly Lipari and Alexander Arici both started off as interns at Family Service Bureau of Newark (FSB) when they were pursuing master's degrees at Montclair State University. They both recently became licensed professional counselors (LPCs).

Alexander Arici and Kimberly Lipari started their careers in mental health services as interns at Family Service Bureau of Newark (FSB), an affiliate of New Community Corporation. Both were earning master's degrees at Montclair State University when they became interns at FSB and both recently became licensed professional counselors (LPCs) working at the agency.

New Jersey requires counselors to be licensed. There are two levels of licensure: licensed associate counselor (LAC) and licensed professional counselor (LPC). Both Arici and Lipari obtained their LAC after completing the graduate program at Montclair State University and passing the National Counselor

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



AROUND THE NETWORK

WELCOME TO NEW COMMUNITY



Brenda Alston joined New Community on Sept. 19 as its Receptionist/HR Assistant. She is responsible for answering the main phone line for New Community, as well as assisting in various capacities with the Human Resources Department. Alston was born and raised in Newark. She spent 13 years living in Arizona working in human resources and relocated back to New Jersey in 2019.

THE NEW COMMUNITY CLARION

The New Community Clarion is published as a community service. The editor reserves the right to withhold articles and photographs once they are submitted. Opinions expressed in columns are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of New Community Corporation.

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New Community Corporation 233 West Market Street, Newark, NJ 07103 973-623-2800

EDITOR, WRITER, PHOTOGRAPHER

Michelle Lang **NCC Director of Communications** 973-497-4413 mlang@newcommunity.org

CHECK US OUT ONLINE:

newcommunity.org









OUR MISSION

To help residents of inner cities improve the quality of their lives to reflect individual, God-given dignity and personal achievement.

NEW COMMUNITY IS RECOGNIZED AS:

- One of the largest and most comprehensive community development organization in the United States.
- A large-scale deliverer of comprehensive programs and services.
- A leader in affordable housing and economic development.
- A model among nonprofit, social entrepreneurship and CDC communities.
- Having beneficial partnerships on the local, national and global level.

Want to Support New Community?

You can make a difference in the lives of inner city residents by making an online donation. Visit newcommunity. org and click "Donate" to give today! We appreciate all support.

GETTING FIRE SAFETY TIPS

pepresentatives from the Newark Fire Department visited Gardens Senior, 265 Morris Ave., Newark, to show residents how to properly use a fire extinguisher on Aug. 23. Participating residents got to use the apparatus in the parking lot of the building. Photos courtesy of Desiree Crespo.





ENJOYING A BARBECUE

esidents of Manor Senior, 545 Orange St., Newark, enjoyed food and Ktime with neighbors at a barbecue outside on Aug. 26. Photos courtesy of Guadalupe Cepeda.





GETTING HEALTH INFORMATION

esidents of Hudson Senior, 21-27 Orchard St., Jersey City, participated in a resentation by UnitedHealthcare in the Community Room of the building on Aug. 23. Photos courtesy of Vivian Le.





GATHERING FOR A SEPTEMBER COOKOUT

Residents of Associates, 180 South Orange Ave., Newark, gathered in the Community Room of the building on Sept. 9 for a cookout. In addition to a warm meal and social time with neighbors, residents were able to get health information from Aetna and get a COVID-19 test.









NCCTI RECRUITS FOR BUILDING TRADES SPECIALIST PROGRAM



NCCTI Director Dr. Sylvia McCray talks about the school to attendees of the Building Trades open house.



NCCTI Building Trades Specialist instructor Yusto Awich shows prospective students the framing that they would be working on.



NCCTI Student Recruiter Aziza Johnson discusses the application and financial aid process to those attending the open house.

w Community Career & Technical Institute (NCCTI) hosted an open house for its Building Trades Specialist program on Sept. 15 at the NCCTI Training Center, 210 West Bigelow St., Newark. Attendees got to meet NCCTI Director Dr. Sylvia McCray, Student Recruiter Aziza Johnson and program instructor Yusto Awich. They also got a tour of the facility where classes take place and participated in a hands-on demonstration.

Those interested in enrolling in any of NCCTI's accredited post-secondary programs should visit newcommunitytech.edu or call the school at 973-824-6484.

FROM INTERNS TO LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS: TWO **FSB CLINICIANS SHARE THEIR JOURNEYS**

FROM PAGE 1

Examination. Those with an LAC must work under supervision for 4,500 hours, or approximately three years, before becoming eligible to apply for an LPC license. Arici and Lipari both worked at FSB under supervision for the required time and received their LPC licenses in August. Now they are permitted to provide services independently.

Both Arici and Lipari decided to pursue a career in counseling because they wanted to help people. Lipari always wanted to help her siblings and friends when she was young and a high school class made an impact.

"I remember I took a psychology course in high school and it was so interesting to me. I found a calling for it," she said. "So that's what I did with my bachelor's and when I graduated, there's really not much you can do with your bachelor's in psychology so I was looking for different things in the field. And being a counselor, it would help people. It felt like something I needed to do."

Arici had experience receiving services. He was in foster care and had what he describes as a good therapist when he was a teenager. But he didn't decide to pursue that line of work until he was in college working toward a different degree.

"I was going to school for computer science and then I decided about a year and a half into my program, I don't really want to pursue this any more," he said. "I was taking a psychology class at the time and I liked it. So I pursued that instead."

When the time came to think about a iob after graduation. Arici said he had the choice of social work or counseling. He chose counseling because he wanted to "help people deal with their problems and how to solve those problems."

Arici graduated from Rutgers University in New Brunswick with a major in psychology and a minor in sociology. He started interning at FSB in 2018 while pursuing his graduate degree and graduated from

Montclair State University in 2019 with a master's degree in clinical mental health counseling. That same year he became a permanent employee at the agency.

"I probably chose FSB because they're a very community-oriented clinic with a high client population and that stood out to me," he said.

Lipari attended Rowan University for her undergraduate degree and graduated with a major in psychology and a minor in Spanish. She began her internship at FSB in May of 2017 while completing the graduate program at Montclair State University. She knew others at Montclair State University had interned at the agency and reached out to see if there was an opportunity. When her internship ended and she graduated with a Master of Arts in clinical mental health counseling in May of 2018, she wanted to become an employee at FSB, but there were no open positions at the time. Luckily for her, a position became available shortly after and she became a permanent employee in July of 2018. Aside from feeling comfortable at FSB and already knowing the procedures and clientele, Lipari said the agency offered supervision, which is required with the LAC license she had at the time.

"They give us supervision, which is really important, which you need to get your LPC. A lot of jobs don't offer that. You have to pay out of pocket," she explained. "That's one of the good things about working here. They really give you the support that you need to succeed and move forward."

FSB Director Christina Ward is happy to assist clinicians during their careers.

"Alex and Kim started here as interns and it's been a rewarding experience watching them grow as clinicians," Ward said. "Getting a clinical license is a journey in and of itself requiring a lot of education and a lot of clinical work hours. I have no doubt both Alex and Kim will show continued success

in the counseling field."

New Community Chief Operating Officer Fred Hunter said he enjoys recognizing employees' accomplishments.

"It's great to acknowledge our hardworking frontline staff," he said. "I think it's exciting to celebrate their dedication to their clients, residents and coworkers, which seems to be a common theme here at New Community Corporation."

As mental health clinicians for FSB, Arici and Lipari meet with clients one-onone, provide case management, conduct outreach and work on treatment plans. They both work out of the Kearny office.

Arici's favorite part of the job is the variety it brings with each unique client.

"Everybody's different. I enjoy that part of the job. Every day feels different. Every session feels different," he said. "I'm a people person. So I really enjoy that part of the job. It's very rewarding at the end of the day."

Lipari enjoys her clients' successes.

"My favorite part is when I see people succeeding," she said. "It's nice when I'm seeing a client for a while and they're starting to hit those goals and start implementing the different strategies we talk about. It's rewarding to see that I'm having an impact on their mental health."

Family Service Bureau of Newark is a licensed outpatient mental health and substance abuse treatment center with two locations. The Newark office is located at 274 South Orange Ave., Newark, and the Kearny office is located at 379 Kearny Ave., Kearny. FSB aims to provide each consumer with the resources needed to improve their quality of life. If you are interested in services, please call the Newark office at 973-412-2056 or the Kearny office at 201-246-8077 or email fsbaccess@ newcommunity.org. More information is available online at fsbofnewark.org.



NCC FAMILIES BENEFIT FROM NCJW/ESSEX BACK 2 SCHOOL STORE







ew Community families participated in the 14th annual Back 2 School Store, sponsored by the National Council of Jewish Women Essex County (NCJW/Essex). Children throughout Essex County each received a brand-new winter coat, clothes, socks, underwear, an age-appropriate book and personal care items, along with a backpack filled with school supplies, all chosen based on their specific requests.

Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, children went in person to shop for items in a pop-up store, but since 2020, the event has been mobile, with items being delivered to families.

New Community Board Member and Outreach Coordinator Madge Wilson works closely with NCJW/Essex to ensure NCC children are included in the annual event.

"I would like to thank the entire NCJW/Essex committee and volunteers who gave so much of their time to make this event a successful one for the children," Wilson said.

Wilson also thanks others who donated backpacks and school supplies to New Community and St. Rose of Lima parish, including Kathy and Bill Hoffman, Father Owen and parishioners of St. Luke's Catholic Church of Long Valley, Katherine Grifonetti of Old Tappan, Sister Mary of Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church and Margaret Strong of Summit.

Photos courtesy of Anibal Alvelo.

CELEBRATING PATIENT SUCCESSES AT EXTENDED CARE

ew Community Extended Care Facility, 266 South Orange Ave., Newark, celebrated patients who were being discharged after receiving rehabilitation care.

From left to right: Gustavo Gonzalez, a resident of New Community Associates, admitted on July 26 and discharged on Aug. 28. Wilhemenia Turner, admitted on May 19 and discharged on Aug. 26. Clyde Coleman, admitted on May 19 and discharged on Aug. 26.







NEW COMMUNITY HELPS YOUNG WOMAN FROM HOMELESSNESS TO A MEDICAL CAREER

FROM PAGE 1

helped her earn her GED.

"At first, it was a challenge for her in terms of attendance due to the fact that she had limited support out of school. She pushed through this by staying after classes when she could to catch up on missed work. Ilene did her best and I admire her determination," Phillip said. "I am really proud of her achievements thus far."

Villanueva said Phillip, her MAC instructor and everyone else she encountered at New Community helped her.

"They actually cared and said I see what you're going through. I want to be here.

I'm open ears and open hands and open information. Everything they could think of, they would always push me to do it," Villanueva said. "They've been there for me like you couldn't imagine. At my lowest, they were there. They didn't judge me. And they helped me."

In addition to being happy about going to school and starting a career she's passionate about, Villanueva is proud to be a good role model for her four children.

"My kids have seen the steps I've been taking so they've been trying to do the same thing," she said. "So everybody's been coming home with honor roll certificates."

NCCTI is an accredited post-secondary career and technical institution that offers the following programs: Automotive Technician, Diesel Technician, Building Trades Specialist, Medical Assistant Clinical, Patient Care Technician, Community Healthcare Worker, Culinary Arts Specialist and Business & Computer Technologies. NCCTI also operates a comprehensive Financial Opportunity Center and Bridges to Career Opportunities Program sponsored by the local and national Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) offices. For more information, call 973-824-6484, log onto newcommunitytech.edu or visit 274 South Orange Ave., Newark.



FAMILY SERVICE BUREAU OF NEWARK: THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

ctober is Depression and Mental Health Awareness Month, with Oct. 10 being World Mental Health Day and Oct. 14 being National Depression Screening Day. Family Service Bureau of Newark (FSB), a mental health provider in both Essex and Hudson counties, would like to bring to the attention of the community the importance of recognizing mental health and that solutions are available.

It's important to break the stigma surrounding seeking assistance with mental health. Stigma promotes reluctance to seek help or treatment, a lack of understanding by family, friends, coworkers or others, fewer opportunities for work, school or social activities or trouble finding housing and the belief that you'll never succeed at certain challenges or that you can't improve your situation.

Help with your mental health is only a phone call away. At FSB, counseling and regular medication monitoring are available. The message we would like to send to the community is: reach out - help is out there. By calling FSB in Newark at 973-412-2056 and in Kearny at 201-246-8077, any individual can start their personal journey to stabilize a mental health condition.

Treatment can provide relief by identifying what's wrong and reducing symptoms that interfere with everyday life. Learning to recognize what is needed to treat a mental health condition will make a big difference and will improve quality of life. FSB also treats co-occurring disorders, meaning we assist with substance use issues along with mental health issues.

The professionals at FSB will understand the client and will offer solutions like inhouse treatment or a referral based on the severity of the condition. Behavioral health issues are brought on by mental, physical and psychological disease, and therapy is crucial in helping those who are afflicted.

On Oct. 14, National Depression Screening

HELP WANTED: NCC IS HIRING

here are a number of open positions available with New Community Corporation in a variety of departments. To see all job listings, along with descriptions and requirements of each position, visit newcommunity.org and click "Careers." Click "Apply" next to the position of interest to see the full description and then "Apply Now" to complete the application process.

NCC requires job seekers to fill out an online application for consideration. If you have difficulty with the online application process, you can chat with a representative for technical support or check out the Frequently Asked Questions page. For additional information, job seekers can call New Community's main phone number at 973-623-2800.

The site is continually updated, so check back often to see if there is a job of interest.

Day, call FSB and ask to be scheduled for a screening and treatment if you are experiencing symptoms of depression, such as persistent feelings of sadness and loss of interest that interfere with your daily life.

While the main priority of therapeutic intervention is to help clients overcome addiction and mental health struggles, those attending treatment will also learn the necessary tools for building a productive,

healthy and happy life.

For your convenience, our intake form can be found right on our website at newcommunity. org under the health services tab. Call today and schedule the next available appointment.

FSB is located in Newark at 274 South Orange Ave. Phone: 973-412-2056. In Kearny, it is located at 379 Kearny Ave. Phone: 201-246-8077.



New Community Adult Learning Center 563 Orange Street, Newark, New Jersey 07107

(973) 558-5536

www.newcommunity.org/services/adult-learning-center/

Available Courses

English for Speakers of Other Languages

Mondays through Thursdays: 10 AM to 12 PM or 6 PM to 8 PM

Citizenship

Saturdays: 9 AM to 12 PM

Computers – Basic & Intermediate Levels

Saturdays: 9 AM to 12 PM

ABE, Pre-HSE, & HSE (English only)

Mondays through Thursdays: 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM or 5:30 PM to 8 PM

Free Services

Health Screenings

Mammograms, Cholesterol, Blood Pressure, Nutrition, Eye Screenings, etc.

Open Community

Free workshops conducted by private institutions and/or volunteers for the general public

Other Services

- · Community organizing
- Community rooms
- · Social services referrals

Cursos Disponibles

Inglés para Hablantes de otros Idiomas

Lunes a jueves:

10 AM a 12 PM o 6 PM a 8 PM

Ciudadanía

Sábados:

9 AM a 12 PM

Computadora – Nivel Básico e Intermedio

Sábados:

9 AM a 12 PM

ABE, Pre-HSE, & HSE (Ingles solamente)

Lunes a jueves:

9:30 AM a 1:30 PM o 5:30 PM a 8 PM

Servicios Gratuitos

Exámenes Médicos Gratuitos

Mamografías, Colesterol, Presión Sanguínea, Nutrición, Examen de la Vista, etc.

Comunidad Abierta

Talleres gratuitos conducidos por instituciones privadas y/o voluntarios para el publico en general

Otros servicios

- · Organización de la comunidad
- · Sala de reuniones
- Referidos a servicios sociales

^{*}Weekdays and Saturdays courses are 9, 10, and 21 weeks long depending on the selected course.



Wellness Tip October 2022

Breast Cancer Awareness

What Are the Symptoms?

There are different symptoms of breast cancer, and some people have no symptoms at all. Symptoms can include:

- Any change in the size or the shape of the breast.
- Pain in any area of the breast.
- Nipple discharge other than breast milk (including blood).
- A new lump in the breast or underarm.

If you have any signs that worry you, see your doctor right away.

For more information about VNA Health Group's services & programs, please call 800.862.3330 or visit www.vnahg.org



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: RHONDA BORDERS

wanted to help

finds her work

as an intensive

people and



Rhonda Borders is an intensive case manager for Supportive Assistance for Individuals and Families (SAIF) at New Community.

case manager for Supportive Assistance for Individuals and Families (SAIF) rewarding.

In her role, Borders helps individuals and families who are receiving public assistance to improve their situations. She helps associates find and keep employment, assists with housing and education and serves as a support system.

"I utilize the services that are in the neighborhood to cut down the barriers that would prevent a person from trying to better their lives," she said.

Helping the associates succeed is Borders' ultimate goal.

"I love my job," she said. "I'm not able to save the world, but if I'm able to take one person from poverty, that's a blessing for me."

SAIF Program Director Dr. Jackie Andrews said Borders has had a positive effect on many individuals.

"Rhonda has proven to be an asset to the SAIF department. She came with a driven passion for helping the associates combat barriers like the lack of housing and employment that prevents the associate from moving forward in life," Andrews said. "She has impacted the associates by providing services and helping associates achieve their goals."

Borders can relate to those she serves. Her mother died when she was young and she had to work hard to complete her education and create a better life for herself and her children.

"I just try to give people what I wanted when my mom passed away," she said. "You want support. You want empathy. You want sympathy. You want all of that." Borders has spent her career serving others. She worked for the Newark Board of Education, starting out as an aide and then being put in charge of discipline, which included home visits to see why children weren't in school or were having other issues. She has also worked at Unified Vailsburg Services Organization and Bethany Christian Academy, serving as a family worker in both places. She first worked at New Community in the early 2000s as a retention specialist and returned two years ago to her current position.

Her favorite part of her job is hearing about associates' successes.

"I like hearing, 'I got it," she said, explaining that could be an apartment, a job or another goal reached. "That's the best part of my day."

Borders still lives in Newark. She has a daughter, two sons and two grandchildren. In her free time, she enjoys church and spending time with her family.

She hopes her work makes an impact on families and the next generation.

"My goal right now in this role that I'm in is to help the parents which will hopefully reflect onto the children," she said. "That's my overall passion, the kids. If our kids are not successful, we will not have a future."

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: AMANDA ERVIN-WILLIAMS

manda Ervin-Williams is a relative newcomer to Commons Senior, having moved to the building in April of this year, but as a lifelong Newark resident, she was familiar with New Community and the area prior to the move.

She decided she needed to leave the house she was living in because of the stairs. She has difficulty walking and climbing up and down the home's 14 stairs was becoming too difficult for her. Now that she's in a handicapped-accessible apartment, she feels relieved.

"My apartment is beautiful. I can get around and do everything in my apartment with my wheelchair. Because I always was independent. And this makes me feel so much better to be around people that are in wheelchairs, in the same situations I am and just to talk," she said. "I thank God that I was able to get into this building. And I love it."

Moving to Commons Senior has let Ervin-Williams gain back independence since she doesn't need assistance navigating her home. She likes the fact that laundry can be done on-site, the building has 24-hour security, a podiatrist visits the building's residents and shopping options are very close by. She also enjoys the activities offered in the building.

"I'm going to be coming to the bingo and I like the crafting they have. When they have cookouts, I participate," she said. "I love the atmosphere."

Meeting Commons Senior Resident Services Coordinator Jill DeRios made Ervin-Williams confident in her decision to move.

"When I came to the building and when I met Ms. Jill, I honestly can say she brightened up my day. She really made me feel good about coming into this place," Ervin-Williams said. "She was so sweet and nice. And that made me feel extra good."

In addition to being welcoming, Ervin-Williams said DeRios has helped her get acclimated to her new home and provides any assistance that's needed. She said DeRios helped her apply for and receive NJ Transit Access Link, which is a transportation service for people with disabilities who are unable to use the regular bus routes.

Ervin-Williams worked in the housekeeping department for Atlantic Health System at Overlook Medical Center in Summit for 31.5 years before leaving disabled in



Amanda Ervin-Williams moved to Commons Senior, 140 South Orange Ave., Newark, in April.

2014. She has two adult sons who were born at the hospital where she worked and one of them is now a food service manager there. She also has an 8-year-old granddaughter.

Ervin-Williams enjoys listening to all types of music and playing cards and games on her phone. She also loves to cook and attend church.

SOCIAL SECURITY NEWS: SERVICES FOR THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY

BY AMMY PLUMMER, SOCIAL SECURITY DISTRICT MANAGER, SPRINGFIELD AVENUE, NEWARK, NJ

Social Security strives to deliver great customer Service and helpful information to everyone, including people who are more comfortable reading and speaking Spanish.

Our Spanish-language website, www. segurosocial.gov, provides information about our programs and services. You can learn how to get a Social Security card, plan for retirement, apply for and manage benefits and much more.

You can also learn more about why Social Security is important to the Hispanic community at www.ssa.gov/espanol/personas/hispanos.

And, you can follow us on our Spanish-language Facebook and Twitter at www.facebook.com/ segurosocial and twitter.com/segurosocial.

We also provide many publications in Spanish at www.ssa.gov/espanol/publicaciones on popular topics such as:

- Retirement, Disability and Survivors benefits.
- Medicare.
- Supplemental Security Income.

Spanish-speaking customers who need to speak with a representative can call us at 1-800-772-1213 and press 7. Please share these resources with friends and family who may need them.



ADULT LEARNING CENTER STUDENT IS PURSUING HER DREAM

laudelle Colin is a doctor and hopes to practice medicine in the United States. She moved to New Jersey from Haiti in April because of political instability in that country and is studying English at the New Community Adult Learning Center.

Colin has always been ambitious. After graduating from high school, she decided

LESLEY LESLIE: ARE YOU GIFTED?



ave you ever heard the saying, 'everyone has a gift"? Did you know that there was a difference between a "gift" and a "talent"? A gift is

believed to be something that you are born with, it may come very naturally to you and you don't necessarily choose it. It's something that may never be taken away from you. Whereas talent is something that you may acquire through hard work, practice and perseverance. It's something that you may earn.

An example of someone that many will agree was gifted would be the singer Whitney Houston. She had a voice that transcended various musical genres and the one thing that music lovers all over the world agree upon was that her voice and singing ability was something that was beyond talent.

While we don't all have the gift of song the way that Whitney Houston did, we do have gifts inside of us that are just as special and monumental. Some of those gifts are things that we are aware of and may be operating or functioning in. While others may be lying dormant within us waiting to be discovered, enhanced or shared with others. So how does one discover and act upon those God-given gifts? Begin by taking a good look at yourself and asking yourself if you believe you are walking in your purpose. Is your life purpose-driven? Are you doing something that you believe is pleasing to God? Are you doing something that is helpful to others?

Seek honest answers from individuals that you trust about what gifts they believe you possess within yourself, particularly your family members who spend the most time around you. Oftentimes, you don't see yourself the way others do. Finally, pray and ask God to help you develop the gifts that you have been blessed with. You may find that the thing you are drawn to do and would even do for free, is the gift that has been buried inside of you all along.

Wishing you the best in your search for that purpose-driven life. Are you inspired to walk in and embrace your gifts? There is no time like the present! to study medicine in Cuba, which she did for seven years and became a doctor. She returned to Haiti and worked with sick people for nine years.

She has a passion for medicine and caring for the sick. Although it was difficult to leave her family, she ultimately decided to pursue medical education in Cuba.

"I decided to fulfill my dream because it was my biggest goal," she said.

This year, she moved from her family again to improve her situation.

"I learned in life you have to have patience and not be afraid to start over," she said.

Colin decided that she needed to learn English so that she can communicate effectively with others.

"English helps me to listen more easily when people are talking with me and around me," she said.

Learning English is Colin's first step toward practicing medicine again.

"My plan for the future is to take the U.S. Medical Licensing Examination and work here as a doctor," she said.

Family is very important to Colin. Most of her relatives live in Haiti, including her parents and one of her sisters. Another sister lives in Chicago. Although there is physical distance between them, they are still close and supportive.



Claudelle Colin moved to New Jersey from Haiti to escape political instability. She enrolled at the New Community Adult Learning Center to study English. Photo courtesy of Cladelle Colin.

"The most important people in my life are my family," Colin said. "My family supports me in all things in life."

The New Community Adult Learning Center serves students who are 16 years old and older and out of the school system. It provides a comprehensive array of day, evening and Saturday educational programs to prepare students for a vocational or college education. Courses include English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Citizenship, Computers, Adult Basic Education (ABE), Pre-High School Equivalency (HSE) and HSE. The Adult Learning Center is located at 563 Orange St., Newark. Office hours are Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Please call 973-558-5536 for additional information.

EVENT HELPS HARMONY HOUSE KIDS RETURN TO CLASS IN STYLE

Jolunteer Sally Milad once again organized a back-to-school event at Harmony House, New Community's transitional housing facility for homeless families. She first started the event in 2017, which brings school supplies, backpacks, hair stylists and pizza to the facility for children to enjoy. The event, which was held this year on Aug. 29, is meant to help the children look and feel their best for the start of a new school year. Photos courtesy of Sally Milad and Yonette Fredericks.









NCC FAMILIES RECEIVE ITEMS





The Resident Services Department of New Community receives donations of clothes, toys and books to distribute to NCC families. Families were able to pick out items on Aug. 31 and Sept. 1. Photos courtesy of Anibal Alvelo.

GETTING FRESH PRODUCE



Residents of Manor Senior, 545 Orange St., Newark, had the chance to get fresh produce during a farmers market right outside the building on Sept. 12. Photo courtesy of Guadalupe Cepeda.

The New Community Clarion 233 West Market Street Newark, NJ 07103 www.newcommunity.org

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FAMILY FUN AT NEW COMMUNITY'S BACK TO SCHOOL JAM

hildren and families enjoyed a day of fun at New Community's Back to School Jam on Sept. 24. The Youth Services Department hosted the event, which included a rock climbing wall, video game truck, bounce houses, inflatables and arts and crafts. Thanks to everyone who came out for the event! Photos courtesy of Youth Services.













