

NEW COMMUNITY



CLARION



SIMONE GAGNERON SELECTED AS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF NEW COMMUNITY CORPORATION



Simone Gagneron was appointed as Chief Executive Officer of New Community, effective Dec. 1. Photo by Ron Wyatt.

New Community Corporation, one of the nation's largest community development organizations, has appointed Simone Gagneron as its Chief Executive Officer, effective Dec. 1, 2022. She succeeds Richard Rohrman who retired in 2021.

Gagneron most recently served as Chief Operating Officer at [United Way of Northern New Jersey](#) where she led financial planning and managed human resources and diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. Prior to that, she spent

nearly a decade at the [YMCA of Newark and Vicinity](#) serving as Vice President of Finance and Chief Financial Officer where she oversaw financial operations and IT functions and managed risks and compliance.

She began her career in finance, serving as a senior auditor. She then took on the role of a senior lead at the real estate management firm Pinnacle Group. From there, she served as Interim CFO/Assistant Vice President of Finance at Palladia Inc.,

a social services agency in New York City with a \$50 million operating budget.

Gagneron earned an MBA in technology from New Jersey Institute of Technology and a bachelor's degree in accounting from Binghamton University. She serves on the board of the Baltimore start-up nonprofit organization Transforming Youth Into Adults (TYIA).

New Community Board of Directors Chairman Dr. A. Zachary Yamba expressed the Board's confidence in the selection of Gagneron because of her background, experience and demonstrated commitment to the urban environment.

"The Board is confident that Simone will continue New Community's legacy of service and empowerment," Yamba said.

Another Board Member, Edgar Nemorin, who chaired the CEO Search Committee for the selection of Gagneron, noted her proven leadership with strong financial and business acumen, as well as her wealth of experience in finance, housing and project management.

"She has the skills, knowledge and experience from her work at the YMCA and United Way that will lead New Community Corporation to achieve its goals," Nemorin said.

In accepting the position, Gagneron has committed to New Community's mission and looks forward to leading the nonprofit to continued success.

"I am excited to join an organization that continues to be influential in its commitment to changing the life trajectory for inner city families," Gagneron said. "It is essential that nonprofits and businesses work together to make sure that the next generation has the opportunities and resources they need to thrive."

NCCTI PROGRAM HELPS STUDENT PREPARE FOR MEDICAL CAREER

Christopher Clement has always had an interest in science and decided while in high school that he wanted to pursue a career in the medical field. He is currently enrolled in the Medical Assistant Clinical (MAC) program at [New Community Career & Technical Institute \(NCCTI\)](#) to kickstart his career.

Clement considered joining the U.S. Air Force to become a medical professional but decided to attend NCCTI instead. His older brother previously completed the MAC program at NCCTI and is currently employed at University Hospital in Newark. He urged Clement to enroll at NCCTI because of his positive experience.

Clement, who is 22 years old, is happy with his decision.

"Everyone is here to help you," he said of the NCCTI staff. "They give you every chance and opportunity to succeed. They help you find the path you're looking for and help you start your career."

He described the atmosphere as being like a family, with staff members offering support with students' courses of study as well as help outside of the classroom when needed.

Academically, Clement feels well prepared by his instructor, Dr. Mamdouh Sorial, who he said breaks down all topics to ensure his



Christopher Clement is enrolled in the Medical Assistant Clinical (MAC) program at New Community Career & Technical Institute (NCCTI).

students understand the material and how to perform procedures in the real world.

AROUND THE NETWORK

LEARNING ABOUT DIABETES



Representatives from [Horizon NJ Health](#) visited Associates, 180 South Orange Ave., Newark, on Nov. 9 to speak with residents about diabetes and how to best manage the condition. *Photo courtesy of Anne Moran.*

LEARNING TO EAT RIGHT TO PREVENT CANCER

Residents of Gardens Senior, 265 Morris Ave., Newark, learned how to make healthy food choices from Cecilia Gomez, Community Cancer Control Specialist at the [Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey](#). She gave a presentation on Nov. 22 titled Eating for Cancer Prevention where she explained what types of food people should eat to keep them healthy. She also explained how to read nutrition facts labels to help make the best choices.



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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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.

NCC RESIDENTS ENJOY APPRECIATION LUNCHEON

Commons Senior, 140 South Orange Ave., Newark, held a Resident Appreciation Luncheon on Oct. 28 in the building's Community Room. Residents enjoyed a warm meal, drinks, cake and the company of their neighbors.



NCC RESIDENTS COME ON DOWN FOR PRICE IS RIGHT GAME

Residents of Manor Senior, 545 Orange St., Newark, enjoyed a game of The Price Is Right in the building Community Room on Nov. 2 thanks to [Amerigroup](#). Residents were assigned numbers and when they were called in groups of four, they had the opportunity to guess the price of items. The person closest to the correct price won the item.



THANK YOU, GOYA

Residents of Hudson Senior, 21-27 Orchard St., Jersey City, enjoyed a variety of food items thanks to a donation from food company [Goya](#) in November. *Photos courtesy of Vivian Le.*



NEW COMMUNITY HOSTS CONGRESSMAN PAYNE AND COUNCILMAN KELLY FOR NATIONAL DIABETES MONTH ROUNDTABLE

The [New Community Adult Learning Center](#), 563 Orange St., Newark, served as the host site for the National Diabetes Month Roundtable presented by [Congressman Donald M. Payne Jr.](#) and [Newark West Ward Councilman Dupré Kelly](#) on Nov. 22. The discussion focused on diabetes care and how the Inflation Reduction Act helps reduce costs for seniors with diabetes.

Congressman Payne shared his experiences and challenges living with diabetes and encouraged everyone to take the advice of their medical professionals to manage the condition. He also talked about the high cost of insulin, particularly for those without insurance, sharing a story about how he accidentally left his insulin behind one time when he traveled to Washington, D.C. and was shocked at the high cost to pay out of pocket for a small vile.

Residents of New Community Manor Senior attended the roundtable, including Sherman Gibbs who spoke during the event about his experiences as a diabetes patient.

The roundtable was conducted virtually via Zoom for a wider audience and included Dr. Johnnie A. Lee, internal medicine, and Dr. Katherine York, [AARP New Jersey](#), as virtual speakers.



Congressman Donald M. Payne Jr., left, and Newark West Ward Councilman Dupré Kelly speak during the National Diabetes Month Roundtable on Nov. 22.



Congressman Donald M. Payne Jr., right, and Newark West Ward Councilman Dupré Kelly, center in blue, stand with New Community Manor Senior residents, including panelist Sherman Gibbs, center in green. NCC Director of Community Engagement Richard Cammarieri stands to the left of Councilman Kelly.



Congressman Donald M. Payne Jr. shares his experiences with diabetes during the National Diabetes Month Roundtable.



Newark West Ward Councilman Dupré Kelly talks about the importance of taking diabetes seriously during the roundtable discussion.

INDEPENDENCE360 DONATES THANKSGIVING BASKETS TO HARMONY HOUSE FAMILIES

The residents of [Harmony House](#), New Community's transitional housing facility for homeless families, received baskets of Thanksgiving supplies from [Independence360 \(I360\)](#) for the 10th year in a row. I360, also known as Spectrum360 adult services, helps enrich the lives of adults with autism and related disabilities.

The participants of I360 donated turkey baskets as well as additional food items to

the residents of Harmony House on Nov. 21.

Harmony House families would like to sincerely thank the participants of I360, the Spectrum360 team and all others that contributed to the 10th Annual Thanksgiving Food Drive. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

Photo courtesy of Yonette Fredericks.



NCCTI PROGRAM HELPS STUDENT PREPARE FOR MEDICAL CAREER

FROM PAGE 1

"He is by far one of the best teachers I ever had," Clement said. "He puts students first."

Sorial described Clement as a good student who is always on time, is engaged and completes his work. He said Clement also has a good relationship with everyone and will represent NCCTI well in the workforce.

"I believe he will be a great medical assistant," Sorial said.

Student Success Coach Odette Phillip described Clement as a polite, respectful and cooperative student.

"He has demonstrated that he is focused on completing the MAC program," she said. "Christopher's attendance is consistent and he manages his course work remarkably."

NCCTI Director Dr. Sylvia McCray said students like Clement inspire the school's staff members.

"Christopher is the example of why NCCTI, its staff, instructors and administrator does what we do," she said. "From the start of his program, Chris has stayed steady and focused on his goal. I am very proud of the work we are doing at NCCTI and of the work the team is doing to improve the student experience."

Upon graduation, Clement hopes to find employment at a local medical facility. He also plans to continue his education. While he hasn't decided on an exact degree, he knows he wants it to be within the medical field.

Currently, he enjoys performing EKGs the most because of the wealth of information that can be obtained. He said the chart of the cardiac activity not only shows the patient's heartbeat. A trained technician can also determine if the patient has eaten, is thirsty or has been smoking, as well as other

factors that could be affecting the heart.

Clement, who lives in East Orange, is on his way to achieving his goal of working in medicine. He is slated to complete the MAC program by the end of January.

NCCTI is an accredited post-secondary career and technical institution that is currently enrolling for the following programs: *Automotive Technician, Building Trades Specialist, Medical Assistant Clinical, Patient Care Technician and Culinary Arts Specialist.* 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.

DONORS' GENEROSITY ENSURES HAPPY THANKSGIVING FOR NEW COMMUNITY FAMILIES

Over the years, individuals, churches and organizations have contributed food for Thanksgiving meals that benefit residents of New Community. New Community Board Member and Outreach Coordinator Madge Wilson organizes the contributions to ensure the food gets to those who need it most.

One of the sponsors is [St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church in Short Hills](#), which partners with its sister church, St. Rose of Lima in Newark. St. Rose of Lima parishioners in Short Hills sponsored a turkey drive this year to benefit residents of Newark. Mike Roberts, a member of the church, coordinated the turkey distribution, along with other volunteers. A local Girl Scout troop also helped with the project.

"The families were so very appreciative for the turkeys," Wilson said.



Members of St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church in Short Hills and a local Girl Scout troop collected turkeys and other Thanksgiving treats to share with New Community families. *Photo courtesy of Madge Wilson.*

Another supporter for the Thanksgiving holiday was Kathryn Grifonetti of Old Tappan. She donated turkeys and other Thanksgiving food for New Community residents.

"This lady is one of the kindest, most



Volunteers from St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church in Short Hills were instrumental in ensuring New Community families had a Thanksgiving meal this year. *Photo courtesy of Madge Wilson.*

thoughtful and generous people that I have ever met," Wilson said, explaining that Grifonetti donates throughout the year.

New Community is grateful for all of its donors and supporters.

NCCTI CELEBRATES THANKSGIVING WITH DESSERT SWAP

Students and staff members at [New Community Career & Technical Institute \(NCCTI\)](#) brought in a variety of desserts to share during the Thankful Tuesday event on Nov. 15, ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday. In addition to the sweet treats, staff members raffled off six prizes, including baskets and gift cards, to lucky students.



NEW COMMUNITY RESIDENTS ENJOY THANKSGIVING MEALS



Residents of Commons Senior enjoyed a Thanksgiving luncheon on Nov. 23, organized by [Millennial Social Club](#).



Residents of Manor Senior received Thanksgiving meals on Nov. 23 from Newark West Ward Councilman Dupré Kelly. *Photo courtesy of Guadalupe Cepeda.*



[New Community Extended Care Administrator Veronica Onwunaka](#), right, organized a Thanksgiving luncheon for residents on Nov. 24. *Photo courtesy of Julienne Van-Nooten.*



Residents of Manor Senior enjoyed desserts in the Community Room on Nov. 23. *Photo courtesy of Guadalupe Cepeda.*



Residents of Associates enjoyed a Thanksgiving dinner on Nov. 20 sponsored by Bishop Andre Speight, Assemblywoman Shanique Speight and Sunlight Missionary Baptist Church. *Photo courtesy of Bishop Speight.*



Roseville Senior resident Linda Pearson prepares food for the building's Thanksgiving luncheon on Nov. 22. *Photo courtesy of Gladys Artis.*



Members of [Millennial Social Club](#) hosted a Thanksgiving luncheon for Commons Senior residents on Nov. 23.

FAMILY SERVICE BUREAU OF NEWARK: REMEMBER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON

During this holiday season, [Family Service Bureau of Newark \(FSB\)](#) would like to continue to remind the community that FSB is open and provides both mental health and addiction services. We offer services via telehealth and in person. Please call our front desk in Newark at 973-412-2056 or Kearny at 201-246-8077 if you have any questions or concerns.

How do I contact FSB and what should I do if I want to refer a person for a substance abuse or mental health assessment?

Please contact FSB Director Christina Ward, LCSW, LCADC, at 973-286-2837 or by email at cward@newcommunity.org for any assistance.

Our Newark office is located at 274 South Orange Ave. and our Kearny office is located

at 379 Kearny Ave.

We would like to remind the community that during the holiday season, alcohol consumption does increase and that can be problematic. Over the holidays, it can be a challenge to manage our emotions due to unpleasant memories and other uncomfortable thoughts that a typically happy time of year can bring up. Please keep in mind that a substance abuse issue is a mental health issue and you are not alone. If you're feeling upset, overwhelmed and just generally unhappy, FSB is here for you this holiday season. We will assess you, speak with you and help provide you with coping skills and any other assistance you need from us, including referrals to other resources.

Check us out on the New Community



Family Service Bureau of Newark (FSB) staff members celebrated Thanksgiving on Nov. 23.

Corporation Instagram, [@newcommunitycorp](#), under #FSB for helpful videos, information and useful mental health and substance abuse tips.

NCCTI HOSTS INFORMATION SESSION FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANT CLINICAL PROGRAM

Individuals who were interested in enrolling in the Medical Assistant Clinical (MAC) program at [New Community Career & Technical Institute \(NCCTI\)](#) had the opportunity to visit the Main Campus on Nov. 16 for an information session. During the session, they learned about the enrollment process, financial aid and how the school operates. They also got to meet the instructor, Dr. Mamdouh Sorial, and ask any questions they had.

Those who weren't able to attend but are interested in the MAC program or any of NCCTI's accredited post-secondary programs should call the school at 973-824-6484, visit the Main Campus at 274 South Orange Ave., Newark, or visit newcommunitytech.edu and click Request Information to start the process to enroll.

NCCTI is currently enrolling for the following programs: Automotive Technician, Building Trades Specialist, Medical Assistant Clinical, Patient Care Technician and Culinary Arts Specialist.



NCCTI Admissions Representative Aziza Johnson speaks with prospective students at the information session.



Medical Assistant Clinical instructor Dr. Mamdouh Sorial addresses prospective students.

PLAQUE PRESENTED TO NEW COMMUNITY GOSPEL CHOIR



During the final performance of the New Community Gospel Choir on Nov. 12, members of the NCC Board of Directors presented the choir with a plaque of appreciation, commemorating their 25 years of service.

HELP WANTED: NCC IS HIRING

There 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.



Wellness Tip
December 2022

Wash Your Hands!

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others.

Removing germs through proper hand washing helps prevent gastrointestinal and respiratory infections and may even help prevent skin and eye infections.

The CDC recommends following these five steps every time you wash your hands -

1. **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
4. **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
5. **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

** Hand Sanitizer Gel can be used when soap and water are not available. Be sure to rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry.

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

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: CHANDA WEBB



Chanda Webb joined New Community Career & Technical Institute (NCCTI) as its Career Services Coordinator in October.

One of the main goals of [New Community Career & Technical Institute \(NCCTI\)](#) is to help students find work upon graduation. Chanda Webb is the school's Career Services Coordinator. She helps students prepare for work and makes connections with potential employers so that she can provide candidates when they are looking to hire.

Since starting the role in October, Webb has gotten to know all of NCCTI's current students as well as recent graduates. She reaches out to those who have completed their programs to find out if they are employed and if they need assistance finding a job. If graduates are

unemployed or still looking for work in their field of study, Webb requests their current resume and works with them to improve it. She also reaches out to her employer contacts to see if they are hiring.

She recently helped an Automotive Technician graduate who was working at Home Depot while still looking for a job in his field of study. Webb connected him to Elite Auto in West Orange where he interviewed and was hired.

Webb hopes to create a network of employers that she can contact, but that also reach out to her when they are in need of employees.

"I want to connect with businesses and make sure we're the go-to place," she said.

Webb enjoys the camaraderie at NCCTI among her colleagues and their dedication to the mission. She said no one is doing the job simply for the paycheck.

"There's a desire to really help students get to the next level. And to really make the program work," she said.

Webb has a wealth of experience in the area of education and employment. She worked at Essex County College (ECC) for five years as a transfer advisor, helping students transition from ECC to four-year colleges. She also served as a workforce development coach there. She worked at The Arc of New Jersey as a job coach, job developer and manager for many years. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, she left ECC and

focused on real estate. She is still a real estate agent, helping clients when she's not at NCCTI.

She decided to apply for the job at NCCTI to get back to impacting students.

"I just felt like I wanted to do this again, connect people to people, businesses to our students," Webb said. "And I knew I could make a difference in that, especially in Newark."

NCCTI Director Dr. Sylvia McCray is glad that Webb has joined the school.

"She brings a lot of knowledge in career readiness skills, workforce and job development," McCray said. "The addition of Chanda to the Financial Opportunity Center rounds out the team, allowing them to be fully functional and immersed in planning and implementing their strategic goals for students (current and alums). I look forward to seeing what they will accomplish in the upcoming year."

As she grows in her current role, Webb hopes to set up internship and externship programs, hold value assessment workshops and host fun events where area business owners can come and share their experiences to offer encouragement and be an inspiration to students.

Webb has been a resident of Bloomfield for 25 years. Her daughter and son-in-law live in the same building. In her free time, she enjoys walking as well as going to museums and sightseeing with her daughter and son-in-law.

SENIOR SPOTLIGHT: MYRTLE KEARNEY

If you go to the Community Room at Associates, you are likely to see Myrtle Kearney. The longtime resident enjoys spending time with her neighbors and friends playing bingo, watching television and participating in building activities.

"I like to come downstairs and mingle with the people, play bingo and, of course, I like football. My favorite team is the Dallas Cowboys," she said.

She typically watches football games in the Community Room to enjoy the company.

Kearney, who is 84, has been living at Associates the longest of all residents, since February of 1991. In her more than three decades in the building, she has made friends with neighbors and staff members.

"I get along with everyone," she said.

Kearney also assists in the building.

"Ms. Kearney is the floor captain for the second

floor and she makes sure all the residents on her floor are good," said Associates Resident Services Coordinator Anne Moran.

Kearney grew up in North Carolina and moved to Newark in 1978 after graduating from high school. It was difficult to find a job in North Carolina, which prompted her to move. She found work in New Jersey and never left. At first, she worked with a doctor for a few years and then found a role as a supervisor for a company where she worked for 40 years. When she retired from that job, she continued working part-time for a lawyer in South Orange before completely retiring.

In her free time, Kearney enjoys cooking, sewing, playing bingo and singing. She makes all types of food, including items for her friends in the building and also does catering, making cakes and pies for those who request them. She does hand sewing since she doesn't have room for a sewing machine, including hemming. She attends church every Sunday and sings in the



Myrtle Kearney has been living at Associates for more than 31 years.

choir.

Kearney also participates in building activities, including educational presentations and meal gatherings.

"They have a lot of activities," she said.

SOCIAL SECURITY NEWS: UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

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

We are here for surviving family members when a worker dies. In the event of your death, certain members of your family may be eligible for survivors benefits. This includes surviving spouses, surviving divorced spouses, children and dependent parents.

The amount of benefits your survivors receive depends on your lifetime earnings. The higher your earnings, the higher their benefits. That's

why it's important to make sure your earnings history is correct in our records. You can do this by creating a personal *my Social Security* account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount. A personal *my Social Security* account is secure and gives you immediate access to your earnings records, benefit estimates and Social Security Statement.

You may also want to visit our Survivors Benefits page at www.ssa.gov/benefits/

[survivors](#). This page can help you understand your and your family's Social Security protections as you plan your financial future.

Please visit www.ssa.gov or read our publication, *Survivors Benefits*, at www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10084.pdf for more information. You can also help us spread the word by sharing this information with your family and friends.

EXTENDED CARE THANKS RESIDENTS FOR THEIR SERVICE

New Community Extended Care Facility, 266 South Orange Ave., Newark, recognized two of its residents on Veterans Day, Nov. 11. Leroy Johnson and Rice Robinson II both served in the military. Fellow residents and staff members gathered to thank them for their service and sacrifice. All in attendance also held a moment of silence to remember those who lost their lives.



NCC RESIDENTS LEARN ABOUT THE DANGERS OF FENTANYL

Representatives from the Newark Police Department and Elev8 Centers, which provides addiction recovery and wellness services, visited Gardens Senior, 165 Morris Ave., Newark, on Nov. 14 to talk about the dangers of fentanyl with residents.

According to the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is 50 to 100 times stronger than morphine. Pharmaceutical fentanyl was developed for pain management treatment of cancer patients, but it is also used illegally. Fentanyl is added to heroin to increase its potency, or is disguised as highly potent heroin. Many users believe that they are purchasing heroin and actually don't know that they are purchasing fentanyl, which often results in overdose deaths.

Photos courtesy of Desiree Crespo.



GIVING TO THOSE IN NEED



The New Community Resident Services Department recently facilitated donations of food and clothing to help those affected by Hurricane Fiona in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. Photos courtesy of Anibal Alvelo.



LESLEY LESLIE: SO LONG FOR NOW



I can hardly believe that this day has arrived. I have been writing this column for the past 25 years. What started out as a column in the Clarion newspaper for new mothers (I had just given

birth to my first child) turned into something that everyone could hopefully relate to.

The column was originally called "Just Between Us" and I agreed to begin submitting the monthly articles at the request of Monsignor William J. Linder. He thought I could offer a unique perspective to the Clarion's young women readers. At the time, I worked for New Community Corporation as their Assistant Director of Marketing, and I was already required to submit monthly articles that promoted the various programs within the overall organization. (Thank you Rona Parker and Laura Comppen.)

When it came to the articles in the column, I was never told what I could or could not write about. However, Monsignor Linder knew that I was a community-minded

woman of faith. So, I guess he trusted that the articles would be inspirational or motivational in nature. He also knew that I loved working with families and children and that I had operated in many positions within the organization. Those positions allowed me to interface with many different people from many different backgrounds. Those positions included the role of Assistant Director of the Babyland Summer Enrichment Program, a recurring summer job that helped me work my way through college. (Thank you Gayle Chaneyfield-Jenkins and Martha Palmer Chaneyfield.)

For a short time, I served as the dispatcher for the Transportation Service at the Pathmark Supermarket that NCC managed. (Thank you Joe Chaneyfield.) I later worked as the Assistant Director of Marketing and Public Relations with Babyland Family Services, Inc. (Thank you Mary Smith, Martha Carroll, Gloria Freeman and Jackie Crawford.)

Then there were the jobs at St. Joe's Plaza: as a waitress at the Priory Restaurant and Sandwich Shop where my tips helped me pay for graduate school. (Thank you Madge Wilson.) I managed the Friday Night Jazz, Sunday Brunch and Gourmet Gospel Series (Thank you Kathy Spivey, Chase Jackson and Denise McCoy.)

Shortly after leaving both organizations to pursue a career in higher education, I had the good fortune to return as a consultant for Babyland's After-School Program. (Thank you Cassandra Scott-Love.)

Throughout this journey, good days and bad, I continued to submit the articles to the Clarion, having worked with several editors of the newspaper. Each of them worked with me and the submission deadlines were often a challenge for me to meet. (Thank you Bob Guskin, Angela Stewart, Eunice Lee and Michelle Lang.)

I have enjoyed this writing journey and the various topics that helped me deal with life's situations as they occurred to me before I shared them with you, the reader.

God has been good and I am so very grateful for the opportunity.

May God bless and keep you

May the Lord make his face to shine upon you,

And be gracious to you.

May the Lord lift his countenance upon you,

And give you peace. Numbers 6:24-26

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

NEW COMMUNITY



December 2022 | Volume 39 - Issue 11

WITHUM PREPARES THANKSGIVING DINNER FOR HARMONY HOUSE FAMILIES

Volunteers from accounting firm [Withum](#) prepared and served a traditional Thanksgiving dinner to families of [Harmony House](#), New Community's transitional housing facility for homeless families, at Monsignor William J. Linder Plaza on Nov. 21. In addition to the meal, Withum also provided Walmart gift cards, which were raffled off to families. This was the first time since 2019 that the annual event has been held for families in person because of the COVID-19 pandemic. New Community thanks Withum for its generosity. Visit [newcommunity.org](#) for more photos.

