



L UW in Bloom

Spring is here! This is an exciting time of year at LUW. Community programs are in full swing, our team remains committed to supporting clients as they build toward a more secure future, and our supporters will be coming together soon to celebrate at this year's gala **"The Next Generation Lifts!"**

This April, in honor of **Volunteer Appreciation Month**, we recognized our dedicated volunteers for their commitment to supporting our neighbors in crisis. Because of our volunteers and entire LUW community, the people we serve have an opportunity to experience new beginnings this spring.

We truly appreciate your ongoing support of Lifting Up Westchester. **When we uplift the most vulnerable in our community, we all rise.**

Anahaita Kotval
Chief Executive Officer

Celebrating Volunteers

Our volunteers embody the spirit of compassion and service in all they do. **Last year, over 2,000 individuals volunteered their time to support our neighbors in need.** Whether it's serving meals in our Community Kitchen, beautifying our facilities, sorting clothes for giveaways, or offering a helping hand wherever needed, their commitment and positivity shines through.

Thinking about volunteering? Consider the words of Shane: *"I always wanted to volunteer, but I was so busy at work that I never ended up doing it. Eventually, I realized that I would never have the time unless I made the time, and now I have been helping at the Community Kitchen once a week for the last few years. Nothing else during my week gives me this feeling, you truly get more than you give."*

As we continue to reflect on the spirit of volunteerism, we extend our deepest gratitude to each and every one of our volunteers.

Your unwavering dedication inspires us all. Together, we embody the strength of community, lifting each other up and making a difference in the lives of those we serve.

From all of us at Lifting Up Westchester — thank you!

If you are interested in volunteering with us, please reach out to our Community Engagement Manager, Nancy Inzinna, at ninzinna@liftingupwestchester.org or 914-949-3098 ext. 9735.



7th Annual Essay Contest: “Walking in Someone Else’s Shoes”

This contest has been established in the loving memory of Beth Massey Rubens, a lifelong teacher, tutor, and mentor with a particular love for language arts.

This year’s Essay Contest was one of the most competitive ever! Open to all 7th through 12th grade students attending school in Westchester County, students were invited to learn about LUW’s programs and write a fictional story about an individual or family who benefitted from one of those programs. Called “Walking in Someone Else’s Shoes,” this year’s prompt looked to dispel some of the myths and stereotypes associated with the men, women, and children LUW serves.



A panel of 45 judges reviewed the essays to select the winners. First, second, and third place prizes were awarded in each of the three grade groups: 7th and 8th grades, 9th and 10th grades, and 11th and 12th grades. Winners were honored at an Awards Luncheon on April 14th at Buon Amici Italian restaurant in White Plains, NY. The Awards Luncheon was generously underwritten by Salvatore & Ritchie D’Errico, owners of the D’Errico Jewelry stores in Scarsdale and Mt. Kisco and loyal supporters of LUW’s youth programs.

7th & 8th Grade

1st Place: Stephanie Collins
Eastchester Middle School

2nd Place – Stephanie Stibler
Saint Augustine School

3rd Place – Jui Karande
Briarcliff Middle School

9th & 10th Grade

1st Place: Sonali Browning
Rye Neck High School

2nd Place – Isaac Carrillo
Horace Greeley High School

3rd Place – Sophie Xie
Edgemont Junior-Senior High School

11th & 12th Grade

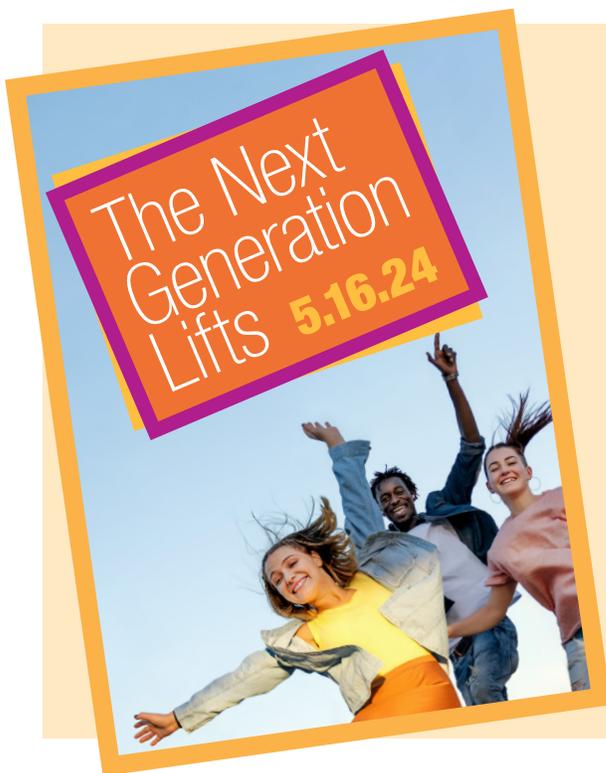
1st Place: Ella Grann
Rye Neck High School

2nd Place – Isabella Vembenil
The Ursuline School

3rd Place – Sara Hanna
Harrison High School

We are so proud of the students who took time to learn about our programs and write a narrative about someone who benefited from them. Special thanks to all who participated, especially our volunteer judges and our Contest Directors, Ellen LaNicca Albanese and Hannah Nelson. **Congratulations to our winners!**

To read more excerpts from our Essay Contest, please visit liftingupwestchester.org/essay-contest.



We Hope to See You at Our Gala!

Thursday, May 16, 2024 | Glen Island Harbour Club

Please join us in celebrating the determined youth in our community and our incredible honorees. The celebration will include fabulous food and drinks, a sunset water view, an inspiring program, and some fun and games, too. You won’t want to miss this!

MEET OUR GALA HONOREES

Please join us in congratulating three wonderful honorees whose generosity and volunteerism have a significant impact on the people we serve.

Markhoff & Mittman, The Disability Guys have been dedicated supporters of our mission since 2015. Their commitment shines year-round, from making sandwiches for Grace’s Kitchen to kicking off the holiday season by assembling grocery bags for the families we serve. One day during our annual Summer Camp, Markhoff and Mittman’s entire team close down their office to host a carnival for our campers, complete with inflatable games, a magic show, and prizes. The results are pure magic and unforgettable memories. Beyond their stellar volunteerism, they actively engage with our mission, consistently reaching out to understand how they can best lend a hand.

The Next Generation Lifts

Take a look at some of our young volunteers and donors helping to lift Westchester up, and what they have to say about their experience!



When **Enzo** was looking to be part of a group that made a difference, he joined his school's Community Service Club. One of their projects was to create snack packs for children in our youth programs. Enzo took his time creating the artwork for the bags and it shows!

Here's what **Alexis** says about her experience volunteering as a counselor at our Summer Camp – "I was very pleased to volunteer for Lifting Up Westchester which strongly supports and assists parents in giving their children a safe, worry-free, and fun summer while navigating homelessness and other life challenges. Camp helped me to develop my teamwork, patience, responsibility, communication and working skills while being given the opportunity to be a part of such a fun and enjoyable community. These are just a few of the reasons why I had a very positive experience working as a camp counselor. This is an experience I will never forget."

Here's why **Zach** decided to donate to LUW once he started working after college – "I was drawn to Lifting Up Westchester because of its strong focus on empowering those within our local communities and because of my trust in the organization. My family has supported this charity for years, so I have been able to see the positive impacts it can have firsthand. I knew that my donation would make an immediate impact on those in need around me."



Ella has been a longtime LUW supporter. She does it all — making holiday grocery bags for families, holiday stockings for the kids, Valentine candygrams, and spring candy baskets. She has younger sisters and hopes that they will be inspired to help when she goes off to college.

Santina Leuci began volunteering with LUW in 2017 when she learned more about children experiencing homelessness, hunger, and extreme poverty right here in Westchester County. Next thing she knew, her house was full of donated items, and she was doing anything she could to lessen the need. Over the years, Santina has established herself as a pillar in our summer camp. You can find her there leading arts and crafts, treating the kids to their own personal ice cream truck, or picking up supplies for a pizza party — these simple joys would not be possible if it was not for her kindness.

KeyBank is focused on helping communities grow. Since 2008, they have been supporting our mission through grants, with their most recent \$200,000 grant award allowing us to launch our employment center, Job Central, in downtown White Plains. We have a youth employment specialist there, and because of the funds that created this program, many young people have a path forward to financial independence and success. We celebrate the giving spirit of KeyBank and are so proud and appreciative of their ongoing partnership.

To buy tickets and sponsorships or make a gift to recognize one of our honorees, please visit liftingupwestchester.org/gala.

This is what **Rachelle** says about her experience being a volunteer — "I started volunteering with LUW in 2022 and little by little, I have gotten the chance to meet and speak with fellow LUW volunteers and donors. The best part has always been the opportunity to learn of each individual's reason for helping Westchester County's underserved population. Each story is inspiring, and I can trust that LUW is full of people who have an honest desire to help their neighbors in need. Who wouldn't want to continue being part of a cause that is genuine, warm, and fueled by neighborly love? I am always grateful to contribute to LUW's mission, and I look forward to being a volunteer for years to come."



A newsletter exclusively for compassionate people who care about community!

Let's stay in touch!

**To get involved, make a gift,
or ask questions, please contact us.**

www.liftingupwestchester.org

info@liftingupwestchester.org

Connect with us on social media:

@LiftingUpWestchester



We hope you will join us at one of our upcoming Journey Home events! This is a one-hour tour to learn more about our mission and impact. Please join us for this opportunity to reframe conversations in our community about individuals who are experiencing homelessness and hunger.

Thursday, May 23rd at 9:00 AM – Open Arms Men's Shelter

Thursday, July 18th at 10:30 AM – Summer Camp

Thursday, October 10th at 9:00 AM – Job Central

Please sign up online at www.liftingupwestchester.org/thejourneyhome.