

# Community! What Does That Mean?

Community means we are connected to each other...that we belong. Community means that we look out for each other when life's challenges arise.

It's sometimes the simple gestures of kindness that make our day and lift us up... like when I saw Eddie, one of our LUW clients, a few weeks ago. He held the door open for me at a store and we caught up about how his day was going. We both smiled and felt seen.

Each one of us can choose to make a difference in our community one person at a time. Eddie shares with us below his experience of the Lifting Up Westchester community that you are a part of creating.....

See you around!

Lauren Candela-Katz,  
Chief Development Officer

## Eddie's Story

"My background is kind of rough. My mother was an alcoholic and alcoholism is a big part of my family's history. I grew up in a one parent household which led to the foster care system. Being taken away from my mom at any age, you're trying to find yourself. I've had a lot of ups and downs being bounced around.



I messed up because I didn't have and understand any core beliefs. I saw things backwards and a lot of things did not work out for me. My out was in the bottle. I became an alcoholic.

Society sometimes has a bad way of looking at the negative instead of the positive.

**The people who work for Lifting Up Westchester have a positive outlook and are willing to give people a chance no matter what their background is, no matter what you look like right now, no matter what you've been through.**

They're going to see what you can do right now to better yourself and move on to the future.

**I still go to Grace's Community Kitchen. It's not just a soup kitchen. It's way more than that.** You always eat and have a place to sit for a little while and speak to staff to figure out what help you need. People need to know the programs and opportunities that are available to them in Westchester County. . .like help in finding a job or an apartment. It is good to have a place to gather my thoughts instead of walking around.

I'm a work in progress and I'm still making every effort possible to do better each day.

**Lifting Up Westchester is one of the best things that happened to me. They're doing the work from their hearts. I have to find some way to give back, because they've provided so much."**

**Just imagine how Eddie's life might be different if he received mentoring, tutoring, and a scholarship to college.**



## Congratulations to LUW Scholarship Recipients from Our Youth Programs!

**Angel R.**  
**Destiny G.**  
**landel H.**  
**Jarrett R.**  
**Angela P.**  
**Christopher J.**  
**Josue S.**  
**Martine C.**  
**Samuel R.**  
**Wesley G.**

Thanks to the many generous donors over the years who contributed to our youth scholarship fund. Each year thanks to you we provide ten to twelve students with modest scholarships that often play a critical role in students being able to stay in school and graduate.

The scholarship fund needs replenishment. Please consider a monthly donation to give youth a fighting chance to break out of poverty.

**To support our Scholarship Program go to [www.liftingupwestchester.org/donate](http://www.liftingupwestchester.org/donate)**

**Eileen Torres, our incredible Director of Youth Services tells us all the time, “You can’t learn if you are hungry. You can’t focus. You can’t think. You can’t make good decisions.”**

So much of our work involves making sure our youth and our adults get the food they need to survive and nourishment for their well-being so they can move forward in life.

Lifting Up Westchester relies on you and other kind and generous supporters like you to help us provide meals for the increasing number of individuals and families coming to Grace’s Community Kitchen, for the youth in our summer camp and afterschool tutor/mentoring programs, and for our college students who are struggling financially.

As we enter the holiday food drive season, we hope we can continue to count on your vital generosity to ensure that no one is ever turned away. Every dollar is important and appreciated. Monthly donations are fantastic!

**For more information on the holiday food drive and how you can participate, contact Nancy Inzinna [ninzinna@liftingupwestchester.org](mailto:ninzinna@liftingupwestchester.org).**



**Due to increased need we are on track to increase the number of meals served in Grace’s Community Kitchen. That is a lot of food and people. To donate visit: [www.liftingupwestchester.org/donate](http://www.liftingupwestchester.org/donate)**

# Did You Know... 75% of LUW's graduating High School Seniors pursue college and 25% pursue certifications and/or jobs!

**Thanks to your amazing support of our LUW Youth Tutoring/Mentoring and our College & Career Success programs our students are well on their way to building a brighter future for themselves and our community.**

See where they have been going...

Allegheny College  
American University  
Bronx Community College  
Buffalo State  
Charles Drew University of Medicine & Science  
City College  
College Mount Saint Vincent  
CUNY, Dominican College  
Iona University  
Ithica College  
John Jay College  
LaGuardia Community College  
Lehman College  
Manhattan University  
Manhattanville College  
Marist College  
Mercy College  
Monroe College  
Morgan State University  
Nyack College  
Queensboro Community College  
Quinnipiac College  
St Thomas University  
SUNY Binghamton  
SUNY Brockport  
SUNY New Paltz  
SUNY Oneonta  
University at Buffalo  
Westchester Community College

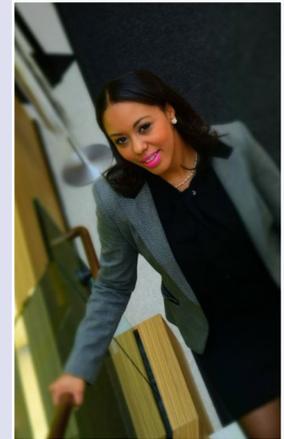
**Our College & Career Success Coaches work with the students to overcome the challenges they face in completing college.**

**This is the difference WE can make as a community in the lives of youth!**

**To provide support for for our College and Career Success Program please visit [www.liftingupwestchester.org/donate](http://www.liftingupwestchester.org/donate)**

## E'Shondra's Story

E'Shondra was raised by her great grandparents in South Carolina until they passed away at age fifteen (15); she was then forced to live with her mother in New York. This was an impossible hardship plagued by substance abuse and instability. E'Shondra then emancipated herself through perseverance while in high school. She was renting her own apartment and self supporting when E'Shondra started participating in LUW's afterschool tutoring and mentoring programs at age 15.



While she held two part-time jobs to pay the \$720/month rent for her one-bedroom unit, she continued to receive LUW support and maintained a straight "A" average, was ranked second in her senior class and received several scholarships and awards upon graduation from high school.

E'Shondra received a college scholarship from LUW to attend John Jay; \$4,000 per year for 4 years until her graduation. She worked during the day at the Bronx District Attorney's Office and attended classes at night. She successfully maintained a 3.8 grade point average and was on the dean's list (2007-2011).

When E'Shondra graduated, LUW provided funding for her to take the Princeton LSAT course and the LSAT test. She was accepted to NY Law School where she again took evening classes so that she could work at Legal Services of the Hudson Valley during the day. She worked for Legal Services of the Hudson Valley for over five (5) years. She graduated in 2015 and accelerated her graduation date from a four (4) year program to a three (3) year program by taking classes in the summer and winter sessions. She crossed the threshold of the Bar Exam in 2016.

E'Shondra accepted a job at Legal Aid and the City of Mount Vernon as an Assistant Corporation Counsel before she pursued her own firm: The McClendon-Smith and Barrantes Isibor PC. Together with her Partner, they handle a multitude of cases which include: civil litigation; family law; matrimonial; and countless real estate transactions. E'Shondra also serves on the 18B panel which provides legal services to indigent clients in Westchester Family Court.

E'Shondra enjoys spending time with her loved ones but most importantly her husband, a NYC detective, and her amazing daughter. Through her daughters lens, she embraces the sanctity of motherhood, endless possibilities of greatness, and new beginnings of love.

**"I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver."**

**— Maya Angelou**

## Your newsletter exclusively for compassionate people who care about community!

To get involved, donate, or ask questions, contact the Development Department.

[www.liftingupwestchester.org](http://www.liftingupwestchester.org)  
[info@liftingupwestchester.org](mailto:info@liftingupwestchester.org)

Connect with us on social media:

@LiftingUpWestchester



## Honoring a Terrific Community Member Who Always Knows How To Give Back!

We are privileged to honor Joe Gallo as a former LUW Board Member and Co-Chair of the annual Golf Outing. Joe continues to be influential in the growth of LUW through forging relationships with the business community, maintaining longstanding partnerships, and securing vital funds for our mission.

Joe has helped to strengthen LUW's ability to make an impact on the lives of our neighbors in Westchester County. His journey with LUW began as Grace Church Treasurer, but soon evolved into a decades long commitment as a passionate supporter and community advocate for LUW and its mission.

We are grateful for Joe's continued compassion, support, and the kindness he brings to people in need each year!

Please join us at the golf outing or donate in honor of Joe at [www.liftingupwestchester.org/events](http://www.liftingupwestchester.org/events).



### HOPE AND A SWING 2023 SPONSORS

7,500			
5,000			
3,000			
1,500			

