

Webster Community Chest December 2024 - January 2025 News for Donors

WEBSTER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AWARDS COMMUNITY CHEST

"BUSINESS OF THE MONTH"

Learn why we were selected. See more below.

WCC BENEFITS COUNSELOR SERVICE

Here is what happens when someone calls 671-2060 for help and who provides it. See more below.

WEBSTER MUSEUM FESTIVAL OF TREES. VOTE FOR OUR TREE (PLEASE!)

Last Day to Vote is Tomorrow! December 31. See more below.

WCC WINTER HOLIDAY PROGRAM

We provided food and gifts for many insecure families. See more below.

GIRLS ON THE RUN

We sponsored four girls whose families otherwise could not afford the program. See more below.

For more information on the Chest, go to webcommchest.org.

WEBSTER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AWARDS COMMUNITY CHEST "BUSINESS OF THE MONTH"

The Webster Chamber of Commerce honored the Webster Community Chest as its December 2024 Business of the Month.

In making the award, Chamber Board of Directors Chair Tim Shortsleeve made the following citation: "For 75 years, this incredible organization has been a cornerstone of support and compassion for the Webster community. Started in 1942, the Webster Community Chest evolved from the "Webster War Chest" of World War II, which supported residents serving overseas and their families, becoming a New York State Charitable organization on April 22, 1948.

"They remain a crucial safety net today, offering everything from emergency food assistance, end-of-month meal kits, food delivery to local food cupboards, financial assistance during crises and emergencies, annual high school scholarships for volunteerism and summer camp scholarships for children, as well as Meals on Wheels subsidies. Nearly 11,000 end-of-month meal kits have been provided in the past year and over 750 Meals on Wheels meals were paid for with subsidies last year.

"The heart of the Webster Community Chest truly is in their unwavering commitment to helping others. Their mission, 'To serve people and organizations in need in the greater Webster community by providing services and resources,' is simple, yet powerful. This incredible work has been made possible by a dedicated volunteer Board of Directors, more than 100 volunteers, and two part-time benefits counselors.

"A testament to their commitment is a funny, yet sweet, story about a call they got from an elderly woman inquiring about food assistance. The woman was calling from Webster, Massachusetts but her benefits counselor immediately hooked her up with the right resources there. This story shows their core values of compassion and care, that indeed they will truly help anyone who reaches out.

"As they celebrate their 75th anniversary this year, the Webster Community Chest reminds us of the power of community involvement and service. Their work is a prime example of the best of Webster: volunteer-driven, with passion in wanting to make a difference. On behalf of the Webster Chamber of Commerce, congratulations to the Webster Community Chest on this well-deserved honor. Thank you for the extra special things you do for our community, and here's to many more years of continued success and service!"



From left to right, Chest Board members Michael Grenier, Steven Yahoodik, Mary Kay Barrett, and Sharon Pratt, Chamber of Commerce Chair Tim Shortsleeve.

WCC BENEFITS COUNSELOR SERVICE

People living in the Webster community experience crises and challenges at any time of day and night and every day of the week. The Webster Community chest is pleased and proud to be available 365, 24/7 to help people meet their needs.

Since April of 2022, the Webster Community Chest has employed Benefits Counselors Tracy Dennis and Kris Lombardo to be sure those needs are met. Tracy and Kris not only have full-time jobs apart from their Chest job-share, but they also volunteer for many Chest activities outside their WCC work, attend board meetings and executive committee meetings as well. Their work is much appreciated by us and by our clients, as evidenced by numerous notes of appreciation.

They have worked hard to grow their referral agency list from 5 to 191 (and counting). This has created a large portfolio of additional agencies they refer to our clients as needed for help beyond the WCC's resources or mission. Tracy and Kris can check the portfolio, share relevant agencies with clients who then choose which to pursue.

They alternate Tuesday-Tuesday weeks so one of them is always available to check phone and email messages in case emergencies need immediate attention. They check the WCC phone number before leaving for work, again at lunch and once home, are on call for the night.

Emergency issues such as fire, eviction, starvation, job loss, illness and death are given priority over other calls with immediate assistance from the Community Chest and any other appropriate agency.

Non-emergency and new-client return calls are made outside day-job hours. Sometimes callers just need someone to listen to them, a service Kris and Tracy provide with calm, empathy and a query about any immediate need.

Once any immediate need is handled, new callers are asked for leases, ledgers, pay stubs, bank statements, SNAP benefits. They are asked about any ongoing needs that can range from rent, food insecurity and transportation issues to high school scholarships (Shirley Miller), summer camp scholarships, meal distribution schedules, and other food and clothing distributions in Webster.

Kris and Tracy are always looking for new clients and new ways to help them. If you have a friend, neighbor or family in need who lives in Webster or an agency you would like to add to their toolbox, please contact (or have them contact) the Community Chest at 585-671-2060 or webcommchest@gmail.com.



VOTE FOR OUR TREE (PLEASE)

Webster Community Chest volunteers once again decorated a tree for the Webster Museum's Festival of Trees. Tracy and John Dennis devised or created the ornaments and tree topper; Bonnie Reynolds and Mary Kay decorated the tree and designed the space at the museum.



The event, which runs from December 7 through December 31, is not just community involvement for us but also a way to share the WCC's mission to, among other services, feed the hungry.

You can vote for your favorite tree online through December 31 via the museum's website at webstermuseum.org and enjoy a virtual tour of the Festival of Trees.

However, you'll be missing a lot of festivity if you don't visit in person, especially the beautifully decorated exhibit rooms containing 21 beautiful trees, and one tree that allows you to add an ornament with the name of a lost loved one or pet.

Tree #6 along the north wall has a custom-made tree-topper and a basket for donations of breakfast food for our meals program. As you can see, our tree reflects our mission as well as introducing the organization to visitors who may in the future support us or use our services.

Please vote for #6! We may win a small cash prize to add to our funds!

You can visit the Webster Museum at [18 Lapham Park](#) from 2:00-4:30 pm any Tuesday, Thursday, or Saturday between 2 and 4:40 pm. Voting for our tree ends on December 31st.

WCC WINTER HOLIDAY PROGRAM

The holidays are a special time for family celebrations, but it's a lot harder to celebrate for people whose budgets don't allow for many necessities, much less special meals and gifts.

Like other Webster organizations, the Webster Community Chest has its own program to help their clients have a special family holiday.

The regular meal distribution was enhanced in several ways, according to Bonnie Reynolds and Mary Kay Barrett, co-chairs of the Community Chest's Meal Center. Meal Center Volunteers wanted to make this holiday distribution different and special for clients. Instead of the monthly three meals and recipes, four were given to families on December 19, plus extras like cereal, mac and cheese, cans of fruit and cake and frosting mixes. All the children were given a kid bag with a special holiday treat. Many groups help WCC to make this holiday distribution including food drives by Immanuel Lutheran Church, the Bayview YMCA, Harborside Dental, Baywinde Senior Living, and the Webster Public Library. "Season's Greetings" cards from the Wellness of Webster Group were added when a school group from Spry Middle School helped bag the groceries.

Families in need were given the opportunity to sign up for Christmas gifts for their children. Benefits Counselors Tracy Dennis and Kris Lombardo sent out a plea for volunteers who signed up to shop for and donate gifts, spending at least \$50 on each child they gifted. Teens received gift cards and younger children received toys and clothing. The gifts were distributed to families along with their meals distribution, making their holiday preparations even easier by combining the two.



The Webster Community Chest volunteers wish you all a happy and peaceful holiday season, knowing that your generosity has allowed so many families to have one too.

GIRLS ON THE RUN

The Webster Community Chest recently sponsored four Webster girls who participated in the Fall Session of [Girls on the Run Greater Rochester](#).

Girls on the Run (GOTR) is a national organization that offers programs designed to inspire girls of all abilities to recognize and embrace their inner strength and make meaningful connections with others.

Trained coaches use physical activity and dynamic discussions to build social, emotional and physical skills while encouraging healthy habits for life.

The sponsorship included registration fees, running sneakers, T-shirt, medal and a journal. The four girls are part of a team of fourteen Webster girls who participated in the Fall Session, culminating in a celebratory 5K run on Saturday, November 23.

Congratulations to all the girls!



Our Webster team at an early Fall practice! Kelly Fisher, Executive Director Girls on the Run of Greater Rochester wrote, "We are so grateful for your support!"



The team of 14 Girls ran under the banner of “Plank Road North School” as that is where they practice. The girls, however, come from elementary schools throughout the Webster Central School District. They are pictured here with their coaches at the Fall Session 5K run with all the other Rochester area teams.

The GOTR of Greater Rochester published their inspiring Annual Gratitude Report to the community as a very graphic visual that runs for 1 minute 22 seconds. See it at [GOTR Rochester Annual Report](#).



One of our Webster team members during the run.

For more information, visit us at <https://webcommchest.org/>.

(Contributions by Kathy Taddeo, Tracy Dennis, Kris Lombardo, Bonnie Reynolds, Mary Kay Barrett, Steve Yahoodik, and Michael Grenier.)

