

Nutley Family Service Bureau: Responding in a Time of Crisis

by Emma Cortese, Public Relations Chair,
NFSB Board of Trustees

Consistent with our mission of responsiveness to the community, Nutley Family Service Bureau (NFSB) is addressing the unprecedented challenges associated with COVID-19. NFSB is dedicated to providing services and creating workable solutions by following guidelines outlined by state and local health departments that allow continuity of operations, while considering the safety of clients, patrons, staff, and volunteers.

■ THE CENTER

In response to constraints associated with the pandemic, the psychotherapy center has adapted by providing mental health services through a teletherapy platform. In addition, our popular Fall Mental Well-Being Series will be offered virtually and free to Nutley residents. We have started planning for our return to in-person therapy sessions. Based on our success with the teletherapy process and input from the clinical team, we will offer in-person sessions for those clients and clinicians who are interested in returning to a traditional approach, and continue remote sessions for those who are interested in a distance model. For more information visit www.nutleyfamily.org/services/mental-health-services/

■ THE SHOP

After shuttering our doors from March to June, the thrift shop has reopened on a new three-day schedule of Monday, Wednesday, and Friday with extended hours from 10am to 7pm. We have reorganized our space to allow movement throughout and instituted safeguards: social distancing, limiting the number of shoppers (adults only) at any given time, requiring masks, offering hand-sanitizing stations, checking shoppers' temperatures, and requiring COVID-19 waiver signing. Due to restrictions on space and



volunteer efforts, The Shop requests that the community be mindful to limit the quantity of donations at a given time and consider the quality of the donations. Bagged and boxed items can be dropped off in our easily-accessible double-door shed at the rear of the 169 Chestnut St. building. We accept gently used items in order to maintain The Shop's high standards of merchandise. As always, The Shop continues its fantastic weekly sales which offer the community family friendly bargains. Visit www.nutleyfamily.org for updates.

■ THE PANTRY

Rapid changes at our food pantry, with an increase in our rolls of more than 25%, coupled with a decrease in food supplies, have presented significant demands. It has been difficult to maintain levels of shelf-stable items due to the cancellation of the annual Scouting for Food Drive which typically supplies 90% of our yearly stock. Additionally, a persistent reduction in proteins available through our food resource partnerships poses hurdles for high-value nutrition commodities. NFSB's access to food resources is further impacted by our limited ability to find volunteers with vehicles to retrieve food supplies outside our community.

As we deal with these pressing circumstances, we maintain our open-air food distribution outside the NFSB Annex at 169 Chestnut St. according to a regular biweekly schedule. We are very grateful for the sustained generous support from local residents, businesses, civic, and church organizations. However, demand is unrelenting due to the social and economic consequences of the pandemic. Non-perishable items, which can be dropped off in bins at the rear of the 169 Chestnut St. offices, are always needed, as are gift cards and monetary donations. In the fall, we will gear up for our traditional Thanksgiving Initiative; be on the lookout for information next month at www.nutleyfamily.org.

NFSB is committed to meeting the situations impacting our township by responding with multifaceted efforts coordinated within our organization and with community partners and stakeholders. We look forward to implementing innovative programs which further our vision of a community where mental well-being is valued as an integral part of life. ■

