

Neighborhood UPDATE



OCTOBER 2020

THE MUNICIPAL HOUSING AUTHORITY FOR THE CITY OF YONKERS

A Letter from Wilson Kimball



This year has felt like both a trick and a treat. While we, as a country, have sustained many losses to COVID-19 we have also found some COVID silver linings. I lost a dear friend and

an uncle to COVID earlier this year. So many of us have lost loved ones that it can feel overwhelming. In those instances I try to think positive thoughts. Remarkably, there have been some COVID silver linings. One of them is that we are spending more time at home, with our families and loved ones. Another silver lining is that we are more focused on our health.

(Continued on Page 2)

Tribute to Danny Cintron



MHACY mourns the passing of a long-time employee and friend, Danny Cintron. Danny, who worked at Palisade Towers for many years, died in a tragic

accident last month when he pulled over on the Garden State Parkway to exchange insurance information and was struck by an oncoming car. Danny was beloved by everyone, and served the residents of MHACY well. He will be missed.

October Is Breast Cancer Awareness Month – Get Your Mammogram

October is breast cancer awareness month. If you're a woman over the age of 40, you should be thinking about getting an annual mammogram. Early detection of cancer can save lives. Below is some important information on mammograms from NewYork Presbyterian Lawrence Hospital's Carol H. Taylor Breast Health Center.

10 Things to Know Before Your Next Mammogram

If you don't feel like you're prepared for your first mammogram, or you're anxious about your annual visit to the radiologist, you're not alone. The American College of Radiology and Society of Breast Imaging recommend that women of average risk start getting annual mammograms at age 40, and yet, only 65 percent in that age group have done so in recent years, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

This October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, so no time like now to schedule your next appointment. NewYork-Presbyterian Lawrence Hospital shares tips on why it's important to set aside fears and offers ways to make the most of your annual visit.

1. It's normal to feel nervous about a mammogram, but you should still go.

The whole experience can be anxiety-provoking — before, during, and after. It can be helpful to acknowledge that, and then move on to focus on why do it in the first place. And that's because annual screening mammography, starting at age 40, prevents the most deaths from breast cancer.

2. Bring your medical history with you for the best care.

A week to a month before a mammogram, if a woman's not going to a radiology practice she's been to before, she should locate her prior images and bring them to the new appointment. Having prior studies for comparison is really important because part of the evaluation is looking not only for masses and calcifications, but also for changes in the breast tissue pattern, and without any prior images, that part is missing. Having prior images can also minimize the need for additional imaging evaluation.

(Continued on Page 2)



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A Letter from Wilson Kimball

(Continued from Page 1)

While we should always prioritize our health, October is a very good time to re-focus on our well-being. It's breast cancer awareness month. Each year 42,690 people (42,170 women and 520 men) die from breast cancer. Having a regular, annual, mammography is crucial in the battle against breast cancer. Do not skip your annual mammography just because of COVID. Get your mammography. Get your flu shot. Wash your hands. Use hand Sanitizer. Wear a mask. Take care of yourself. You are worth it!

You should also make time to vote. Voting is an important act. It can be an act of protest, support or individuality. You can vote for candidates on the ballot or write-in your own candidate's name. You can vote at the voting booth on November 3, 2020 or you can get an absentee ballot or vote early. You have a lot of choices. But, no excuses. Vote. Because, your opinion should count.

And lastly, as the month comes to an end we are reminded of how our lives are changed by COVID. Children, who for centuries have celebrated Halloween, are being discouraged from participating because of the pandemic. Halloween originated with the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, when people would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off ghosts. In the eighth century, Pope Gregory III designated November 1 as a time to honor all saints. Soon, All Saints Day incorporated some of the traditions of Samhain. The evening before was known as All Hallows Eve, and later Halloween. Over time, Halloween, celebrated on October 31, evolved into a day of activities like trick-or-treating, carving jack-o-lanterns, festive gatherings, donning costumes and eating treats. MHACY will be working with resident coordinators to make sure that every child who lives at one of our properties gets a Halloween gift bag. It can't make up for the year we've had but it could go a little way towards makes things sweeter.

Stay safe, stay healthy and stay active.

Wilson Kimball

President & CEO

Municipal Housing Authority for the City of Yonkers

October Is Breast Cancer Awareness Month – Get Your Mammogram

(Continued from Page 1)

- 3. Go au naturel the day of your test.**
Don't wear deodorant to your appointment. It can appear on the mammogram as little white dots, which can look like calcifications, which in some cases can be the earliest sign of breast cancer. Also consider wearing a skirt or pants with a separate top, so when you get undressed you can remove your top without having to remove all your clothes.
- 4. Team up with your technologist.**
Tell the mammogram technologist if you have any new lumps and then work with her to get the best possible images. The positioning and pressure may be uncomfortable; however, it lasts just a few seconds and enables optimal evaluation of the breasts. As much as possible, just try to relax the body and work with the technologist. It's a team effort to get the best possible images.
- 5. Stay ahead of scheduling.**
On your way out, book for next year to ensure that you actually get annual screening mammography.
- 6. With annual screening mammograms, don't let concerns about radiation dissuade you.**
A mammogram is an extremely low dose X-ray, and the risk of the minimal radiation exposure is far outweighed by the potential mortality benefit.
- 7. You may not know your results right away, and that's normal.**
Most women come in, have their test, it's read within 24 hours, and then results are mailed to the patient and referring physician. The vast majority of women, the vast majority of the time have a truly normal mammogram, and this is very reassuring.
- 8. Family history counts.**
Women at high risk of breast cancer, defined mainly on the basis of a genetic mutation or family history, should start annual screening earlier. For example, if your mother or sister was diagnosed with breast cancer at 46, then you should start getting annual mammograms at 36 years old.
- 9. You still need a mammogram, even with no family history.**
Even if you don't have a family history or other risk factors, this doesn't mean that you shouldn't get screened. The fact of the matter is that 60 to 70 percent of women diagnosed with breast cancer have no known risk factors.
- 10. Annual screening mammography saves the most lives.**
If you haven't had a mammogram in the last year, then call your healthcare provider so they can help you to do so.

The Carol H. Taylor Breast Health Center at NewYork-Presbyterian Lawrence Hospital provides a wide range of breast imaging and biopsy services in a beautiful, relaxing spa-like environment. With an award-winning team, convenient hours, and the latest screening and diagnostic technologies, the Center is one of Westchester County's most popular choices for breast care. To schedule your appointment, please call 914-787-5008. For more information visit www.nyp.org/lawrence/services/breast-center

Rock the Vote

MHACY encourages everyone to vote. If you are not registered, it's easy to do by visiting the Board of Elections, calling or visiting their website. This year because of the pandemic, people can request an absentee ballot and vote by mail. If you voted in past elections, you should be receiving an absentee ballot request form in the mail. If not, you can request one online at <https://citizenparticipation.westchestergov.com/voting/absentee-ballots>. Applications must be received by October 27.

There is also the opportunity for *early* voting this year. The dates are as follows.

- Saturday, Oct. 24, 2020 from noon until 5 p.m.
- Sunday, Oct. 25, 2020 from noon until 5 p.m.
- Monday, Oct. 26, 2020 from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m.
- Tuesday, Oct. 27, 2020 from noon until 8p.m.
- Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2020 from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m.
- Thursday, Oct. 29, 2020 from noon until 8 p.m.
- Friday, Oct. 30, 2020 from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m.
- Saturday, Oct. 31, 2020 from noon until 5 p.m.
- Sunday, Nov. 1, 2020 from noon until 5 p.m.

In Yonkers you can vote at the Grinton I. Will or Riverfront Libraries. You can find the list with all the locations on the Board of Elections website. Also, look for more information right here on our Facebook page.

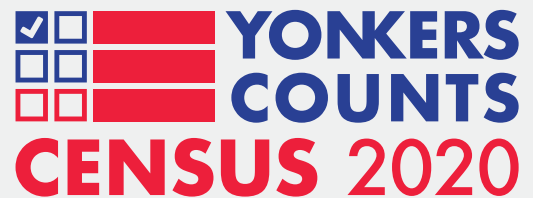
Attention MHACY residents!

You may have received an important letter in the mail asking you to sign up for *Rent Café*, our new online portal. More than 1,000 letters are expected to go out this month. MHACY is updating its housing waiting list and registering is the easiest way to make sure that you are on the list.

Registering is easy. Once you registered you can:

- Pay your rent from the convenience of your home **without fees**
- Save time
- Stay safe during the COVID-19 epidemic
- Place work orders for repairs
- Update contact information so you can receive important notifications and stay on the waiting list

Check your mail for your personal ID code to register. If you did not receive your letter or lost your ID code, please call MHACY at 914-793-8400 and speak with Jennifer (X137) or Sarah (X127) or e-mail rentcafe@mhacy.org.



Fill Out Your Census Survey Today

It's not too late to fill out your 2020 US Census form.

Every 10 years the federal government counts all its citizens. That count determines just how much money the City of Yonkers and other communities across the nation will get to spend on services we all use like housing, hospitals and schools.

“The 2020 Census is critical for every city in America, but mid-sized cities like Yonkers depend on it a bit more,” said Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano. **“There are tens of millions of dollars at risk for programs and services many of us use every day, including schools and hospitals.”**

You can respond online at 2020Census.gov, by mail or by phone (1-844-330-2020).

2020Census.gov | 1-844-330-2020

A circular graphic with a dashed border containing the text 'EVERY VOTE COUNTS' in blue. To the right of 'VOTE' is a stylized American flag. At the bottom are three stars: a blue one, a red one, and a blue one.

EVERY
VOTE COUNTS

MHACY Tenant Council Representative and President Succeeds in Dream of Homeownership



Owning your own home is a goal that is possible. Just ask Vanessa Lugo. Vanessa was a member of the Resident Advisory Board (RAB) and a Tenant Council Representative as well as the President of her site (Calcagno Homes) for more than 12 years. Now she will be closing on her new home in Syracuse, New York later this month.

Vanessa said that persistence is the key to homeownership.

“I would tell anyone that you have to be dedicated, you have to ask questions and you have to be able to overcome obstacles,” she said.

Vanessa grew up in School Street and later had her own apartment there. Two years ago, when MHACY began the RAD process (Rental Assistance Demonstration Program) Vanessa decided that rather than sign a new lease, she was going to own her own home. Vanessa asked MHACY for information and also enrolled in a course through Westchester Residential Opportunities which taught her the steps she needed to take to work towards owning her own home.

“First thing is to make sure that your credit is good,” said Vanessa. “Without good credit, even if you have the money for a down payment, you are not going to be able to do it.”

For two years, Vanessa worked to repair her credit, and to save money every month to make sure she had enough to cover the closing costs. Because her brother and children’s father lived in the Syracuse area and the taxes were lower, she decided to look for a home there. In July, Vanessa was all set to close on a house, but the deal fell through at the last minute. But she didn’t let that deter her and continued to look. Now her three sons and daughter will be moving into their new 4-bedroom home. Vanessa said she loves the eat-in kitchen, dayroom and above ground pool, firepit and big front yard.

Despite owning her dream home, she said she will miss the people at MHACY whom she called great neighbors. She encouraged others to work towards owning their own home.

“Now I have something to leave my children,” she said.

“Life is what you make it.”



Halloween During COVID-19 Can Still be Fun

Halloween is right around the corner. Here are some low-risk activities you can do with your children to protect against the spread of COVID-19 as recommended by the CDC.

- Carving or decorating pumpkins with members of your household and displaying them
- Carving or decorating pumpkins outside, at a safe distance, with neighbors or friends
- Decorating your house, apartment, or living space
- Doing a Halloween scavenger hunt where children are given lists of Halloween-themed things to look for while they walk outdoors from house to house admiring Halloween decorations at a distance
- Having a virtual Halloween costume contest
- Having a Halloween movie night with people you live with
- Having a scavenger-hunt-style trick-or-treat search with your household members in or around your home rather than going house to house