

Helping You Help Others



By Noelle Stanuch

noellestanuch@longislandmediagroup.com

The Charity of the Month for May is

Economic Opportunity Council of Suffolk

www.eoc-suffolk.com

The Economic Opportunity Council of Suffolk (EOC of Suffolk), is a non-profit, community-based organization that was founded in 1967 as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's "Great Society" legislation.

EOC of Suffolk promotes self-sufficiency among low-income families and individuals by revitalizing communities, broadening the minds of children and assisting families in need. Formally designated as a "Community Action Agency" by the federal government, it channels block grants from Washington to meet the needs of Long Islanders.

While most of EOC's work takes place in Suffolk County, the organization also provides a number of its services in Nassau County. Three of its initiatives that take place in both of those counties are:

1) The Housing Counseling program, which helps individuals and families achieve their dream of homeownership.

2) Its Developmental Disabilities work, which provides a comprehensive array of services for people with developmental disabilities – all aimed at enhancing their quality of life.

3) The Chronic Health Care Coordination program, which helps individuals manage their own physical health, mental health and social needs in a comprehensive manner.

Additionally, five of their many programs offered in Suffolk County include:

1) EOC of Suffolk's Youth and Adolescent Services, which promotes leadership, healthy decision making, sexual health and pregnancy prevention among local youth. The organization's after-school programs serve more than 1,000 middle school students daily, providing academic and skill-building activities that promote

vocational and educational growth.

2) The Rapid Rehousing Program, which helps individuals and families experiencing homelessness

and aims to return them as quickly as possible to permanent housing within their home communities. EOC of Suffolk team members address and troubleshoot barriers to obtaining and maintaining permanent housing.

3) EOC of Suffolk helps keep neighborhood streets safe through its SNUG (GUNS spelled backwards) Violence Prevention program, which functions in cooperation with residents, private industry and community-based organizations. SNUG helps identify and defuse community "hot spots". It also provides mentorship and leadership-oriented services to youth who are gang members or who are at risk of joining gangs.

4) The organization's Targeted Prevention and Supportive Service Program supports people living with HIV/AIDS. Clients are treated with respect, dignity, privacy and trust. Services include transportation, consumer advice, assistance obtaining benefits, linkages to substance abuse and mental health services, legal services, health education and testing.

5) Recognizing the importance of childcare for working families, EOC of Suffolk owns and operates three childcare learning centers: Way to Grow in East Patchogue, Montauk Childcare Center and a childcare center at the Family Court complex in Central Islip. Those facilities meet the highest standards of early childhood education. Children participate in activities providing intellectual stimulation and fostering self-reliance and social responsibility.

For more information, visit EOC of Suffolk at www.eoc-suffolk.com.



Helping People. Changing Lives.

If your non-profit would like to be featured in this column, please email noellestanuch@longislandmediagroup.com for consideration.

Helping You Help Others



By Noelle Stanuch

noellestanuch@longislandmediagroup.com

The Charity of the Month for May is

Economic Opportunity Council of Suffolk

www.eoc-suffolk.com

The Economic Opportunity Council of Suffolk (EOC of Suffolk) is a Patchogue-based non-profit organization that promotes self-sufficiency among low-income

families and individuals by revitalizing communities, broadening the minds of children and assisting families in need.

While much of EOC of Suffolk's work is concentrated in Suffolk County, it also operates several programs that serve residents of both Suffolk and Nassau counties. One of those bi-county offerings is the organization's Housing Counseling Services.

As a HUD-approved housing counseling agency, EOC of Suffolk offers a comprehensive array of housing services. Its "Mortgage Default and Foreclosure Prevention Counseling" program provides mortgage counseling for homeowners island-wide who are having difficulty maintaining their mortgage.

Many households across the country and across Long Island confront the risk of foreclosure. Last month, foreclosure filings nationwide reached the highest level since the pandemic began in March 2020. More than 30 thousand properties across the U.S. faced foreclosure, a 181 percent jump from March 2021 and a 29 percent increase from February.

It was recently reported that about 14,500 Long Island homeowners were at least three months behind on paying their mortgages. The risk of foreclosure has increased when a statewide foreclosure moratorium expired in January.

To help Long Island families keep their homes, EOC of Suffolk retains an experienced team of certified foreclosure prevention counselors who will help homeowners understand the complex foreclosure process,



and talk through possible courses of action to bring a mortgage current. They will discuss loss mitigation options and inform homeowners of financial and legal resources available

to them. Counselors can explain how homeowners can work with lenders or agencies on forbearance plans or loan modifications.

EOC of Suffolk also offers "Comprehensive Housing Counseling" that helps individuals and families achieve their dream of homeownership. The program provides one-to-one homeownership counseling and group counseling, as well as budget and credit counseling.

Finally, the organization also helps current and prospective homeowners through an online, eight-hour "Homebuyer Education Course." The course helps enrollees determine if homeownership is right for them, how to shop for a home and how to maintain a home. Those completing the course receive a certificate that positions homebuyers to fulfill education requirements for down payment assistance programs. The certificate can also be presented to lenders. The course operates on a convenient and flexible timetable allowing participants to complete it on their own schedule.

For more information about EOC of Suffolk's various housing counseling services, call 631-968-8000 or visit www.eoc-suffolk.com.



If your non-profit would like to be featured in this column, please email noellestanuch@longislandmediagroup.com for consideration.

Helping You Help Others



By Noelle Stanuch

noellestanuch@longislandmediagroup.com

The Charity of the Month for May is

Economic Opportunity Council of Suffolk

www.eoc-suffolk.com

The primary mission of the Economic Opportunity Council of Suffolk (EOC of Suffolk), is to promote self-sufficiency among low-income families and individuals. Most of their programming is devoted to

revitalizing communities, broadening the minds of children and assisting families in need.

Despite the word Suffolk in its name, the agency operates a number of programs in both Nassau and Suffolk counties. One such initiative is its Services for People with Developmental Disabilities program.

As defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "developmental disabilities" are a group of conditions arising from an impairment in physical, learning, language, or behavior areas. These conditions typically begin during a young child's developmental period, may impact day-to-day functioning, and usually last throughout a person's lifetime.

EOC of Suffolk offers a comprehensive array of services for people with developmental disabilities aimed at enhancing their quality of life. Its specially trained staff will customize a program to help maximize each person's ability to live with independence and self-sufficiency. In addition, personalized case management helps to ensure that individuals receive the government benefits to which they are eligible.

The overall offering has six components:

Community Habilitation Services: Under this program, EOC of Suffolk provides individuals with support and services that focus on developing life skills and community integration.

Group Day Habilitation Services: Fortunately, having a developmental disability doesn't preclude one from becoming an involved, contributing member of society. This service helps individuals acquire new and valuable skills through volunteerism and education. It also hosts social and recreational activities.

Individual Support Services: These



services target higher-functioning individuals who require minimal support. Participants receive monthly subsidies to help them live a more independent life in the community.

Respite Services: EOC of Suffolk provides temporary relief from the demands of caregiving, helping to reduce overall family stress. The program helps families provide uninterrupted care for their loved one with a developmental disability.

Respite/Recreation: This service component provides educational, occupational and recreational activities, as well as opportunities to increase socialization skills. Services take place on-site as well as on field trips to help enrich the learning process.

Self-Directed and Fiscal Intermediary Services: This program empowers individuals to exercise the maximum amount of control over the types of support and services they wish to receive. They also have a voice in the selection of providers and in how services are provided. Working with employers and funding agencies, people with developmental disabilities can engage as full citizens in communities of their choosing.

EOC of Suffolk can also arrange for the services of a Fiscal Intermediary for individuals who have chosen self-direction – supplemented by administrative and billing support.

For more information about Services for People with Developmental Disabilities provided by EOC of Suffolk, call (631) 666-6471 or visit www.eoc-suffolk.com.



If your non-profit would like to be featured in this column, please email noellestanuch@longislandmediagroup.com for consideration.

Helping You Help Others



By Noelle Stanuch

noellestanuch@longislandmediagroup.com

The Charity of the Month for May is Economic Opportunity Council of Suffolk

www.eoc-suffolk.com

The Economic Opportunity Council of Suffolk (EOC of Suffolk) is a non-profit organization that operates a number of programs in both Nassau and Suffolk counties. Based in Patchogue, EOC of Suffolk is dedicated to promoting self-sufficiency among low-income families and individuals. Its programming largely centers on revitalizing communities, broadening the minds of children and assisting families in need.

One of this non-profit's programs that serves people in Suffolk County and Nassau County is called Chronic Health Care Coordination.

Managed by program director Delmarie Gotti, Chronic Health Care Coordination supports individuals with such chronic illness as HIV/AIDS, mental health-related conditions, heart disease, diabetes, asthma and hepatitis C. It also serves populations with obesity, substance abuse problems, sickle cell disease and other long-term conditions.

This Chronic Health Care Coordination program solely serves people with incomes below the poverty line. Participants, who must be on Medicaid, also often receive various forms of food and housing assistance.

Because of their circumstances, and because of the day-to-day life challenges many participants face, it's often difficult for them to maintain a proper focus on the management of their chronic health needs. Many are jobless and many lack an adequate supply of food. Some are homeless or have lacked proper housing for years.

Simply put, when you don't have a place to live, then keeping up with your doctor's appointments isn't likely to be the number-one priority on your mind.

Ms. Gotti and her skilled team of care coordinators focus on helping individuals manage their physical health, behavioral health, and social needs in a comprehensive manner. EOC works to ensure that program

participants are receiving the necessary care to stay healthy and to stay out of emergency rooms and hospitals.

EOC of Suffolk team members help their clients "navigate

the system." They can assist with the filing of applications for various forms of public assistance. They may help connect participants with food pantries and help arrange assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps. Additionally, a support team from EOC of Suffolk can help clients find housing and even help arrange for the services of a moving company.

If clients are grappling with behavioral or mental health issues, EOC staffers can help them get proper professional assistance. They'll help participants get past possible stigmas often associated with mental illness. The EOC of Suffolk team can assist by lining up such support as therapeutic assistance, group therapy and medications.

While individual care plans vary from client to client, the most common, long-term goal of the Chronic Health Care Coordination program is to help participants manage their personal health care needs, stabilize their lives, become independent and find work. Clients who achieve these goals "graduate" from the program, ready to move on with their lives on a firm foundation.

For more information on the Chronic Health Care Coordination program, please call (631) 968-8000.



If your non-profit would like to be featured in this column, please email noellestanuch@longislandmediagroup.com for consideration.