

The Norwalk Hour

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MAYOR'S BALL

Young and old to benefit



Alex von Kleydorff / Hearst Connecticut Media

Mary Windt, executive director of The Marvin, talks with some ladies during one of the activities at senior housing center on Tuesday. Mayor Harry Rilling has named The Marvin as a recipient of proceeds from the 2018 Mayor's Ball.

Health center, The Marvin are fundraiser recipients

By Robert Koch

NORWALK — The old, the young and the underprivileged stand to benefit from the 2018 Mayor's Ball next month.

Mayor Harry Rilling has chosen The Marvin and Norwalk Community Health Center as recipients of proceeds

from the ball, which is Jan. 26 in Darien.

The Marvin

Mary Bennett, a lifelong Norwalk resident, has lived at The Marvin on Gregory Boulevard for eight years and enjoys a corner unit with a bedroom, kitchen and living room that lets in abundant sunshine. She said she likes the security and friendliness at The Marvin.

"The very friendliness and taking care of us — feeding us, that's very important," Bennett said. "And the security here is so nice because when you come in at night and lock the door, it's secure."

Bennett is one of 50 residents of Under One Roof/The Marvin, which opened as a congregate-housing facility at 60 Gregory Blvd in 1997 and since has expanded to include a pre-school

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Alexvon Kleydorff / Hearst Connecticut Media

Resident services coordinator Leticia Croke talks with resident Susan Roberts at The Marvin senior housing center on Tuesday. Mayor Harry Rilling has named The Marvin as a recipient of proceeds from the 2018 Mayor's Ball.

BALL

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center for children and assisted living services for seniors.

"We have an agency here, Masonicare, which has nursing on staff," said Marvin Executive Director Mary Windt. "It keeps people out of nursing homes."

Jane Staff, another lifelong Norwalker, followed her sister's footsteps by moving into The Marvin a year ago.

"Other people had come here that I know and I had visited here and I saw how everything was so nice," Staff said. "So that's why I came."

Staff said she likes the freedom afforded residents at The Marvin. Dinner is cooked in house for all, but residents can leave the facility as they please or stay inside for activities such as exercise classes, musical performances, bingo or painting. A library is also available. The Marvin issues a monthly newsletter that keeps residents abreast of the offerings and celebrates residents' birthdays.

Windt said proceeds from the Mayor's Ball will go toward programs and operations at the facility.

The money will come as The Marvin undergoes a \$3.5 million state-funded overhaul that will replace windows, upgrade lighting, install a new heating system and otherwise make the building more energy efficient.

Norwalk Community Health Center

Craig Glover, Norwalk Community Health Center CEO, said the center is excited that Rilling has chosen it as a recipient of proceeds from the Mayor's Ball.

On any give day, the health center on Connecticut Avenue handles 250 appointments for medical services and assistance, such as signing up for Medicaid and Medicare or connecting with food pantries.

"Norwalk Community Health Center provides medical, dental, and behavioral health services for approximately 14,000 patients annually," Glover said. "With a patient population that spans newborn to elderly, the focus is on continuity of care and wellness designed with and for each patient, regardless of their ability to pay."

Nearly three quarters live at or below the

federal poverty level. Half rely upon Medicaid, one in five are uninsured, one in 10 have private insurance and about 6 percent pay with Medicare. The center employs bilingual staff as many patients do not speak English.

The patients come to the health center for adult medicine, pediatric care, behavioral health, women's health and most recently dental services.

Dr. Jennifer Marrone, a clinical team leader, has worked at the center for nearly a decade in the women's health department. She said she's giving back to the community by seeing patients, hearing their concerns and treating them mentally, physically and emotionally.

"I've had patients that have seen me for the last nine years and I see their mothers and I see their daughters and it's like a whole life cycle of family," Marrone said. "That's why I really do truly love Norwalk Community Health Center. I love my patients and this is why we're here every day."

Not all are served in house. In 2013, the health center introduced its Medical Mobile Unit, which travels throughout greater Norwalk and provides adult, pediatric, dental hygiene and women's health services to the area's most vulnerable and least-mobile residents.

The health center opened in 1999 and grew steadily. In 2010, under CEO Larry Cross, it moved from cramped quarters on Water Street into the 24,500-square-foot facility at 120 Connecticut Ave.

"We're trying to find more space," Glover said. "We're going to keep this (space), but we're looking to add additional space."

Mayor's Ball Jan. 26

The 2018 Mayor's Ball is at 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 26, at the Waters Edge at Giovanni's in Darien. Reservations with payment will be accepted until Jan. 17 or until the venue sells out. Tickets are \$125 per person. Tables of 10 can be reserved.

Checks should be made payable to the "Norwalk Community Benefit Fund." For information, call Maritza Alvarado at 203-854-7950. Silent auction donations produce the bulk of the ball proceeds. To donate a silent auction item, call Sally Johnson, executive assistant to the mayor, at 203-854-7707.

2018 Norwalk Mayor's Ball to benefit old and young



Jane Staff likes the fact the cooking an option and that she can head to the dining room for meals instead at The Marvin senior housing center on Tuesday, Nov. 21.

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