



Rockland County Legislator John Murphy District 16 Newsletter

Serving the Communities of Pearl River, Tappan, Blauvelt, Sparkill

Autumn 2014

Rockland Psychiatric Center Campus: Past and Future

From the time I joined the Rockland County Legislature over 40 years ago in 1971, it has been my honor and joy that my Legislative District has hosted one of our nation's most valued treasures and historic sites, the Rockland Psychiatric Center Campus. Although it is much smaller in size than 40-50 years ago and now hosts two large athletic sites - the GAA field, which I am proud to be able to say that I had a hand in securing its first lease on the property and the Orangetown fields, which the Town government made possible when it purchased the property most recently declared surplus. Now I hope to be a part of the year-long anniversary celebration of the core of the campus, the former Rockland State Hospital, now the Rockland Psychiatric Center (RPC).



People admitted to RPC are transferred from community hospitals in Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester Counties. Our hospital serves people with complex mental illnesses requiring treatment beyond brief hospitalization. RPC Community Services Programs are located in Westchester, Sullivan, Dutchess, Ulster, and of course, in Rockland County. All of the Rockland community services are provided on the Orangeburg campus, unless otherwise noted. They are the Recovery Center in Bldg. 19; the Orangeburg Service Center in Bldg.1; the Nyack Service Center, Nyack; the NY Residential Care Center for Adults (RCCA) in Bldg. 17; the Acute Psychiatric Crisis Residence (APCR) in Bldg. 57; the Transitional Placement Program (TPP) in Bldg. 57; the Orangeburg Transitional Residence (OTR) in Bldg. 57 and the Sullivan Transitional Residence in Bldg. 57. The number served (on any given day) are: Inpatient-400, Family Care-250, Residential-350, and

Enrolled Outpatients 3400.

Construction began in 1927 on a 600-acre rural campus, and initially had 5,768 beds. With a working farm, its own power plant and industrial shops staffed by patients who manufactured everything from mattresses to brooms and furniture, RPC was then considered among the best-planned psychiatric hospitals in the world. In 1931, the hospital opened to 60 male patients. By 1959, the peak year for admittance, RPC had more than 9,000 residents (including a staff of 2,000). Then, just about when I appeared on the scene, the policy of "Deinstitutionalization" was under way, which is another story to be told in a book I have started to write.

This was soon followed by the establishment of a separate Children's Psychiatric Center (RCPC). I am proud to say I served on the first RCPC Board of Visitors and continue today, to serve on the boards for both the Adult and Children's facilities. RCPC is a psychiatric hospital exclusively for children and adolescents between the ages of 11 and 16 from the Hudson Valley Region. It is currently housed in a relatively new building while its previous home is now the set for the hit cable show, "Orange is the New Black."

Another internationally renowned facility on this oasis of hope is the Nathan S. Kline Institute for Psychiatric Research (NKI) that has earned a reputation for its pioneering contributions in psychiatric research, especially in the areas of psychopharmacological treatments for schizophrenia and major mood disorders, and in the application of computer technology for mental health services. Since 1952, interdisciplinary teams of distinguished NKI scientists have applied their talents and expertise to study the etiology, treatment, prevention, and rehabilitation of severe and persistent mental illnesses.

It is my considered judgment, strengthened with time and experience within the mental health universe, that this campus is an oasis of hope that will flourish with the success we all so achingly long for.

9th Annual Rockland County Autism Symposium



More than 3.5 million Americans live with an Autism Spectrum Disorder and the prevalence is rising, affecting 1 in 68 births. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention it is the fastest-growing, serious developmental disability in the country. That is why Camp Venture and County Legislator and Venture President John Murphy, Inna and Josh Needelman (Mindworks), the Rockland County Legislature and the Autism Science Foundation bring the top medical research scientists and service providers in the field of Autism to Rockland County each Fall to inform parents, educators, providers and those on the spectrum about the latest information on autism research, treatment and techniques, strategies and pharmacology news.

This year, our sponsors are pleased to present the following highly acclaimed experts:

- Dr. Fred Volkmar, Irving B. Harris Professor, Yale Child Study Center and Professor of Pediatrics, of Psychiatry and of Psychology; Chief, Child Psychiatry at Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital; Chair, Child Study Center
- Peter Pierri, Executive Director, Interagency Council of Developmental Disabilities Agencies, Inc.,
- Dr. Vincent J. Carbone, Ed.D., BCBA-D, Carbone Clinic
- Michael Storz, President, Chapel Haven, a support services organization

9th Annual Rockland Autism Symposium
Thursday, October 30, 2014
Pearl River Hilton, 8:00 am to 3:00 pm

For information on registration and past symposiums, please visit the website:

<http://www.rocklandautismsymposium.com/>

Legislator Murphy Addresses the Sale of Summit Park Hospital

As most of you know, Rockland County formed a Local Development Corporation (LDC) in 2013 for the purpose of selling Summit Park Hospital and Nursing Care Center. In July 2014, the LDC Board unanimously passed a resolution to enter into a purchase sale agreement, which allows for the eventual transfer of the Nursing Care Center and Hospital. The \$36 million bid of Summit Park Acquisition Group, LLC was chosen from four competitors that submitted proposals last fall. The sale of Summit Park is indicative of significant problems and disparities within the broader national health care financing system. Sweeping changes are taking place both in how care is paid for, and also how care is delivered.

As a result, hospitals and nursing care centers all across New York are in crisis. Here in Rockland, the taxpayers have provided millions of dollars each year in subsidies to Summit Park, which has become a drain on the county's cash flow. With this imbalance expected to worsen in the coming years, the decision was made by the previous administration to put the facility on the market to help navigate the county beyond its serious fiscal challenges.

Summit Park Hospital and Nursing Care Center moved to the present location in 1976 and has served the people of this county with dedication and pride. Many of those who work at the complex have served our families and neighbors for decades. Please know the move to privatize Summit Park does not reflect poorly on the hospital and nursing home staff or the quality of care offered to patients. Despite months of uncertainty, these dedicated health professionals continue to provide

an excellent level of care and support.

With the expected transfer of ownership in early 2015, Summit Park will be well-positioned to face the new realities of American healthcare. For those employees who continue with the purchaser, I believe each will grow more as a professional, with expanded opportunities in a well-funded company. I am confident the hospital will emerge stronger from this transaction.

The decision to sell Summit Park into private ownership is not a "silver bullet." Our budget crisis will not be solved by this transaction alone. In fact, most of the \$36 million earned on the deal will not go toward our \$138 million deficit. However, the sale will stop the bleeding, allowing the financial recovery of Rockland County to move forward.

A transition team, including unionized hospital staff, has been established to ensure patient, employee, and community needs are met during the process. Under the terms of the agreement, all residents will continue to be residents and none will be transferred without their written consent. All employees will be considered for continuing employment. We will work tirelessly to ensure a smooth transition.

As we work to finalize the purchase, please realize that operations at both the hospital and nursing home remain at full throttle. Inside the facility, it's "business as usual," with new patients arriving each week. We continue to make a significant investment in quality on a day-to-day basis from the top down. Rockland County residents will continue to have access to high quality health care services and other specialized needs.

Legislator Murphy and County Legislature Congratulates Camp Venture for New Business Enterprise

On September 2, 2014, County Legislators recognized Camp Venture, a not-for-profit provider of care and services to children and adults with developmental disabilities, for the organization's successful effort to establish an affirmative business that will provide job training and employment opportunities for participants of the organization's Adult Day Program, which serves over 450 persons with developmental disabilities on a daily basis.

The Camp Venture Print Shop, a specialty advertising business, is training participants to produce imprinted merchandise for sale to area businesses. A competitive wage will be paid to trained participants working on contract orders.

I sponsored the recognition, because the State and Federal Governments have required organizations like Camp Venture to advance career opportunities for their consumers that will promote community integration and greater independence. Camp Venture has complied by creating support services for their consumers as well as this affirmative business employment opportunity. The end goal is to move people from sheltered workshops and non-vocational programs into private sector jobs.

It was a privilege for Chairman Alden H. Wolfe and myself to present Certificates of Appreciation to Print Shop Participant Nancy Puchniak and to Venture staff members George Giddies, Mynor Lucero and Christina Forlow.

Ms. Puchniak thanked the Legislature for recognizing the program and explained the training and imprint process. "It is exciting to learn how to fill

the orders and work the machines," said Ms. Puchniak, "and I am looking forward to working in The Print Shop." Ms. Puchniak presented Legislators with hats and cups imprinted with Camp Venture's logo. Camp Venture's Executive Director Dan Lukens said, "For the participants, The Print Shop offers them a chance to develop skills and to get ready to move from an Adult Day Program into the world of competitive work. Our consumers want to work and this business is a way to develop not only the skills for a job, but also a résumé."



Legislator John Murphy Appointed to County's Newly Formed Commission on Behavioral Health

For much of my professional career, I have dedicated myself to serving the needs of those whom society often neglects, the mentally ill, both as the Co-Founder of Loeb House and as a member of the Boards of Visitors of New York State's Rockland Psychiatric Center and Rockland Children's Psychiatric Center. As such, I am pleased to announce that on August 13, 2014 the Rockland County Commission on Community Behavioral Health was launched.

Given all the recent changes in America's health

care system, it is vital that the county create a commission to develop comprehensive strategies to increase access to mental health services in Rockland, in a financially responsible way. The 26-member panel of experts will conduct a community assessment of behavioral health needs, including strengths and gaps, to better meet our needs in a culturally sensitive way. The volunteer commission will make recommendations for specific steps to shape the delivery of County-provided mental health services for years to come.

Camp Venture Memorial Pond Twins with Auschwitz Memorial Ash Pond

In addition to serving as your County Legislator, I have been serving as the President/Chairman of the Board of Camp Venture, a private, voluntary, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) provider of a full menu of human care services to over 1,800 Developmentally Disabled adults and children.

In 1997, Camp Venture created and dedicated a Memorial Pond, "The Pond of the 200,000," to the memory of those handicapped people murdered by the Nazi regime, because they were judged to be "Useless Eaters." The inspiration for Camp Venture's "Memorial Pond of the 200,000" came from the Ash Ponds at Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Death Camps. Seven decades have passed since man's most infamous act of inhumanity against their fellow man, a genocide so great, it nearly obliterated the Jewish people from the face of the Earth. Even now, if one throws a stone in the ash ponds, so named for the cremated human remains thrown into the ponds, a cloud of gray, lifeless ash rises up from the dense depths of death and human destruction, a reminder of the souls we must never forget and a reminder of what we must never allow again.

The pond is on property that was part of the Campus of the Dominican Sisters of Sparkill, adjacent to the building that was once the Rosary Academy For Girls and now serves as a Day Activities Center for Camp Venture's most egregiously damaged adults. It is the largest day center in the County. The pond includes wheelchair accessible docks and paths and is used as a respite for

Camp Venture's consumers to be cared for and walked or wheeled about on pleasant days.

Since there are only two such ponds in the world, we decided they should be "twinned," as are many locations throughout the world. This would bring two generations, two worlds, two religions, two classes of people robbed of their nobility together in the minds and hearts of a public that may have grown immune to the lessons of indifference. In commemoration of the innocents lost, but not forgotten, a special Holocaust Memorial will be erected at Camp Venture's pond, identical to the memorials at Auschwitz, as part of the twinning of the two ponds, lest time erases a lesson to be remembered.

Now is the hour for us to collectively find a way to create a caring communion of people willing to remind the community not only of our moral obligations, but the wisdom of nurturing brotherhood and mutual respect by revisiting/rededicating the message of the "Pond of the 200,000." Camp Venture's inclusive Community Committee and its Honorary Chairperson, Mrs. Matilda Cuomo, invite the Rockland community to come together and join our rededication of the "Memorial Pond of the 200,000," and twinning with the Ash Ponds at Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camps in Poland.

... Please Join Us ...

**The Camp Venture
Rededication and Twinning
Ceremony
October 2, 2014, 10:00 A.M.
Venture Center
230 Route 340, Sparkill, N.Y.**



The Ash Pond at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp in Poland where over 1 million innocent women, men, and children were gassed to death for being Jewish. It is a memorial pond like Camp Venture's "Pond of the 200,000" for the innocent also murdered by the Nazis for being handicapped.

*Please do not hesitate
to write, call or e-mail
Legislator Murphy
with any questions or concerns*

Legislator John Murphy

Rockland County Legislature
11 New Hempstead Road,
New City NY 10956
(845) 638-5100

MurphJo@co.rockland.ny.us

Visit: www.rocklandgov.com
Like us: www.facebook.com/rockleg

