

Leaders Discuss Keeping Kids Safe in Disasters

With the prevalence of major disasters on the rise, emergency management officials and community partners from Putnam County are helping local communities throughout the nation build capacity to keep children safe during catastrophic events.

At a congressional briefing May 17, Barbara Ilardi, public information officer for the Putnam County Department of Health, and Barbara Garbarino, community liaison for the Putnam County Community Resilience Coalition, delivered presentations about the groundbreaking policy advances the county has made in preparing for the unique needs of children in disasters.

Congressman Sean Maloney, D-Cold Spring, also spoke at the Capitol Hill briefing.

The event was hosted by the National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University's Earth Institute and representatives from Save the Children. The two organizations have collaborated with Putnam County for more than two years on a project called the Resilient Children/Resilient Communities Initiative, which is funded by a three-year grant from the global health care company GSK.

The Resilient Children/Resilient Communities Initiative has been developing an innovative disaster resilience model that specifically focuses on the disaster preparedness needs of children at the local level. The team is piloting the model in Putnam County, as well as Washington County, Arkansas. In both locations, the RCRC team has brought emergency management officials together with child-serving institutions, schools, after-school programs, social services, health care providers, parents, and dozens of other stakeholders to address gaps in the infrastructure that protects children in the event of a major disaster.

The goal is to ensure the safety of children, restore a sense of normalcy to their lives as quickly as possible, and enhance the ability of entire communities to bounce back after catastrophic events.

The RCRC also established a national panel of experts to link the community work with national preparedness priorities. The National Children's Resilience Leadership Board convenes to monitor progress on the local model's development and to help translate the challenges and gaps identified by the local communities into national policy when and where necessary.

"I'm incredibly proud that Putnam County is one of only two in the entire country on the cutting edge of a movement to prioritize kids' needs during disasters, and making sure they can get back on their feet after the dust has settled," said Maloney. "If you're a parent, you probably already know that kids and adults experience hardship differently. If we just take some time to plan and to think about gaps in services before disaster strikes, we'll get better outcomes for our children — that's why this initiative is so

important."

"We are proud to be part of this cutting-edge work," added Garbarino. "The needs of children can be overlooked because they often cannot speak for themselves. But by a taking a child-focused approach to resilience, local community stakeholders can have the infrastructure in place to make sure the unique needs of kids are met when disaster strikes."

Jeff Schlegelmilch, RCRC project director and deputy director of NCDP, said that what makes this initiative so unique and powerful is that it really puts the communities in the driver's seat, with access to the expertise and national audiences that is normally out of reach for community-level action.

"And they are paying it forward with all of the tools used these past years soon to be available to other communities looking to do similar work," he said.

Butterfield Funding Comes Up in County Exec. Race

Continued from Page 1

slate," he said at a recent County Legislature Physical Services Committee meeting.

However, another \$300,000 is still needed to cover a \$134,000 "project shortfall," as well as kitchen equipment (\$75,000), furniture and furnishings (\$20,000) and contingencies (\$68,000), said Tully.

"It's important to the process that we have this funding in place," he said. "We can't make an award unless we know that the funding is there to execute on it."

It is expected that some of the extra expenditure will be recouped through various grants, he added.

Legislator Barbara Scuccimarra, R-Philipstown, said she will be meeting with Congressman Sean Maloney, D-Cold Spring, to request that he secure funding for the project.

"I have a meeting with Congressman Maloney," she said. "It'll be the second one I have, and I'm asking him to contribute to this project, as well. So even though we're laying out \$300,000 more, hopefully

I'm going to recoup some of that."

The committee unanimously approved the increase in expenditures, and the full Legislature is expected to vote on it during its May 1 meeting.

With this additional funding request, Fleming said the Odell administration has put taxpayers on the hook for at least \$1.1 million to fit out rental space in the Lahey Pavilion, which is space the people of Putnam do not own.

Fleming, who has been elected Kent town supervisor for three terms, called the additional funding request outrageous.

"It is the job of the county executive to spend the public's money prudently, and to deliver essential services," she said. "Odell has done neither at the Butterfield site. The only party getting a good deal at Butterfield is the developer."

"Butterfield is yet another example of fiscal mismanagement by Odell and her administration," continued Fleming. "The proposed Butterfield senior center is 6,000 square feet in an existing building. Why are the costs so high for this small retrofit, and why is public money being spent on a building the public does not own?"

Plans to redevelop the Butterfield site were put forward by Peekskill developer Paul Guillaro in late 2012, and talks to include

a county senior center on the site began in 2013.

Since signing a lease with Guillaro, the county has paid rent on the unfinished, unoccupied space, said Fleming. County highway crews have been paid to demolish the interior, rough plumb and hang drywall — which has kept them from the roads and away from the infrastructure work the public pays them to do, according to the supervisor.

"Odell has wasted precious time and public money on Butterfield," said Fleming. "She missed multiple opportunities to do other sites to deliver what our seniors have asked for and deserved — a welcoming space where they can access fresh, healthy meals and engaging, enriching programming. Instead, they've got an empty building with frozen meals delivered from across the county, and no clear indication that the facility they've been promised will ever become a reality."

Odell, however, said that making the Butterfield senior center a reality is "the right thing to do" considering all that seniors do for the community.

"They're taxpayers, and they've been paying taxes for a very long time," she said. "We need to fund this project. This project has been on the books for many, many years, and this administration is bringing it to fruition."

NAMI Putnam County

National Alliance on Mental Illness



Putnam County Fourth Annual Mental Health Awareness Walk

You are not alone!



Saturday May 5, 2018 9am – Noon
 Round trip: Carmel Fire Dept. → Putnam County Bike Path

Participants and friends of NAMI Putnam County:

We are sponsoring this walk to raise the awareness that mental illness is a disease of the brain and just like any other illness it can be diagnosed and treated. Recovery is not only possible it can be expected. We need your help to continue to support families and individuals in Putnam County who are struggling with mental illness. ALL proceeds will help fund the FREE educational, advocacy and support services that NAMI Putnam provides. To reach our goal, we hope that each participant or friend finds 8 sponsors: your family, your friend, or your co-worker, to support this cause. For more information and to register visit us on the web at: www.namiputnam.org