

H.H. Wells Raises \$3,000 For CoveCare Center

Henry H. Wells Middle School in Brewster recently hosted its annual Italian bistro dinner fundraiser, where faculty, staff, students and families joined together to show their continued support for CoveCare Center, which provides services to foster hope, wellness and recovery in the community.

In addition to the dinner, three student organizations – the Student Council, the National Junior Honor Society and the Student Art Club – recently donated funds to continue a long-standing partnership between the school and CoveCare Center. With the contributions from the student organizations, close to \$3,000 was raised this year.

“We are so impressed by the dedication, passion and generosity of the staff and students at H.H. Wells and grateful for their ongoing support of our mission,” said Diane Russo, chief executive officer at CoveCare Center. “We continue to see more children and families in need, and the donations from H.H. Wells will truly make a difference and assist us in continuing to pro-



From left are Jean Marie Mullen of the H.H. Wells Mathematics Department, Principal John Clark, and CoveCare Center Chief Executive Officer Diane Russo.

vide services to improve the health of those in our community.”

To add to the school’s generosity this year, three artists – Sadie, Lauren and Angie – created a painting for the agency that symbolizes important facets of what CoveCare Center offers to its young clients and families, and the hope that the agency instills in

the community.

A recent book drive at the school resulted in CoveCare receiving brand new books to share with its younger clients, which will be housed in the Children’s Therapeutic Playroom.

H.H. Wells supported the renovation of the playroom in 2016.

CoveCare Center is the only private, non-profit agency providing recovery-based mental health and substance use treatment and prevention services in Putnam County. It offers hope and healing to people of all ages through a comprehensive range of services, including individual and group counseling, care coordination, family advocacy, parenting education, community outreach, and medication management.

For more information about CoveCare Center and its services, visit www.CoveCareCenter.org or www.facebook.com/CoveCareCenter, or call 845-225-2700.

Three Putnam Lakes Included in State Plans to Combat Algae

A dozen tailored action plans to address the causes of harmful algal blooms (HABs) in priority waterbodies across upstate New York – including Lake Carmel, Palmer Lake and Putnam Lake – were announced last week by Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

The action plans outline specific projects and programs to be implemented at priority lakes and also identify actions that can be taken at waterbodies statewide to reduce the threat of HABs.

The increasing frequency and duration of harmful algal blooms threatens drinking water quality and the recreational use of waterbodies that are essential to upstate tourism and ecosystem health, according to Cuomo. HABs, which are formed by high concentrations of blue-green algae or cyanobacteria, can produce dangerous toxins that can harm people and animals, close economically important beaches and fisheries, and threaten drinking water supplies.

Blue-green algal blooms have arrived early in Putnam for the second consecutive year. So far this summer, seven public beaches in Putnam County have been closed due to harmful growth.

“These harmful blooms are a significant issue for our county,” said County Executive MaryEllen Odell. “We have a number of beautiful lakes that have been affected. This can cause problems for recreation, and potentially for the quality of our drinking water. State funding and expertise will help us combat this problem.”

“Warming temperatures may be to blame in part for the increasing number and duration of blue-green algae blooms,” added Dr. Michael Nesheiwat, interim Putnam County commissioner of health. “The type in Putnam is technically known as cyanobacteria. These toxin-producing microscopic organisms are harmful to humans and animals if swallowed. At high levels, ingestion may cause nausea, diarrhea and vomiting, along with irritation of the skin, eyes, nose, throat, and respiratory tract.”

Toxic bacteria are naturally present in low numbers in lakes and streams. However, in warm, shallow, undisturbed surface water that gets a lot of sunlight, the bacteria can grow quickly and easily, creating a bloom. When this happens, floating scums on the water surface may appear, along with discolored water covering all or portions of a lake.

The Putnam County Department of Health closely monitors permitted bathing beaches, performing periodic checks at regular weekly or biweekly intervals depending on the situation. It also responds to calls from town, village and summer camp personnel. However, when there is visible

presence of blue-green algae, operators of permitted beaches must close their beaches.

Colors can range from green, blue, brown, yellow, grey or even red. Contact should be avoided with any discolored water, with or without a floating covering or unpleasant odor. When the water clears, either naturally or by treatment, follow-up water testing must be conducted, as toxins can still be present even after the bloom looks like it has passed.

“Only after a satisfactory result on a water test are town and beach personnel permitted to re-open the beach,” said Associate Public Health Sanitarian Shawn Rogan. “We work closely with the towns to reopen the beaches as soon as possible. If the water tests are acceptable, we can usually open a beach within two days.”

Treatment methods, if any, are strictly a town decision, and application of an algaecide requires approval by the state Department of Environmental Conservation.

During its initial phase, the governor directed the state’s Water Quality Rapid Response Team, co-chaired by the state DEC and Department of Health, to identify priority lakes that represent a range of locations, conditions, and vulnerability to HABs.

Four regional HABs summits were convened in February and March to bring together nation-leading experts with steering committees of local stakeholders to identify factors fueling HABs and to develop tailored strategies to reduce the frequency of these blooms.

The action plans derived from these summits describe the current conditions of the targeted waterbodies, summarize research conducted and data produced, identify potential causal factors contributing to algal blooms, and provide specific recommendations to minimize the frequency, intensity, and duration of HABs to protect public health and the environment.

The action plans will drive implementation of projects and programs on these waterbodies that are tailored to address the key factors likely fueling the blooms. Priority actions identified in the plans range from wastewater treatment upgrades, sewer expansions, and septic system upgrades and replacements, to streambank erosion prevention, stormwater best management practices, agricultural nutrient reduction measures, and open space buffer preservation projects.

The state is providing nearly \$60 million in grant funding to support implementation projects for the priority lakes, as well as other waterbodies impacted by HABs.

Man Accused of Groping

A Southeast man was arrested last week by New York State Police from Brewster after he allegedly pinched the buttocks of a child under the age of 7 at the Marshalls department store in Brewster, and reportedly asking the boy to follow him.

Jaroslav Kiskas, 43, was arrested June 15 and charged with forcible touching, a class A misdemeanor. He was processed without incident and issued an appearance ticket returnable to Southeast Town Court later this month.

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