



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Suzi Oppenheimer

Senator Oppenheimer Hosts Caregiver Support Seminar at White Plains High School

SUZI OPPENHEIMER October 14, 2010

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On October 13, 2010, Senator Suzi Oppenheimer (D-Mamaroneck) sponsored a free caregiver seminar in the Atrium of White Plains High School. The event featured experts from the Visiting Nurse Service of New York (VNSNY) who offered tips and techniques for taking care of loved ones and preventing caregiver burnout.

White Plains School Superintendent Christopher Clouet welcomed the audience and introduced the Senator, saying “Senator Oppenheimer has the vision to bring community members together to discuss and strategize on the delicate issues facing caregivers. The school district is delighted to host this important event.”

Senator Oppenheimer expressed her deep admiration for “the life-sustaining role caregivers play in assisting elderly or disabled loved ones. It is,” she said “the ultimate act of kindness, love and respect.” More than 65 million Americans – nearly 30% of the United States population -- are currently caring for a chronically ill, disabled or aged individual. “Most do so,” observed the Senator “with no formal training or professional support, many while holding full time jobs at the same time.”

Alluding to the “sandwich generation” who balance care for elderly parents, while providing for young children still at home, Senator Oppenheimer discussed the physical and emotional demands of caregiving, noting that the family disruption and increased financial pressures of caregiving can be enormously stressful.

“But the good news is that you are not alone. There are many wonderful groups and organizations that exist to provide you with the support you need.” With that, Senator Oppenheimer turned over the presentation to the experts of the VNSNY.

Judy Santamaria, Director of VNSNY Caregiver Services, spoke of the many challenges faced by caregivers and provided tips for avoiding caregiver burnout, stressing the importance of caregivers getting training to help them cope with their added responsibilities. Renata Gelman, a registered nurse and Nurse Care Manager, gave advice on managing medications, while Sandra Nohavicka, a VNSNY social worker advised caregivers on adapting a home environment for long-term care. The VNSNY gave out copies of its Caregiver Resource Booklet and other helpful literature.

The VNSNY is the largest not-for-profit home health care agency in the United States, serving more than 30,000 people each day. It provides a full range of home health care services throughout Westchester County and the New York City metropolitan area. For more information about the VNSNY or to obtain a copy of their Caregiver Resource Booklet, visit their website at www.vnsny.org or contact them at (800) 675-0391.