

Town & Village - Thursday, June 18, 2009,

Area Community Groups Work Together

The Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies (FPWA), located in the landmark Church Missions House building on East 22nd Street and Park Avenue South, recently accepted the GO Project into its membership after being reintroduced to the organization by Gramercy Park Block Association President Arlene Harrison. The GO Project shapes the futures of low-income New York City public school children by providing critical academic, social and emotional support starting in the early elementary years. GO provides year-round educational and family support services to children who are performing below grade level and equips them with the confidence and skills needed to succeed at school, at home and in life. As members of the Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, the GO Project will be eligible for a variety of member benefits, including direct financial assistance for their clients through FPWA's partnership with The New York Times Neediest Cases Fund, management and technical assistance, advocacy and legislative services, grant opportunities, an annual holiday toy and gift drive, and volunteer recruitment and placement.

The Gramercy Park Block Association, which has supported a number of FPWA's initiatives including their annual holiday toy and gift drive, was instrumental in getting the two groups together. Eliza Rockefeller, who is the Chair of the Gramercy Park Block Association's Children's Community Service Committee and a former student at the Grace Church School, volunteered with the GO Project and her enthusiastic endorsement inspired her mother, Tara Rockefeller, who sits on the boards of both the GO Project and the Gramercy Park Block Association and Arlene Harrison to pursue bringing the GO Project together with FPWA. They met with Susan Latham, Director of Development & Communication at FPWA to tell her about the GO Project, and then facilitated a meeting with Wendy Reynoso, GO Project's Executive Director. The GO Project had been a member of FPWA for many years, but the partnership lapsed with successive changes in staff at both organizations. Their reintroduction and the subsequent membership of the GO Project will result in new resources and supports for the over 300 youngsters they serve. Judy Milone, FPWA's Assistant Director of Member Services, guided the GO Project through the application process.

The Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies has been working since 1922 to improve the lives and conditions of disadvantaged and low-income New Yorkers. FPWA is unique in New York City in that it is the only membership organization for Protestant and non-sectarian health and human services agencies, with almost 300 member agencies and affiliated churches in its network. Rev. Dr. Thomas Pike, a Trustee of Gramercy Park and longtime Board Member of FPWA, introduced Arlene Harrison to Susan Latham two years ago, and the two have subsequently worked together on several initiatives benefiting New Yorkers in need.



Back Row, L-R: Tara Rockefeller, Board Member of Gramercy Park Block Association and the GO Project; Susan Latham, Director of Development & Communication at FPWA; Wendy Reynoso, Executive Director of the GO Project. Front Row, L-R: Eliza Rockefeller, Chair of the Gramercy Park Block Association's Children's Community Service Committee; Arlene Harrison, President of the Gramercy Park Block Association; Judy Milone, Assistant Director of Member Services at FPWA.

photo by Tim Mercure