

NASSAU COUNTY

★ **New lead for NICE program**

United Way of LI to oversee free MetroCard project

BY KELDY ORTIZ

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United Way of Long Island will now oversee a partnership with Nassau Inter-County Express that provides free MetroCards to county organizations for distribution to low- and moderate-income riders, officials with both agencies said Tuesday.

Everyone Rides NICE will now be administered by United Way, which will work with 21 social service agencies to provide MetroCards to eligible riders.

The announcement is set to be made Wednesday at a news conference at NICE headquarters in Garden City.

"These folks wouldn't have the funds or other disposal income to be able to allocate to transportation in the first place," said NICE CEO Jack Khzouz, "so whether they wanted to or not, they may not have the resources to be able to take the bus."

Newsday previously reported that the free MetroCard program was started in 2015 by Transdev, NICE's parent company, which partnered with United Way in 2017, using a one-time \$1.25 million grant.

The program will be run by United Way and work with col-



Everyone Rides NICE, a United Way of LI-NICE partnership, gives free MetroCards to eligible riders.

leges, nonprofits and other groups to distribute the cards, said Theresa Regnante, president and CEO of the United Way of Long Island.

Without a car, transportation on Long Island is a challenge, said Regnante, adding that about 2,500 riders use the free MetroCards.

"It's immensely more difficult to make an appointment on time, go to the doctor, go to the dentist, go to school, take your kid, whatever it is, it's really difficult," Regnante said of

life on Long Island without personal transportation.

Claudia Boyle, CEO of the Hispanic Counseling Center in Hempstead, said the barrier prevents people from using her facility, which provides services such as mental health and substance abuse.

"Either because they don't have a car or if they do sometimes it's hard for them to get from one place to another," said Boyle, adding that the MetroCards from United Way help.

Aysha Shahid, a rising senior

and premedicine major at New York Institute of Technology in Old Westbury, has benefited from the program. Shahid, 20, who commutes from Elmhurst, Queens and takes a MTA train and two buses, learned about the program in 2021.

"I don't have my own car and I also come from a single parent household so financially I have to budget a lot of what I do sometimes," she said. "The bus passes, they gave me some leeway so I don't have to worry about that."

FIRE MARSHAL: TEENS EXPOSED TO CARBON MONOXIDE

More than a dozen teenage campers were treated for carbon monoxide exposure Tuesday morning, with one hospitalized, at a religious camp in Great Neck, according to Nassau County's chief fire marshal.

The Great Neck Alert Fire Company received a 911 call at about 5:30 a.m. for an activated carbon monoxide alarm and a report of several people feeling ill at the Chabad of Great Neck on East Shore Road, said Fire Marshal Michael Uttaro.

Fire officials determined there were high readings of carbon monoxide in the building and that several teenage female campers sleeping at the camp had been evacuated, Uttaro said.

In total, 13 campers evaluated by EMS were suffering the effects of carbon monoxide exposure such as headaches, lightheadedness and nausea, he said.

One of the teens was taken to North Shore University Hospital for observation, and 12 others were evaluated at the scene, Uttaro said.

The Fire Marshal's Office issued several fire code violations for inadequate smoke alarms, inadequate carbon monoxide alarms, no portable fire extinguishers and electrical violations, he said.

Camp officials and the Kings Point Police Department, which responded to the scene, did not respond to requests for comment.

The Kings Point building inspector shut down the camp's heating and ventilation system, which caused the carbon monoxide to seep into the building, Uttaro said.

— ROBERT BRODSKY



Sick campers at the Chabad of Great Neck were treated.

MANORHAVEN VILLAGE

Trustee unseats incumbent mayor in elections

BY DARWIN YANES

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The Village of Manorhaven has elected a new mayor and two trustees by narrow margins.

John Popeleski, who serves as a village trustee, defeated Mayor Jim Avena, who was seeking his fourth term on the board. Popeleski received 381 votes and Avena received 351. Popeleski ran alongside incumbent trustee Harry Farina and challenger Monica Ildefonso on the People's Working Party line. "Manorhaven residents were

ready for a change, and they made sure it happened during this election," Popeleski told Newsday. "I look forward to being that change for them."

Avena ran with Deputy Mayor Rita Di Lucia and Dan Garcia on the Manorhaven Residents Party line.

Farina, with 376 votes, and Ildefonso, with 364, beat out Garcia and Di Lucia, who received 361 and 359 votes, respectively. All candidates were elected to 2-year terms.

The board consists of three trustees, a deputy mayor and a

mayor. Trustees are paid \$3,000 a year. Vincent Costa is also a trustee.

Popeleski said he will appoint someone to take over his trustee seat at the village's July 6 board meeting.

Avena did not respond to requests for comment.

Popeleski, who retired from the Port Washington Water District six years ago, was first elected as a trustee in 2016. He told Newsday the village is in the midst of several important projects including resurfacing roadways, rebuilding Manor-

haven's section of the preserve pathway and upgrading pump station and sewer lines. He added that he will work to secure grant funding for more upgrades to the area.

Additionally, he said he will work with the Greater Port Washington Business Improvement District and the local chamber of commerce to try to bring more businesses to the village.

"We have a lot to do but we are ready to roll up our sleeves and keep moving forward until we get everything done," Popeleski said.