

GEORGE LATIMER, Westchester County Executive

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WESTCHESTER COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH PRESENTS 2018 PUBLIC HEALTH AWARDS

Top Honors go to Norman Haight and Paul Presendieu-Cuesta

Together with Joan McDonald, director of operations for Westchester County, the Westchester County Board of Health presented the 2018 Public Health Awards on **Thursday April 19 at 10:30 a.m. in the Atrium in the Jeannette J. Phillips Health Center, 1037 Main Street, Peekskill.**

This year's awards recognize outstanding contributions to public health in Westchester by five people and celebrate the accomplishments of the public health community. The presentation was hosted by HRHCare Community Health in Peekskill. National Public Health Week was observed April 3-9.

"We all benefit from the commitment of these volunteers to improving the health of our community," said McDonald, who presented the winners with proclamations honoring their achievements on behalf of County Executive George Latimer. "With their extraordinary concern for others, these individuals set an example for all of us. I congratulate the winners and I encourage other residents to follow in their footsteps."

On behalf of Latimer, McDonald thanked the volunteer members of the Westchester County Board of Health for safeguarding the county's health, along with Health Commissioner Dr. Sherlita Amler and the health department, who work together to preserve, protect and promote the health of Westchester residents.

Board of Health President Robert Baker, MD, presented the Dr. Harold Keltz Distinguished Public Health Service Award to Norman Haight, a lifelong Peekskill resident.

"Norman Haight has demonstrated an enduring commitment to improving the health and well-being of Westchester's most fragile populations," Baker said. "His volunteer work and service as a vice president and trustee at The Preservation Company, a not-for-profit agency, has supported the construction and preservation of affordable housing in the Hudson Valley."

“Norman’s welcoming smile opens the door to his commitment to meeting the housing and health care needs of his community,” said Jeanette Phillips, executive director of The Preservation Company. “Throughout his years as a board member, Norman has worked to assure we partnered with developers to provide housing for seniors and special populations, and has supported events that bring the diversity of our communities together.”

The Board awarded the J.R. Tesone Youth Public Health Service Award to Paul Presendieu-Cuesta, 27, of New Rochelle, for his efforts to promote environmental awareness on the Westchester Community College campus. Mr. Presendieu-Cuesta led the effort to revive Earth Day on campus and has continued to expand Earth Day activities at WCC since 2015.

“As a Westchester Community College student, Paul made it his mission to revive earth day on campus and he has continued to volunteer his time to improve sustainability and environmental awareness there long after he graduated,” Baker said.

“We are very proud of Paul’s continued contributions to public health and public good,” said Westchester Community College President Dr. Belinda Miles. “Paul is an exemplary graduate of Westchester Community College who sets a high standard and is a great example of how an individual can make a positive difference on behalf of the environment.”

The Board also recognized three Public Health Honorees:

- Hector Santiago, 30, is a Yonkers resident and community activist who walked alone from Yonkers to Albany last summer to highlight the need for additional resources to address the mental health needs of New Yorkers. Mr. Santiago is a former gang member who initiated the StopAndShake campaign to improve relations between police and the communities they serve.
- Marisa Porgpraputson, 31, is a Scarsdale resident and recent College of New Rochelle graduate preparing for a career in nursing. A leader of the Student Nurses Association at CNR, she played an active role in publicizing and coordinating opioid education and training for CNR nursing students.
- Myrantz Assade, 36, is an Irvington resident and recent College of New Rochelle graduate who now works as a registered nurse. He was a leader of the Student Nurses Association at CNR who helped plan a series of educational events on campus to inform students about the opioid public health epidemic. Included in the events were opioid overdose prevention training sessions led by the Westchester County Department of Health.

“The Health Department is fortunate to have such capable partners working alongside us to promote public health in our communities,” said Health Commissioner Sherlita Amler, MD. “We are especially grateful to not-for-profit groups and to our honorees, who enhance and support the efforts of local organizations.”

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Westchester County, located in the heart of the historic Hudson Valley, covers 500 square miles and has a population of just under a million. Originally home to Native Americans, who were members of the Lenape tribe, it is today a rich mix of many cultures and landscapes. The County is a blend of bustling cities, quaint villages and picturesque towns as well as open spaces and a network of beautiful parks. Westchester is made up of 6 cities, 19 towns and 20 villages. Westchester County is known for top-notch public schools, and a high quality of life. The County is also an intellectual capital, boasting a highly educated workforce, competitive colleges and universities, Fortune 500 companies, world changing non-profits, and cutting-edge research centers. Westchester is led by County Executive George Latimer, who took office in January 2018 as the ninth County Executive. Using inclusion and openness as a foreground, Latimer is fighting to make Westchester a destination for all people to live, work and enjoy. Learn more about Westchester County by visiting www.westchestergov.com

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