

SPOTLIGHT ON THE WOMEN'S CLUB SUPPORTING THE LOCAL EFFORTS OF THE RISE ORGANIZATION

Raquel DeMillio

"Real generosity is doing something nice for someone who 'll never find it out." Frank A. Clark

Give yourself a pat on the back. Yes, You! As a member of the Women's Club, you've supported efforts to uplift others. Through the years, the Women's Club has conducted very successful food drives (Thanksgiving and spring) and back-to-school gift card collections (July) to assist Rise, a wonderful non-profit organization, located in Hightstown.

As a result of President Lyndon Johnson's 1967 War on Poverty, Rise was one of four community centers begun in Mercer County, under its legal name, Community Action Service Center. Housed in small second floor offices on Main Street, Rise provided basic social services to the area which was very rural, mostly farmland. Since that time, their work has expanded tremendously, so much so that in 1992, Rise was recognized as a separate non-profit entity. Growing with the times, Rise Case Managers help clients navigate connections to support agencies, promote health clinics, refer to counseling/legal/special programs/soup kitchens and publish (online through uRise,) free community offerings. Relying on generous donations and applying for grants has permitted them to reduce their reliance on government funding.

Current offices on Franklin Street are in a building purchased in June 2021 from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). Fun fact: before IBEW, the building was used as a synagogue. Rise maintains the original offices on Main Street, used mostly for English as a Second Language and health classes. Profits from their 114 Rogers Avenue thrift store provide financial assistance for their 6-week camp, servicing 105 children this summer, and youth programs. In 2021, Rise Pantry volunteers supplied 4,525 baby products, 2,495 bags of personal products, 1,312 Thanksgiving baskets and maintained a year-round pantry for 1,192 food-insecure families visiting each month. In November 2021, the Women's Club donated 25 shopping carts filled with non-perishable food and \$1,500 in gift cards for Rise's Thanksgiving Drive. For the 2022 Spring Food Drive, eight carloads packed Stonebridge's food donations. For the July back-to-school Backpack Drive, our \$950 gift card collection truly bolstered their efforts.

Receiving generous support from organizations like the Women's Club has allowed Rise to achieve its goal to consistently help those in unfavorable circumstances. Way to go, Stonebridge Women's Club!!

Caring Cooks at Ronald McDonald House: dates are available. Please contact Pat Marino at pdefeo917@yahoo.com for information.

RAVE: Reading a book to students. Interested women submit an application at the Children's Desk, Monroe Twp. Library. Volunteers are matched with a classroom, based upon preferences.