

Long Island Volunteer Hall of Fame

Archive Project

Inception to Induction

New Ground

“We Educate, We Empower”

Year of Founding: 1991

Issues Addressed: Poverty and Homelessness

Induction Category and Year: Homelessness, 2003

Founder: Mairead M. Barrett

History: In 1991, Mairead M. Barrett, a nun, grew astounded at the amount of families on Long Island who were stuck in the never ending brutal cycle of homelessness, and with the overwhelming number of people who could never seem to make it out of local shelters. Through this sudden realization, New Ground, a nonprofit organization, was born. This organization was based on the idea that educating the population would be a premise for change in the way people live their lives. New Ground works with many different organizations to give people the tools to start over and maintain the healthy, happy life that they deserve. New Ground starts from the very beginning and works its way to help a family succeed. Once a family is selected, they can take part in any of their services that will help them achieve their short term and long term goals. It all starts with Intensive Care Management, which at first concentrates on a family's immediate needs. A social worker will provide support to help a family move in the direction that it needs to go and will help decide what that particular family will need to achieve in the long term.

Another program New Ground provides is educational funding for those who need it. Through countless contributions, New Ground is able to help children and young adults meet all their educational goals including but not limited to, SAT prep and reading courses. They also help with smaller, though just as important things, such as lunch money and public transportation fees. An educational advocate will assist in reading and psychological assessments in order to provide the accurate amount of help for any particular individual. Assessment for learning disabilities is a top priority, as is providing the right tools for the child's learning. New Ground believes it is important to work with both adolescent and adults to overcome the mindset that may one day lead to poverty.

New Ground knows that although education is a top priority it is also equally important for children to enjoy their young lives. The organization recognizes that most of these children have experienced hardships well beyond their years.

Special programs, such as Family Memories, will help a child realize the benefits that more privileged children have. Each month Family Memories sets up a special event for the children to take part in such as sending Easter cards and baskets in April, or their yearly summer outings such as fishing trips and barbeques. This will give the children something to look forward to and some incentive to keep themselves happy and on the right path.

Another very important aspect of New Ground is called Homeward Bound. Within this program New Ground is doing everything they can to stop the cycle of homelessness. Most importantly, they help by providing long term housing which enables its members to get a higher education and obtain degrees. This will provide an opportunity for those members to seek a career with a salary that they would not have gotten without continuing their education. Homeward Bound at New Ground will then supply the means, whether it be in the form of monetary or moral support, to help people who were once homeless, to integrate themselves into a world where they are no longer in poverty, and can adapt to everyday living.

In addition to working with the homeless, New Ground has dedicated itself to helping our veterans. Catherine Martin INN and New Ground have been in a collaboration to assist male veterans that are in recovery since 1995. It is important for these veterans after they leave the military to be able to find full time employment in order to support themselves and their families.

There have been some amazing statistics from all of New Ground's hard work and dedicated staff. Since 1991, New Ground has assisted 78% of their participants achieve the goal of finding long term housing on their own. Sixty-six percent of families had at least one adult in their unit who was able to complete an education program. Ninety-three percent of the children who participated achieved some kind of academic success by the time they left New Ground. Plus an amazing 100% of its participants increased their household income. Through their countless efforts, and incredibly dedicated staff, New Ground is sure to have a very positive effect on the community and will continue to strive in the fight against poverty, and homelessness in the form of education and empowerment.

Agency Mission: Through a dedicated staff of social workers and counselors along with professionals with knowledge of substance abuse, New Ground works to provide families with the tools to be able to stop the cycle of recidivism and ultimately strive to end poverty on Long Island.

Population Served: New Ground provides any needed support to anyone who has been homeless and in local shelters. In addition to families stricken with poverty, New Ground also works with veterans who do not have the means to support themselves to find a good

paying job after their time in the military. Although there is a waiting list to be a part of this outstanding program, New Ground strives hard to serve its community with dedication and focus, and be able to provide for anyone who doesn't have the means to provide for themselves.

Scope of activities: New Ground offers a variety of activities, such as Getting Focused, where its participants are able to express their creativity through photography. These children have the opportunity to have their work submitted to various exhibits in local libraries and museums. Another program that New Ground participates in is called Reading All Stars. Within this program, children stricken with poverty and homelessness have the chance to achieve their academic goals. Homework help and reading assistance are we provided within this particular program.

Volunteering: New Ground has opened its doors to many volunteers both in the past and present. Volunteers help families choose the best programs for them to get them started on a path to achieving their goals.

Affiliate Organizations: Family Memories, Catherine Martin INN, Reading All Stars and Homeward Bound.

New Ground Supporters: Newsday Charities, We Care Fund, Wal-Mart East Meadow, Bethpage Federal Credit Union, Astoria Federal Saving, Citi Community Development, NYS Senator Kemp Hannon, Bank of America, and TD Charitable Foundation, among countless donations from caring local individuals.

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**Submitted by:
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