

SPOTLIGHT:

Jan Fisher

Executive Director, Nonprofit Westchester

Jan Fisher has long served in the local nonprofit sector, working with Westchester Jewish Community Services — the largest provider of outpatient mental health treatment in the county — for 13 years before consulting for The YWCA of White Plains & Central Westchester.

In July 2019, Fisher took a new position at the helm of an organization that has what she feels is a truly unique calling: “Nonprofit Westchester is the only business membership organization that is solely dedicated to advancing the needs and interests of Westchester’s nonprofit sector, the people we serve, and, most importantly, our workforce.”

During the pandemic, this mission took on a whole new sense of urgency. “CEOs of my member organizations, my board, and myself were literally working 20 hours a day just figuring out how we were going to make sure people were safe and that our services were delivered,” recalls Fisher.

“Since COVID hit, we have held over 60 workshops on everything from board governance to [securing] grants; the local government came out with a funding opportunity for us, and our business sponsors have more than doubled,” she adds of Nonprofit Westchester’s success in the face of the pandemic.

In recent months, Fisher has worked tirelessly with the YWCA to create a new Center for Racial Equity and served on George Latimer’s Reopening Task Force to help area businesses and nonprofits reemerge and recover from the pandemic.

“COVID reinforced the importance of working together,” reflects Fisher, who adds that “when we all operate as one, our individual organizations will do better. If we are going to accomplish real change, we have to do it together.” —PA



Nonprofit Pioneers

Whether they are providing affordable housing, food, shelter, or sustainable energy solutions to residents, Westchester’s nonprofit leaders are helping heal our region, one selfless act at a time.

As president and CEO of Westhab, the county’s largest nonprofit developer of affordable housing and the biggest provider of housing services for the homeless, **Rich Nightingale** fights around the clock to aid area residents in need. Over the past year, Nightingale and Westhab have begun finishing touches on a \$45 million affordable residential campus, Dayspring Commons, and secured an additional \$1 million for an affordable-housing project titled Hudson Hill, both in Yonkers.

Since 2017, **Anahaita Kotval** has been an engine for change as CEO of White Plains’ Lifting Up Westchester, which is dedicated to providing food, shelter, and support to area residents. Recently, she helped Lifting Up Westchester secure new avenues of funding with the Hudson Gateway Realtor Foundation, as well as substantial grants from the ACME

Foundation and United Way.

Joining humanitarians like Kotval is **Karen Erren**, the newly installed president/CEO of the county’s largest nonprofit hunger-relief organization, Feeding Westchester. When the county’s food-insecurity rate rose by more than 50% during the pandemic, Erren, her staff, and nearly 300 community partners stepped up to find creative ways to feed 275,000 to 300,000 residents each month during the pandemic — twice the normal rate.

Similarly, **Nina Orville** works hard to facilitate green power initiatives as executive director of the nonprofit consortium Sustainable Westchester. After taking the reins in February, Orville had a major win her very first month on the job, when Yonkers mayor Mike Spano announced that the city would join Westchester Power, Sustainable Westchester’s history-making Community Choice Aggregation program, which uses online auction technology to help municipalities negotiate a fixed-rate clean-energy supply and expand residents’ access to a green electricity grid. —PA 