

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Members of the Kehillath Shalom Social Action Committee joined by local businesses and Legislator William R. Spencer
Back Row, L to R: Rachel Spencer, Deborah Globus, Legislator Spencer, Barbara Heller, and Carolyn Plante, from the Huntington Senior Center.
Front Row: Marie Korn, Ruth Frize, Abbey Parriser, Debbie Rimler from the Tri-CYA, and Kay Posillico of the Life Center.

Thank You Reception Recognizes Local Businesses Who Participated in the 5,000 Purses Project

Centerport, NY – Suffolk County Legislator William R. Spencer, M.D. was delighted to join with Kehillath Shalom Synagogue on Monday to host a reception acknowledging the businesses and local groups who helped make the 5,000 Purses Personal Care Product Drive such a wonderful success!

The drive which was initiated and coordinated by the Synagogue as part of the larger national 5,000 Purses Project, collected gently-used purses and personal care items for homeless women in Nassau and Suffolk Counties. Thanks to the overwhelming support of the community, over 500 purses filled with essentials have been collected for women in need.

“The Social Action Committee at Kehillath Shalom, a small Reconstructionist synagogue, enthusiastically joined the national 5,000 Purses Project. Never did we expect the overwhelming response from our community

-More, More, More -

including local churches, high schools, cancer support groups, businesses, family and friends," said Barbara Heller, a committee member. "On Valentine's Day, 384 purses filled with personal care and comfort items were delivered to women's homeless shelters on Long Island. We thought we were done, but the support kept pouring in. This was definitely a tsunami of love!"

The packages were distributed to women in need across Suffolk and Nassau Counties with the help of The INN (the Interfaith Nutrition Network). "Our organization addresses the issues of hunger and homelessness on Long Island through its network of 14 soup kitchens and 22 housing units. Our focus is always on the guests- those challenged by poverty who seek our guidance and resources, which we offer with dignity, respect and love." said Dorian Stern, Director of Development at The INN. "We were truly honored to be the recipients of the Purse Project coordinated by Kehillath Shalom of Cold Spring Harbor, who collected 400 elegant handbags, each filled with personal care items, for the female guests of The INN. These items were distributed to the guests on Valentine's Day 2016, a perfect complement to sentiments of the day-love and compassion."

Since the "official" end of the drive on February 14th, collectively another 125 care packages have been received. Those purses were given to The INN and the Tri-CYA at the reception for distribution in the Huntington area.

Homelessness is a reality faced by thousands of people across our nation and right here on Long Island. Last year, nearly 600,000 people were homeless in the United States, with over 80,000 in New York, and more than 3,800 people in Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

"Access to shelter and food is critical for the homeless, but another key necessity is often times overlooked; basic personal care/ hygiene products. These simple items are vital to a person's everyday life, well-being and self-dignity, but accessing toiletries can be a tremendous hardship due to high costs." said Legislator William R. Spencer, M.D. "I would like to extend my deepest thanks to the folks at Kehillath Shalom, as well as the community groups and all the immensely giving residents who joined this movement. Our efforts will help lift spirits and improve health and self-esteem of those facing homelessness."

At the thank you reception, Kehillath Shalom representatives and Legislator Spencer presented the Huntington Cinema Arts Centre, the Huntington Senior Center, Cartel Hair Salon, Daisy Nail Shop, The Life Center, Jack & Jill of Suffolk, Urban Coffee, and Harborfields High School Global Justice Club with certificates thanking them for their involvement. Additionally, Legislator Spencer presented members of the Social Action Committee with a proclamation recognizing their tireless work and dedication to the project and the community at large.

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