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Mt. Kisco Bakery Helps Improve Peekskill Homeless Shelters

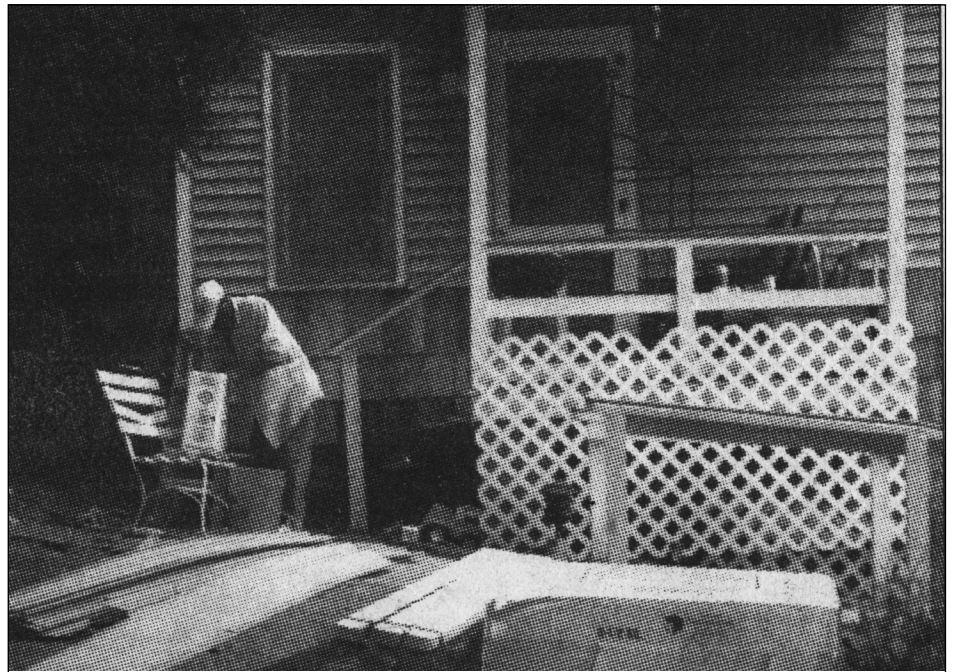
FAITH ANN BUTCHER

The generosity of a Mount Kisco bakery has helped a Peekskill non-profit organization.

Connie's Bakery and General Store, located at 41 South Moger Ave., has donated \$3,000 to The Family Resource Center of Peekskill, through its Foundation Sweet Success program.

The Family Resource Center was one of the six organizations to benefit from Connie's donation. The socially-responsible bakery's primary focus is to give 100% of its profits to charities. Connie's donations have helped local non-profits feed the hungry; empower women and children; enrich art and music; care for veterans; provide programs for children and much more.

The Family Resource Center used the funds to make its homeless cottages in Westchester County a better place to live for victims of domestic violence. The organization offers housing counseling and housing help. It has 18 units, 8 of which are designated as temporary emergency housing units. They offer counseling for first-time homebuyers, financial money



Connie's Bakery & General Store in Mt. Kisco has donated \$3,000 to upgrade the quality of life at The Family Resource Center of Peekskill's Shelter.

management, reverse mortgage counseling as well as other service.

"Connie is an angel – I can't thank them enough! We weren't expecting her to give to us so generously," Elizabeth C. McCorvey, executive director of Family

Resource Center in Peekskill explained. "I had applied for the grant four years earlier, so receiving it was a shock to me! Our shelter was suffering and money was extremely tight because we lost control to some of the housing properties that house

some of the homeless families,” she added. “We had to scramble to find new places to relocate the people to prevent them from going back to the shelter.”

McCorvey emphasized that the money will be utilized to upgrade the quality of life at the shelter. “The money is a tremendous help because it will help create jobs and will beautify two of our homeless units at 30 Lakeland Avenue in Mohegan Lake,” she remarked. “Although no one in our facility has had an apprenticeship job at the bakery in Mount Kisco, we give homeless families a place to stay and provide stability to get them into a better position to either go back to school or seek employment. Most residents here don’t want to stay in a shelter – they want their own apartment.”

Many of the windows in the cottages were in a dilapidated condition. While others were difficult to open with large cracks and nowhere close to energy efficient. The funds have helped in putting

over twenty new storm windows in two of the Center’s homeless shelter units, making them a safer place to live. “This effort has reunified those people who often come from broken families to help them reside in a safe dwelling that they are proud of,” said McCorvey.

Rebecca Procopio, a resident who lives in a cottage with her two sons, was thrilled to see the change in her house. “It truly was like Christmas for us when we received the new upgrades in our unit. I witnessed first-hand how the funding from Connie’s Bakery has helped to improve the quality of life for me and my family,” she said.

Connie’s Bakery and General Store does a lot more than just providing cash donations to the non-profits. It continuously helps the community by providing an apprentice program for some who have been socially or economically challenged allowing the local community to prosper. “Each

time we sell a bakery item, wrap a hand-crafted gift or ship a gift basket another non-profit benefits. Receiving feedback and thanks from the people we help is just icing on the cake,” explained Deena Plotka, director of operations at Connie’s Bakery and General Store.

“The bakery has been in business since 2005,” said Laura Breitenbach, director of community outreach for Connie’s Bakery and General Store. “The main criterion is any organization can apply to be one of our charitable partners as long as they’re identified by the IRS as a 501 C3 non-profit. The first year we started initiating checks was in 2006. We take on a local ‘homespun’ approach to market products from smaller lesser-known companies and individual farmers and local artists and businesses and handmade jewelry. Everything in the bakery is made right on the premises.”

Suzanne Rothberg contributed to the article.