

AROUND THE TOWNS

Unsung heroes who serve neighbors get due honor

Twelve people from Essex County will be honored for their civic and community service this week during the annual Family Service League awards night, taking place Wednesday in West Orange.

The honorees have helped their communities in a variety of ways — from working at food pantries to supporting foster parents. The winners were nominated by their mayors of their towns and recognized by the league, which is based in Montclair. The league provides several services, including counseling, social skills programs, help for sexual assault victims, nursery school care and mentoring at locations throughout the county.

Kelly Freeman of East Orange being recognized for founding Sierra House in East Orange, a safe environment for homeless young women. Freeman is also a commissioner in the East Orange Housing Authority.

Eleanor Culnen of Fairfield established the food pantry at St. Thomas More Church in 1976 and has assisted families and children in need through the pantry for the last 32 years.

Kathy Weissenberger is a member of the Glen Ridge Municipal Alliance Committee and helps educate residents about underage alcohol and drug use. She also served as president of the Linden Avenue Home and School Association.

Irvington resident **Darlene Reeves** co-founded the Determine to Achieve Community Network, a support group for parents who want to integrate children with disabilities into social and community activities. She has also volunteered for many community and social service agencies.

Maplewood resident **Karen**

ESSEX DIARY



ELIZABETH MOORE

Matters Magazine.

Patricia and William Chisolm of Millburn started Just Babies 10 years ago to recruit, train and support foster parents; they have themselves provided a temporary home for more than 170 foster children.

Montclair resident **Frank Rennie** is being recognized for helping families and children in Montclair by serving on the Salvation Army board, the Montclair Neighborhood Development Corporation and the Montclair Mentoring Partnership.

Keith Balla of Newark started a preschool program at Zion Lutheran Church and helped found the sports legend program through his work as a board member for the Newark YMCA. He's also served in other volunteer roles helping children and families.

Fran Bardino of Nutley has helped better the lives of two children from East Orange through her work as a volunteer with the Court Appointed Special Advocate.

Sister Rie Crowley of Roseland has a long list of community service that includes visiting the elderly, helping seniors find rides, getting volunteers for soup kitchens, organizing fundraisers for

Duncan has a long history of helping families and children. She has served as president of the Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club and founded Project Playground. She also publishes

cancer patients and assisting families in crisis.

Verona resident **Barbara Ashurst** is a teacher of disabled children and an advocate for kids with developmental disabilities. Besides working with children who have special needs, she also volunteers her time to help them.

Robin Lavorato of West Caldwell is being recognized for her work as an advocate for a family of six children living in Newark through her work as a court-appointed special advocate.

SPANISH MASS IN CALDWELL

In an effort to reach out to the Hispanic community, **Bishop Manuel A. Cruz** will celebrate a Mass in Spanish at St. Aloysius Catholic Church in Caldwell on Nov. 16 at 1:15 p.m. The church is located at 217 Bloomfield Ave.

For the last couple of years, the church has made an effort to reach out to Spanish speakers by offering English as a Second Language classes and by celebrating in December the Feast of the Virgin of Guadalupe, who is the patron saint of Mexico. Though this mass will be celebrated in Spanish, all are welcome to attend.

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