

NEWS

Molinaro advises Camphill on funding options

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Hudson-Catskill Newspapers

Published:
Monday, November 9, 2009 1:04 PM EST

New York state Assemblyman Marc Molinaro toured Camphill locations in Hudson and Copake Friday. The Camphill community taught him about their sustainable lifestyle, and Molinaro taught them about different ways to appeal for more state funding.

First stop on the tour was Camphill's relatively new Hudson House, with residents who dropped their chores for a moment to welcome Molinaro with coffee and cake. He checked out the restored historic home's seven bedrooms, chatted with residents and marveled at Camphill-made furniture.

Camphill is classified as an Integrated Residential Community, and the bulk of its funds come from donations and state entitlement funding through entitlements and grants. Money is also raised through the village's store, which sells an array of handmade items from biodynamic seeds to toys. With state budget cuts looming, Camphill Village Executive Director Richard Neal appealed to Molinaro for advice on how to keep state funding steady.

Camphill does not charge individuals to live in either county Camphill location, and has developed several green initiatives, like solar panels which power multiple buildings, a biodynamic farm, electric or hybrid vehicles, and geothermal heating.

About two million dollars is raised each year from donations. "We have 104 people in the village with developmental disabilities. Of those, probably thirteen percent of families have the ability to support us," said John Baring, a community member at the village, during a tour of the 600 acres and around 50 buildings that is Camphill Village.

"This is the first year we're really asking for help," Development staff member Suzanne Bressler told Molinaro on the tour. "Our needs have changed so much."

With a total population of 236, many of whom have lived at Camphill for twenty years or more, people are growing older, which means Camphill will have to respond to the members of their population whose abilities are changing due to aging.

Additionally, Camphill's Hudson location is built to be an Integrated Residential Alternative but is not funded by the state as one. "We are hoping, with Marc Molinaro's advice, to negotiate an appropriate way to get IRA funding for our two houses in Hudson," Neal said.

"We're still in negotiation, and we are hoping to have our Hudson project funded as an IRA. We're working with all responsible parties, and we hope the funding will be there," Neal said.

Molinaro advised Neal to reach out to all available sources of funding, and advised Neal on how to get a greater share of state grants and appropriations. "I'm very impressed with what you do here, and can see the value. You should reach out to the region," he said, suggesting the Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation, the state Dormitory Authority, and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA).

Camphill Village in Copake will soon be celebrating its 50th anniversary; the village recently was awarded a HEAL NY grant to cover half of the cost of construction of a new location in Ghent, which will serve as a Camphill elder care initiative.



Elias Rive and Madelon Hunt, members of Camphill Village's Hudson House, with Assemblyman Marc Molinaro. (Contributed photo)