

# Putnam Family & Community Services Office Gets Facelift

By Holly Toal

Clients at Putnam Family and Community Services now have a new, more welcoming space to greet them at the Carmel office that provides behavioral health services, including mental, social/emotional and substance use disorder treatment to people throughout the lower Hudson Valley.

The Carmel and Lake Mahopac Rotary Clubs made donations to PFCS last year to help renovate the waiting room at 1808 Route 6, to make it more professional and comfortable. After updating the flooring, replacing the furniture and fixtures and applying some fresh paint, the office debuted the new space last week.

"This is where we want to have our guests as comfortable as possible," said Debbie Levin, director of development for PFCS, to a room full of stakeholders who gathered Feb. 19 to see the renovation.

Chief Executive Officer Diane Russo thanked the Rotarians on behalf of the Board of Directors at PFCS, and on behalf of those who receive services. "I'm sorry we do not have before and after pictures, because it is just unbelievable," she said of the transformation.

Russo added that clients even participated in the renovation, as PFCS asked for suggestions and preferences during the design process. "We were able to get their input and we were able to create this great space," she said.

"You made it possible through your generous donations, and I can't thank you enough," she told the Rotary Club members.



From left are Rotarians Peter Convery and Jay Judell, PFCS CEO Diane Russo, Rotarian Tracey Walsh, PFCS Board Chairman Christopher Dillon, and Rotarians Kathy Valletta and Sal Gambino, next to a plaque that has been installed in the new office space at Putnam Family and Community Services in Carmel, thanking the Carmel and Lake Mahopac Rotary Clubs for their support.



PFCS Director of Development Debbie Levin describes the transformation to community stakeholders last week during a debut of the new office space.



Cold Spring artist Dana Dalton volunteered her time and talents to paint a mural at the Carmel office. Photos by Holly Toal.

Christopher Dillon, board chairman for PFCS, also voiced his appreciation. "This is an amazing piece of generosity, which you would only expect from the Rotary," he said.

Also part of the big reveal was a mural that was painted by Cold Spring artist Dana Dalton, who donated her time and talent to the renovation.

In a sort of serendipitous occurrence, Dalton posted on social media one day that she would offer her talents, free of charge, to a non-profit organization that was looking for someone to provide an artistic touch to its offices.

As PFCS was in the midst of its transformation, Levin reached out to the artist and the relationship was born. "I thought, why not do what I love to do and provide what I can offer," Dalton explained of her volunteer offer. She is also in the process of completing a volunteer project at a nursery school at Green Chimneys in Brewster.

The mural at PFCS took two days to complete. "We are hoping kids will interact with it," Dalton said of the large tree with sprawling branches, which received a coat of sealant so kids can touch it and the wall can be washed clean of handprints.

"The children love it," added Russo. "it's just beautiful."



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*Diane Russo (center) thanks Carmel and Mahopac Rotary members including Putnam Undersheriff Peter Convery, Carmel Rotary President Jay Judell and Mahopac Rotary President Tracey Woller.*

## ***Putnam Family and Community Services Gives Thanks***

By ERIC GROSS

Putnam Family and Community Services gave thanks Friday to a Cold Spring artist and members of the Carmel and Mahopac Rotary chapters for helping to spruce up the non-for-profit's waiting room area.

Last year, the two Rotary organizations whose motto is 'service above self,' donated generous funds to support renovation of the PFCS waiting

ease.

With funds donated by the Rotary, the renovation that included a new paint job, updated flooring, new furniture and other fixtures got underway.

At an 8 a.m. 'thank you' gathering, PFCS staff thanked the Rotary for its assistance.

A special part of the recognition came when Dana Dalton of Cold Spring who owns One of a Kind Murals was introduced and also thanked for her magnificent artistic design

the Courier that she had decided to volunteer her time for an organization that assists those in need: "I noticed that PFCS was in the midst of a renovation and offered my services gratis. I am so pleased with the result."

PFCS Executive Director Diane Russo thanked both Dalton as well as the two Rotary chapters: "We are so fortunate to have a beautiful mural for the children's area of the waiting room as well as



# Local Rotaries help give county agency a new look

## *Mahopac and Carmel clubs provide PFCS with much-needed facelift*

BY GABRIELLE BILIK  
OF MAHOPAC NEWS

Putnam Family and Community Services (PFCS) celebrated the completion of a much-needed facelift to its waiting area last Friday during a reception with the Lake Mahopac and Carmel Rotary clubs, the organizations that made the remodeling possible.

"It had been a long time since it had been updated," said Debbie Levin, director of development at Putnam Family and Community Services. "It needed paint. It had purple floors and the chairs were not appropriate for a service such as ours. It was not a welcoming and comfortable area for our people and our clients."

Before the remodel, Levin said the waiting area had a very institutional feel and because of the sensitive nature of the office's services it was a cause for concern. PFCS provides services that address mental health needs, substance abuse, as well as social and emotional issues that affect the community. However, PFCS is a nonprofit so any money that is raised goes directly

into its programs. Levin said the donated funds from the Rotary clubs were much needed and have made a huge difference.

Both Rotary clubs were on hand for the reception. Diane Russo, CEO of PCFS, and Christopher Dillon, chair of PCFS Board of Directors, gave short speeches.

"You would not believe the difference you have made in the lives of the people that come here," Russo said.

Tracey Walsh, president of the Lake Mahopac Rotary Club, said they were happy to assist.

"They applied for one of our community-giving grants, met all of the qualifications, and we were more than happy to help because it's a very worthy cause and it helps folks in the community," she said.

The funds provided by the Rotary clubs made a huge difference in the space, Walsh said. The waiting area is now warm and inviting and features a soothing blue paint.

Another donation was the time and talent of Dana Dalton, who painted a mural on one of the walls. Dalton had offered her free time

and an idea for the mural on the Putnam County Facebook page. The PCFS was one of 80 that responded.

Dalton, who had done dozens of murals over the years throughout Westchester, has never donated before. She enjoyed the experience so much she is now working on a mural (her largest yet) at the nursery school at Green Chimneys in Brewster.

"This is therapy for me," she said. "I have a few hours to stand and get lost in what I'm doing."

Levin said the feedback from clients has been overwhelmingly positive. She said clients are appreciative of the changes and many of them were active participants throughout the process, choosing paint colors and other design elements.

"We are treating people who have issues and problems that can frequently cause them stress, anxiety and worry," Levin said. "We need to do everything we can to put them at ease and having a professional, compassionate and respectful environment is very important."



Lake Mahopac Rotary past president Peter Covey, Carmel Rotary president Jay Judell, PFCS CEO Diane Russo, Lake Mahopac president Tracey Walsh, PFCS board member Chris Dillon, Carmel rotarians Kathy Valletta and Sal Gambino



PHOTOS: TABITHA PEARSON MARSHALL  
Artist Dana Dalton volunteered her time and talents to make the children's waiting area more cheerful.