



# Vassar-Warner's The Columns

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A Senior Residence of Distinction Since 1871 - Offering Independent Residency, Assisted Living and Respite Services

## **New Executive Director Hits the Ground Running** *by Steve Densmore*

It seems like Irene Andujar has been preparing for her new role as Executive Director of Vassar-Warner Residence her entire life.

If you look at the varied assortment of skills and experiences it takes to lead a non-profit adult residence during challenging times, Ms. Andujar has acquired them all - either through education, employment or volunteer service.

Her very full resume includes a Bachelor's degree in Organizational Management from Nyack College; Office Manager at Rockland ARC during the 1990s; Senior Director of Community Relations at Sunrise Assisted Living in New City, New York from 1999 to 2005; and, most recently, Marketing Director for the Continuing Care Retirement Community of Glen Arden and Elant Place. On top of that, she's even a Red Cross certified CPR Instructor and a Troop Leader for the Ulster County Council of Girl Scouts!

Vassar-Warner Board President Steve Wing said Ms. Andujar's resume quickly caught the search committee's eye and her lively and optimistic personality did the rest. "We think we've found the perfect choice to lead Vassar-Warner over the next few challenging years," said Mr. Wing.

Perhaps the biggest challenge immediately facing Ms. Andujar will be to bring new residents to Vassar-Warner. Since she started in August, Ms. Andujar has hit the ground running, focusing much of her time on marketing efforts designed to tell the community more about the benefits of living at Vassar-Warner.

"In my past job at Glen Arden, a lot of my efforts involved both internal and external networking, developing good referral sources," she said. "Adult residential services have become highly competitive. What we need to do at Vassar-Warner is to begin to educate the community about which programs and services we offer. We also want to offer continuing events here to demonstrate what a vibrant and interesting place this is to potential residents."

Along these lines, Ms. Andujar has already instituted new initiatives and has begun orienting the rest of the staff to think about themselves as representatives of Vassar-Warner in the community.



*Irene Andujar*

"Everybody is a marketer. Everybody can contribute to educating the community about our product and what a wonderful environment we offer," she stated. "This is going to require the changing of thinking of all staff. Everybody has to be on board with this concept."

Ms. Andujar remains convinced that, once potential residents and their families visit Vassar-Warner, they'll be hooked by the Victorian charm, the congenial atmosphere and professional support provided at the residence.

To give potential residents an even better feel for life at Vassar-Warner, the new Executive Director has furnished a model room off the main hallway for visitors to explore at their leisure without inconveniencing residents.

To bring everyone on board and to gather feedback, Ms. Andujar has begun monthly team meetings. The whole idea, she says, is to encourage what works and change what doesn't. "It's a good give and take for everyone," she said.

She considers filling Vassar-Warner to capacity a "reachable goal" within six months to a year, as long as everyone is on the same page with the "whole marketing" concept. "It's a tall order, but it can be done," she said, pointing out that she's used to an even more competitive environment in Rockland and Westchester counties.

Although the challenges are many, Ms. Andujar believes Vassar-Warner's many assets and its uniqueness will win the day. It has already won her heart. "I love the residents, the tradition and the history. It feels like home," she says.

# News in Brief

## NEW PARKING LOT COMPLETED

Vassar-Warner residents, staff and visitors are enjoying the additional parking space provided by the newly created lot at the corner of Montgomery and South Hamilton Streets. B&K Construction completed the paving of the lot in August which created an additional thirteen spaces.

Shrubbery further enhances the much needed off street parking. The driveway behind Vassar-Warner has been widened and paved. Visitors and staff are delighted that ruts and mud puddles have been replaced by a smooth surface. The addition of flowers in a window box and in pots at the back door says "Welcome to Vassar-Warner."

## Lighthouse International Offers Vision Services

The Lighthouse of Mid-Hudson Valley, based in Poughkeepsie, is now able to cover the cost for vision rehabilitation services to older adults (60 years plus) who have moderate vision loss, thanks to a one year grant from the Dyson Foundation.

Lighthouse vision services include a low vision exam, optical aids, home visits for vision rehabilitation services (including safe mobility training and adaptive supplies at home) following established guidelines.

Through these vision services, people with vision impairment learn alternate techniques to accomplish daily tasks safely, travel independently, cope with their loss, as well as maximize their remaining vision.

For more information, contact Denise VanCuyk, Case Manager at Vassar-Warner. Denise has already referred some Vassar-Warner residents for these services and it is hoped more can be helped in the future.

## Fall Card Party

The Vassar-Warner Board of Advocates held their Fall Card Party and Luncheon on Thursday, October 4 from 10am to 2pm. The main course was prepared by Mary Bastian Van Voorhis. Other Board members made the desserts.

Card Party volunteers included: Tickets: Barbara Tryon; Bake Sale: Lillian Hanlon; Table Prizes: Joan McDonald; Door Prizes: Anne Cross and Jane Fisher; Servers: Arlene Barresi, Betty Allen Clark, Ann Christmas, Jane Croushore, Pat Drain, Lillian Easton, Betty Francis, Bea Northway, There O'Connor, Grace Raunick, Eleanor Skov, Barbara Tryon, Elizabeth Underhill, and Virginia Walsh.

Everyone enjoyed the food, fun and festivities. The Spring Card Party and Luncheon will be held on Thursday, April 17, 2008 at Vassar-Warner from 10am to 2pm. Tickets are \$10. Call 845.485.6866 to reserve a table.



Board member Lucy Hawkins and Executive Director Irene Andujar at the Card Party and Luncheon this fall



Card Party attendees enjoy delicious snacks, a catered luncheon and lots of card playing at this twice a year benefit sponsored by the Board of Advocates

## ***In Memory of Jennie Tobin*** *by Henrietta Mountz*

**A** Red Bud tree grows on the grounds of Vassar-Warner, planted by Evelyn Doyle in memory of her aunt, Jennie Tobin, a 10 year resident of Vassar-Warner.

Jennie was born in Poughkeepsie and lived her entire life in the city. Never having learned to drive, she walked everywhere. As she grew older and needed more help, Vassar-Warner was the perfect choice for her.

Because of Vassar-Warner's location on South Hamilton Street, Jennie was able to remain in the city she loved, walk to her church and continue her volunteer work twice a week at Meals on Wheels. She used the Loop Bus Service to shop at the Galleria Mall and the city bus to visit friends in the hospitals.

From Vassar-Warner, Jennie was able to walk to the homes of relatives to visit. Evelyn remembers many pleasant visits with Jennie who loved to sit on the Doyle's front porch.

She also remembers the helping hand Jennie extended to the family as the Doyles raised their two sons.

Jennie loved to watch children walking to and from school which is why Evelyn chose to place the Red Bud tree below the window of Jennie's former room.

Jennie was an independent woman who derived great satisfaction from helping others. Vassar-Warner offered the opportunity for her to continue her life style while providing her family with the peace of mind that comes from knowing a loved one is secure in the caring and competent hands of the Vassar-Warner staff.



*Evelyn Doyle plants a Red Bud tree in memory of her aunt Jennie Tobin who was a resident of Vassar-Warner for ten years*

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## ***Vassar-Warner Contributors (October 2006-September 2007)***

Pillars (\$10,000 or more): Dyson Foundation

Sponsors (\$1,000 or more): Community Foundation of Dutchess County, Rod and Joann Crotty, Thomas Eufemia, Colette Lafuente, Stephen Wing

Champions (\$500 or more): Anne H. Cross, Kip Bleakley O'Neill

Advocates (\$250 or more): Michael Burdis, Joseph Darrow, Carol W. Dean, Hammond Security, Lucy and Richard Hawkins, Mary Lunt, Mary Mulligan, Esther Odescalchi, Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, Judy and Ray Siegart, Evelyn and David Stevenson

Supporters (\$100 or more): Donald and Dale Adams, Anonymous, Dr. and Mrs. Morton Alterman, Arlene and Ron

Barresi, Susan Bynoe, Levester Cannon, Michael and Mary Cronin, Janet Croushore, Dennis Dempster, Mr. and Mrs. Brian Doyle, Ralph V. Ellis, Inc., Walter Engel, Jr., First Baptist Church of Poughkeepsie, Fred and Pickie Foote, Jeffrey Giardina, Joan Gochee, Mark and Karen Gochenour, Jeffrey Graham, Mr. and Mrs. David Harvatin, Janet Houston, Reverend John Hunter, David and Mary Kelley, Theresa and Edward Kerin, Peter and Elizabeth Lumb, Mauri Associates Architects, Robert and Grace McKee, William Murphy, Henrietta Mountz, Alice and Joseph Nardone, Lucille Pattison, Good Samaritan, Sedore and Company, Carol Sudol, Steve and Linda Marin Taft, Marjorie Thompson, Louis and Agnes Vidunas, Gail Webster

*A Senior Residence of Distinction*

**Vassar-Warner**



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## You're never too old...to have fun!

This spring, we celebrated National Jelly Bean Day with a group of SUNY New Paltz Arts Education students led by Regina Euell. The students helped residents create mosaic pictures that represented signs of spring - using jelly beans, of course!

Residents and students also decorated picture frames for the finished mosaics, creating lasting memories of this fun filled day. An enjoyable afternoon was topped off by an exhibit of the students' personal artwork. We all look forward to a return visit by these creative students.

