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91st Assembly District  
Larchmont - Mamaroneck - New Rochelle - Port Chester - Rye Brook and Rye

April 19, 2024

Dear Friends,

As of Friday evening we are in the process of passing the final FY 2024-25 State Budget. Next week I will provide an update on the adopted budget, but I can report several priority issues I fought for that will result in benefits to the Sound Shore and Westchester communities.

These priorities include key funding additions for state aid to school districts, clean water grant funding, flood mitigation, college tuition financial aid programs, restorations to many health care programs, childcare funding, and support for 4201 schools, including New York School for the Deaf based in Westchester. There is positive news in many other budget categories as well as disappointments on various issues where we will continue the fight.

Last week I enjoyed experiencing the eclipse with residents and staff at the Osborn senior community in Rye and at the boardwalk at Playland Amusement Park. It was great to see the eclipse but also great to share the moment with others marveling at this special event.

On the boardwalk, I spent some of the time with active community volunteer Brian Jackson (Rye Lions Club and Rye Chamber of Commerce), who visits the boardwalk every morning to photograph the daily sunrise. On this day, he had all the equipment to take amazing photographs of the eclipse. I share this beautiful image in which Brian incorporated one of Playland's historic towers with a special moment of the eclipse.



This newsletter includes an update on my work supporting digital equity programs and updates on a number of community activities and events.

As always, do not hesitate to contact me or my staff on issues in this e-mail or any matter in which we can be helpful. My office number is 914-939-7028.

Warm regards,

*Steve*

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### **Laptop Distribution with the STEM Alliance and the Carver Center**



Recently I shared in the excitement of the distribution of 60 new Chromebooks to high school students at the [Carver Center](#) in Port Chester at the conclusion of a digital inclusion program through a partnership with [The STEM Alliance](#) and Carver.

Digital inclusion programs provide affordable broadband access, a training course, and a device to individuals in need of digital literacy assistance. Each teenager received a new Chromebook during the event, giving these students an opportunity to expand their academic and personal growth through digital skills. Device ownership - not loanership - is associated with becoming a fluent tech adopter who can master a wide range of requisite skills in our digitally driven world.

It was very exciting to meet and share the excitement of program participants as they received their new laptops. I was joined at the distribution by STEM Alliance and Carver Center staff, Carver Center Chief Executive Officer Anne Bradner, and Port Chester Mayor Luis Marino.

I am the leading proponent of digital inclusion programs in the state legislature where I advocate for statewide programs to support these services that address what is known as the digital divide, the inequities that leave students and adults at a disadvantage when it comes to education, health care, employment, and the countless other parts of our lives that require digital access.

These programs are best provided through partnerships between groups like The STEM Alliance and community organizations that help individuals who need these services. Over the past two years, the partnership between The STEM Alliance and Carver Center has been instrumental in providing STEM education and fostering digital equity among students and adults.

Daniel Bonnet, Carver Center's Chief Program Officer, expressed gratitude for the partnership, stating, "Providing Chromebooks to our Teen Center members and participants is a valuable investment in their future. It equips them with essential skills, expands their educational opportunities, fosters creativity and innovation, and promotes social connection and personal growth. By empowering teens with access to technology, you are helping to shape confident, capable, and digitally literate individuals who are ready to thrive in the modern world. It is one step closer in closing the digital divide in our community!"

This distribution was made possible through a \$90,000 grant I sponsored through the Office of Children and Family Services to provide these programs through the

STEM Alliance with community groups on the Sound Shore. To date I have funded grants that have provided 19 of these programs to 350 individuals with the following local partners: [New Rochelle YMCA](#), [Community Resource Center](#) in Mamaroneck, [Don Bosco Community Center](#) in Port Chester, [Open Door Community Health Center](#), [La Plaza de Paulo](#) in Port Chester, and the Carver Center. Additional grant funds are in the pipeline to provide more programs and laptops to those needing devices and training.

In Albany I work with a statewide network of groups providing digital equity programs and a national group advancing this model across the country. Digital inclusion programs are an effective tool in successfully addressing structural inequities in society. I am thrilled to work with and advocate for the technology groups and local not-for-profits that partner to provide these programs.

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**New Rochelle State of the City at the New Rochelle Boys and Girls Club Remington Clubhouse**



Last week I attended a packed house at the New Rochelle Boys and Girls Club Remington Clubhouse to hear Mayor Yadira Ramos-Herbert's first State of the City Address. The Mayor gave a great overview of New Rochelle's past success and continued plans for progress going forward.

The excitement of the event was amplified by the venue at the new Remington

Clubhouse of the New Rochelle Boys and Girls Club. The outstanding facility will serve the youth of our community in countless ways. The additional programming provided by the Boys and Girls Club and New Rochelle's other vital not-for-profits are essential to the growth and development of youth today.

The next night New Rochelle again celebrated the new clubhouse with the Boys and Girls Club gala. The new clubhouse was made possible through the support of the community, private funding, and governmental grants, including state funding I sponsored with my state Assembly and Senate colleagues, Assemblywoman Amy Paulin, Senator Shelley Mayer, and Senator Nathalia Fernandez. You can learn more about the great work of the Boys and Girls Club at <https://bgcny.org>

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### **ArtsWestchester Arts Awards Celebration Recognizes the New Rochelle Council on the Arts**

The Westchester Arts community joined in a packed house to honor various awardees for their contributions to the artistic life of our county. New Rochelle Council on the Arts President Theresa Kump Leghorn accepted the Community Award for the council's 50 years bringing events, programs, and public arts to every corner of New Rochelle. I had the honor of presenting the award on behalf of our New Rochelle State Legislative Delegation, Assembly colleague Amy Paulin, Senator Shelley Mayer, and Senator Nathalia Fernandez. You can learn more about [ArtsWestchester](https://artswestchester.org) and the [New Rochelle Council on the Arts](https://newrochelle.org/council-on-the-arts) on their websites.

I am pictured here with County Legislator Terry Clements, Melissa Kagan representing Assemblymember Amy Paulin, New Rochelle Council on the Arts President Theresa Kump Leghorn, New Rochelle Mayor Yadira Yamos-Herbert and Dr. LaRuth Gray.



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### **EMS Issues Will be a Key Focus for this Legislative Session**

Not included in the state budget was a package of state legislation to reform EMS services, organizational structures, and access to funding throughout the state. I am the Assembly lead sponsor with Senator Shelley Mayer of the Essential Services legislation, which is one of the leading bills in the package. We were hopeful the issue could be addressed in the state budget. More work is needed to resolve outstanding issues and we are determined to do everything we can to move the package of bills before the end of the legislative session. I am pictured below at an Albany press conference earlier this year organized by Firefighter groups. The EMS reform bills are a priority for Fire Service, local government, and EMS groups throughout the state. In recent years, we have won changes in prior legislative sessions through working with reforms under the jurisdiction of state agencies. The next level of reforms requires legislative action this year.



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### Tom Geoffino Retirement at New Rochelle Library



I recently attended a farewell reception for long-time New Rochelle Public Library Director Tom Geoffino with library staff and supporters. Tom has been one of the most respected library directors in Westchester and is retiring after decades of service as a library leader. Under Tom's leadership in New Rochelle, technology upgrades and renovations were on the schedule every year. These efforts were supported by the community, the New Rochelle Library Foundation, a supportive Board of Trustees, and by Tom's skill at applying for outside grants to bring in the

resources to keep the library always moving forward. The New Rochelle Public Library has been very successful at winning numerous grants from the NYS Library Capital Construction grant program. Tom will be one of the honorees at the New Rochelle Public Library gala on May 9<sup>th</sup>. For more information [click here](#).

I am pictured here with long-time library supporter Haina Just-Michael, State Senator Shelley Mayer and honoree Tom Geoffino.

