

# THE RIVERTOWNS Enterprise

VOLUME 42, NUMBER 6 • MAY 5, 2017

The Hometown Newspaper  
of Hastings-on-Hudson,  
Dobbs Ferry, Ardsley  
and Irvington

REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION

## CV honors a neighbor, champion, mentor

By Patricia Robert

"It all started after I wrote a letter to the editor of The Rivertowns Enterprise in support of Children's Village," said David Schwartz of Ardsley-on-Hudson, referring to his 12-year involvement with the institution as a volunteer and trustee. Schwartz, 82, is this year's recipient of the Legacy of Service Award that Children's Village (CV) presents annually at its Circle of Friends dinner.

Jeremy C. Kohomban, president and CEO of CV, in presenting the award, described Schwartz as "a man who is passionate about helping kids — actually, about helping everyone who hasn't gotten a decent shake in life."

At the time he wrote the letter, Schwartz and his family lived adjacent to the residential treatment facility for troubled youth. His letter was about a controversy then brewing in the Dobbs Ferry community when CV was awarded a contract by Westchester County to run the Family Court Assistance Program. This program allowed teens awaiting appearance before the family court to be housed at CV on a short-term basis.

"The community reacted with alarm. I wrote to say how responsible I found CV to be, how safe my family and I felt living in close proximity, and how proud I was to live in a community that accepted and helped those most vulnerable," Schwartz said. "The very next week Linda Stutz, CV's vice president of advancement, called and asked me to come meet Jeremy."

As a result of that meeting, Schwartz began the service to CV that was celebrated at the dinner at Pier Sixty at Chelsea Piers in Manhattan on April 27. He also serves on the board of the special-act Greenburgh 11 School District which serves CV residents and other special-needs day students, and is vice chairman of the Westchester-



TIM LAMORTE/RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE

David Schwartz

Whether their skills improve or not, it is important that they have the support and attention they so desperately need. I am going to be there every week for them.

David Schwartz

Putnam chapter of the Working Families Party.

"The first, and most sensible thing we decided to do was to create a Community Advisory Board," Schwartz said. "This was launched in 2006 and continues to meet at least three times a year. It is our responsibility to keep our neighbors informed about all the wonderful things, or incidents, that are happening at CV. We are really its ambassadors." He currently serves as

chairman of the committee.

Once involved through the advisory committee, Schwartz found other ways to help CV's residents. He founded CV's In-Kind group of volunteers, who meet every Wednesday to collect, sort, and distribute donations to the children and their families.

"It is very important to keep the family intact whenever possible," Schwartz said. "So, if a family has been homeless, and then is able to get living ac-

commodations, they will need material goods. We can provide that — after all, CV's mission is to help both the youth and their families — so the youth will have a suitable home to go to when they leave CV."

Schwartz and his wife, Martha, have two children — Adam, who lives in Bethesda, Md., and Sarah, who lives in La Jolla, Calif. Both graduated from the Dobbs Ferry public schools. They also have four grandchildren.

Schwartz expressed admiration for Kohomban's understanding of the youth he serves, and shared his enthusiasm about the merger of CV with Inwood House, which will offer housing to CV students when they turn 21 and transition from the Dobbs Ferry campus.

All of this service at CV led to a commitment that is perhaps the most natural of all for Schwartz: Having been an English teacher for 41 years, he became a tutor. During his career as an educator, he was also the dean of students at Ethical Culture Fieldston School where he worked for 29 years, the principal of Solebury School in New Hope, Pa., for four years, and a teacher at Riverdale Country School in the Bronx for eight years.

"I began helping the older boys, the ones in high school, with their writing skills, and it has been wonderful," he said. "The best part is that I am following what Jeremy stresses — that the really crucial thing is that each boy has an adult in his life. The first young man I tutored was 15 and had been in foster care since he was 5. He had never attended a full year of school until he came to Children's Village. He was determined to go to college, to build a productive life, and to take care of others. He is on the road to succeeding."

"Whether their skills improve or not, it is important that they have the support and attention they so desperately need," Schwartz concluded. "I am going to be there every week for them."