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**Health Center Locations:** Huntington, Mt. Vernon, New Rochelle, Patchogue, Riverhead, Smithtown, Spring Valley, West Islip, White Plains, Yonkers

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# Choice News



## Day of Action in Albany



It was a beautiful day as two buses filled with advocates for women's health and reproductive rights traveled to Albany, NY for a Day of Action on May 4. The original trip in January had to be cancelled because of a blizzard! "It is important for us to come to Albany and thank those who support us and show those who don't that we are not going away. We will keep coming back year after year," said Reina Schiffrin, President/CEO of PPHP.

Working in collaboration with Family Planning Advocates (FPA) and Planned Parenthood affiliates from New York City and Nassau County, Planned Parenthood Hudson Peconic (PPHP) gathered its supporters and met with elected officials in the Senate and Assembly to discuss pending legislation impacting women's health, families, and other important topics.

To start the day, more than one hundred advocates gathered together

to hear elected officials who support the work of Planned Parenthood. Perhaps the most invigorating was Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins who said, "You think you are lobbying for bills, and you are, but it's bigger than that. You are lobbying a legislature that refuses to allow women self-determination, refuses to allow women equality, refuses to allow women to say, I know what I need. Step out of the way!" She continued to say, "They have refused it year after year and our job will never be done until we get to the heart of the problem, which is electing people who don't respect us."

Following the opening rally, advocates spent the next several hours meeting with elected officials to discuss the importance of Reproductive Services Act, Paid Family Leave, the "Boss Bill", and more.

It was a successful day and everyone at PPHP thanks those who participated and made their voices heard.



**“ We will keep coming back year and after year. ”**

—Reina Schiffrin, President/CEO, PPHP

**Top image:** Advocates with Assemblymembers Paulin and Galef on the floor of the Assembly.

**Bottom image:** Senator Carlucci with volunteers from the Teen Information and Peer Services (TIPS) Program

## Calendar of Events

### Summer Benefit

Sunday, July 26, 5-7 p.m.

The Pavilion at Sunken Meadow Park, Kings Park, NY  
Honorees: Mark & Rita Sakitt  
Visit [www.pphp.org/summer](http://www.pphp.org/summer) for more information.

### Empower Gala

Wednesday, October 21, 6 pm

Hilton Westchester, Rye Brook, NY  
Special Guest: Ali Wentworth, actress, comedian, author, and producer  
Honorees: Jill Scheuer & Keith Pattiz  
Visit [www.pphp.org/2015EmpowerGala](http://www.pphp.org/2015EmpowerGala) for more information.

To donate to PPHP, visit [www.pphp.org/donate](http://www.pphp.org/donate) or call (914) 467-7337.

### Interested in volunteering with PPHP?

There are a variety of activities throughout the year for volunteers. Please call (914) 467-7341 for more information.



**Images, clockwise:** Equal Pay Rally on April 14. Religion, Sex, and Politics discussion on March 23. Celebrating the 42nd Anniversary of Roe v Wade at Stony Brook University.

## Message from the President



Dear Friends,

We have been busy this year, in all areas of the organization, to provide the best services to our community.

Recently, we implemented a new, intensive training program for our health center assistants (HCAs) to improve the care we offer our patients, hired four new directors in various roles to bring their perspective and experiences to PPHP, began training a new group of Teen Information and Peer Services (TIPS) peer educators, participated in an Equal Pay Day rally, and hosted a discussion about sex, religion, and politics. Earlier this year, we met with elected officials in Washington, DC, and hosted two events celebrating the 42nd anniversary of Roe v Wade.

We have many events coming this summer and fall—they are listed on the back. I hope that you will join us and show your support for PPHP and our services.

Best,

Reina Schiffrin, MPH



## Emerging Leaders Council: Young Supporters Taking Action

PPHP's Emerging Leaders Council (ELC) was recently formed by members of the internal Youth Outreach Committee as a way for our young professional supporters to stay or become involved with Planned Parenthood. Comprised of college students and young professionals, the council's mission is to advise PPHP on programs and services as they pertain to young people. After months of recruitment and outreach, we currently have nine dedicated members who range from current college students to a college professor, all with a similar passion for sexual and reproductive health.

The council has had three meetings and is already diving into important sexual and reproductive health issues. Council members who are part of the Stony Brook University (SBU) community are working with administration to develop a program to address sexual assault issues on campus. This is a new type of partnership between PPHP and SBU in which the ELC and members of the campus' Voices for Change for Planned Parenthood (VOX) chapter will work together.

Another topic the council is paying close attention to is PPHP's LGBTQ programs

and health services. The council is advising the staff on the expansion of services and educational programs geared specifically to the LGBTQ community.

Fundraising is a big part of being a member of the Emerging Leaders Council. The intent is to engage young people in philanthropic work and get them accustomed to fundraising and participating in fundraising activities. Our upcoming Summer Benefit in Suffolk County is co-chaired by ELC Co-Chair Lily Cushenberry, the Rockland County benefit was co-chaired by ELC member Geraldine Chery, and we had council members at the East End Benefit in Sag Harbor as well. They are also working as a group to plan a fundraiser for the fall.

The current members of the ELC are enthusiastic, motivated, and passionate individuals. If you know anyone who would be interested in joining, particularly from Westchester and Rockland Counties, please email Lucy Christensen, Special Projects Associate to the CEO, at [lucy.christensen@pphp.org](mailto:lucy.christensen@pphp.org)

## Ruth Geissinger Robertson - a True Champion

Written by: Betsey Casey and Marian Williams

We learned this spring of the passing of Dr. Ruth Geissinger, a pioneer of Planned Parenthood in Northern Westchester. Her death on March 16, 2015 in Mt. Kisco reminded us all of PPHP's history of devoted physicians and the difference they made in the lives of our patients and in our community.

Born in New York City in 1916, she was a graduate of Hunter High School and Hunter College. She received an MD from the University of Michigan in 1939, one of eight women in a class of 80. Board-certified in Obstetrics and Gynecology, she moved to Mt. Kisco in 1948 with her husband, Dr. Douglas Robertson, also an Ob-Gyn with the

Mt. Kisco Medical Group. Together, they were the Planned Parenthood "power couple"—Dr. Robertson served for many years on the Board of Directors and both doctors could always be counted on as expert and articulate advocates. For more than 35 years, Dr. Geissinger was the minimally paid clinician at Planned Parenthood Northern Westchester, which for a time operated out of her private practice office. She also worked as a part-time physician for the local school district. In addition to delivering hundreds of babies, Ruth and Doug raised four children of their own.



## Training Residents and Fellows at PPHP Health Centers

PPHP began a program with two organizations in its service area, Stony Brook University Medical Center and the Institute for Family Health, to train physicians in OB/GYN and Family Medicine. While the program in Smithtown only began a few months ago, participants in the New Rochelle program will be completing their year-long program this summer.

Vanita Kumar, MD, Medical Director, PPHP, and PPHP physicians are training five OB/GYN residents in its Smithtown health center, and four family medicine fellows in its New Rochelle health centers. "The participants love the hands on training they receive. It has been very valuable in the reproductive health and family planning training," said Dr. Kumar.

By training more physicians, PPHP is educating them to provide better



**Above image:** Three of the Fellows who are being trained in PPHP's New Rochelle health center.

services to their patients who may come to them, wherever they may be practicing in the future, as well as creating a resource it can call upon should it need more physicians in its centers.

## Volunteers through our Health Center Advocacy Program collected stories from people in our health centers.

Julissa shared her story:

**“Planned Parenthood has provided me with care for 8 years now. I am grateful for the friendly staff and knowledgeable clinicians. When I was 17 and needed birth control, Planned Parenthood stepped in and made this possible with no questions asked, and with STD testing included. When I was 22, my mother passed away from cervical cancer and Planned Parenthood helped me cope with this tragedy and provided me with proper screenings to ensure I was safe from the cancer that took my mother's life. ”**