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## **OPUS for Person-to-Person Launches 'Balloons for Families' Campaign**

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It is an annual tradition for a sea of red balloons to decorate Darien mailboxes every spring. In the past, these balloons, placed by members of OPUS for Person-to-Person, have signified support of P2P's campership program, which sends over 400 children from low-income households to summer camp every summer.

But this year, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, everything is different.

— *an announcement from* [OPUS for Person-to-Person](#)

With continued uncertainty about the duration of the COVID-19 crisis and with social distancing protocols potentially impacting the full operation of summer camp providers, P2P has had to keep their annual campership program on hold until there is more clarity about what the summer will hold.

What is certain is that the families of the 400 children who would have been eligible for the program this summer are the most vulnerable in our community and have been the most disproportionately impacted by this crisis.

P2P has seen the demand for food assistance increase by over 50% and emergency financial assistance increase by over 70% during the past two months.

To respond to these shifting needs, OPUS for Person-to-Person is adapting their annual spring campaign to be called “OPUS Balloons for Families,” and will also raise funds to support P2P’s emergency assistance programs, including food and financial assistance.

“We remain optimistic that some camp programs will be held,” shares P2P CEO Nancy Coughlin, “and our goal is to send as many children to camp as possible. However, if there are limitations around the number of children we can send, we know that we will continue to need to provide families with healthy food to keep growing, and financial assistance to keep them safely housed during this very difficult time.”

Also new this year is the addition of a Challenge Grant, offered up by four Darien and Rowayton families in support of the campaign. Thanks to Joe and Amy Gold, Sue McGraw, Avery and Elena Whidden, and Chris and Liz Whitney, every dollar donated to the campaign will be matched up to \$100,000.

"People are coming to P2P for help who have never needed help before. Our community can stand together if we are all willing to help where we can," offers Amy Gold, P2P volunteer and Board Member.

"I've been a loyal supporter of OPUS's Balloons for Campers because there is no better investment in our community than in our children. This year, with or without summer camp, we'll be there to support our families and their emerging needs," said Sue McGraw, a P2P supporter.

This year, when people donate to Balloons for Families, they will receive a DIY OPUS Balloon that can be printed and decorated at home.

On Saturday, June 13, supporters are encouraged to hang the balloons in their windows or on their front

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door. Pictures of the balloons can be posted to social media accounts using the hashtag #ThisRedBalloon, and OPUS will share pictures with the entire community.

To support OPUS for Person-to-Person's Balloons for Families campaign, and to make this summer a time of hope for local families, please visit: [give.p2pHelps.org/OPUSBalloons](http://give.p2pHelps.org/OPUSBalloons).

#### ***About OPUS for Person-to-Person***

OPUS for Person-to-Person is a charitable organization whose mission is to support Person-to-Person through fundraising efforts and public awareness. Their fundraisers help P2P provide goods and services to more than 25,000 individuals and families in our communities who lack basic necessities and resources. For more information, please visit <http://www.opus4p2p.org>

#### ***About Person-to-Person***

Person-to-Person, Inc. was established in 1968 to provide low-income individuals and families living in Lower Fairfield County with basic emergency services. A community-supported agency, Person-to-Person is committed to providing individuals and families with assistance for basic needs to overcome daily challenges and access to resources to improve their lives.

With a vision of educated, financially stable, and hunger-free homes for all, programs include food and clothing assistance, emergency financial assistance, and Camperships and Scholarships. With locations in Darien and Norwalk, and a warehouse and mobile food pantry in Stamford, the Person-to-Person service area includes Darien, New Canaan, Norwalk, Stamford, Weston, Westport, and Wilton.