

## **5<sup>TH</sup> SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH CENTER AT PARK AVENUE SCHOOL LAUNCHED**

In keeping with its mission of providing quality health care and human services to those who need it most, Open Door Family Medical Centers has opened its fifth school-based health center at Park Avenue School in Port Chester. The center is open 8:30am-4:30pm on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Over half of Park Avenue School's students are already enrolled with the Center, which is staffed by Open Door providers Debra Gerson, MD, Robin Dillon, NP and Patient Care Technician Gloria Neyra.

"Our first day on-site was great, meeting and greeting students and staff," said Ellette Hirschorn, Director of Clinical Services and Programs for Open Door. "The school community gave us a very warm welcome."

School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs) provide primary health care services where the students are and when they need it. With parents' permission, students are enrolled with the SBHCs which provide numerous services that include physicals, immunizations, wellness visits, chronic disease management, hearing and vision screenings, and mental health screenings. In addition SBHCs help students and their families manage significant health concerns, like asthma and obesity before they lead to bigger problems.

Having the ability to provide health care services within the schools makes a profound difference in the health of the students enrolled in the program. Debra Gerson, MD, Medical Director of School-Based Health Centers for Open Door, recalls one patient who, had it not been for the SBHC, may well have partially lost his vision. "He had been hit in the eye with a soccer ball over the weekend and came in to see me complaining about a serious pain in his right eye. He was seeing floaters and his vision was blurred. I was able to make an appointment for him to see an eye doctor that afternoon, where he was diagnosed with a detached retina and we scheduled him for surgery the next day. According to the surgeon, he would have lost vision in his right eye if the retina detached further, which would have likely occurred had he not had the immediate access to care that Open Door's SBHC afforded him."

In addition to Park Avenue School Open Door also manages school-based health centers at The Edison Elementary School, Kennedy Magnet School, Port Chester Middle School and Port Chester High School.

### **About Open Door Family Medical Centers**

Open Door has received the highest Recognition as a Patient-Centered Medical Home™ (PPC-PCMH™) from the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). This ranking distinguishes them from medical practices across the nation as less than 12% are presently eligible to achieve this advanced standing. For 38 years, the federally qualified community health center serves a multi-cultural community and has provided top quality medical, dental care and social services to the Westchester community, particularly the economically disadvantaged.. Open Door has four centers in Westchester located in Ossining, Port Chester, Mt. Kisco and Sleepy Hollow. In addition, Open Door operates school-based health centers in Port Chester at The Edison Elementary School, Park Avenue School, Kennedy Magnet School, Port Chester Middle School and Port Chester High School. In 2009, approximately 40,000 patients were treated at Open Door, making nearly 170,000 patient visits. Over 13,483 children were treated during that same year. Funding for Open Door Family Medical Centers comes from local, state and federal grants as well as private foundations and individuals.

