

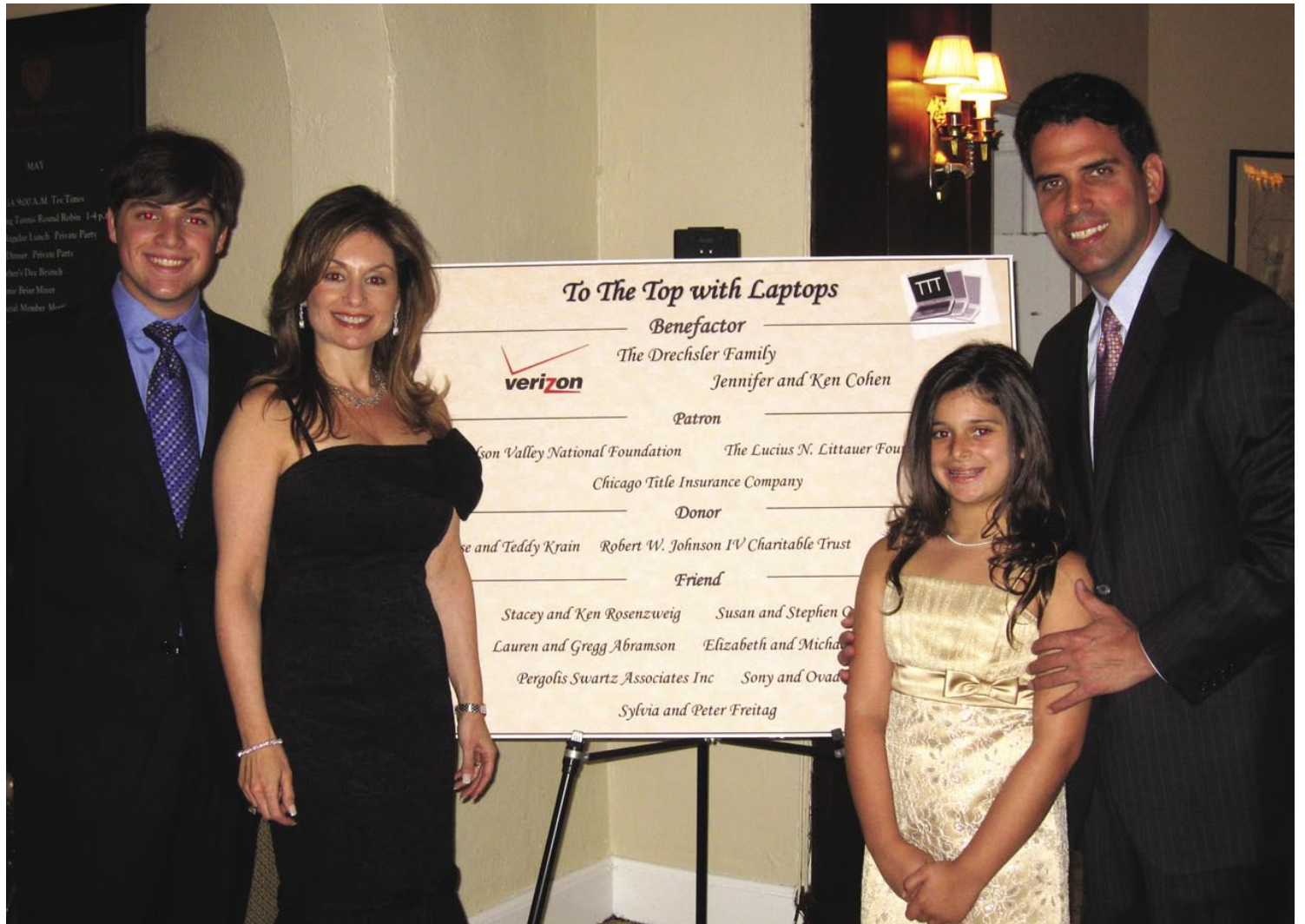
# “To The Top with Laptops” expands to New Rochelle

By ANDREW PARK

In connecting paths and more so than online, ten Port Chester High School graduates, many who achieved superfluously under embattled circumstances, have found themselves as the beneficiaries of a technological gift - packages of laptops complete with printers and wireless Internet cards for them to take to college. The boon stemmed from Alex Drechsler's Bar Mitzvah, a coming-of-age Jewish rite the Rye Brook teen undertook two years ago.

“I was trying to come up with something to do for my mitzvah [good deed],” explained Alex, 15, who noted his father Robert approached him with the idea to bestow computers with the donations collected from his occasion. “It was a unique idea and I wasn't really sure how to go about it but we came up with a title and decided on giving away laptops. I could not live without my computer so I wanted everyone, or at least more students to have a very important tool.”

The title of the benefit the father and son team contrived was “To The Top with Laptops,” now running in its third year and set to award 15 seniors - five students each from Port Chester High School, Yonkers High School and New Rochelle High School - with laptop packages. The expansion of the charity moved swiftly, explained Robert, as a multitude of benefactors and sponsors stepped forth to assist in a fundraiser featuring a raffle and silent auction.



(L-R) Alex, Bea, Laura and Robert Drechsler at a fundraiser event held at the Bonnie Briar Country Club on Saturday, May 10.

Photo courtesy of Drechsler family

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“I think it has been good for my son who rose up knowing only one sort of life in Rye Brook in somewhat of a homogeneous community,” said Robert. “In meeting kids from Port Chester, in New Rochelle, in seeing different kinds of kids who faced different challenges has been very, very beneficial. He's motivated to move forward with it.”

This sentiment is one seconded by Alex, who seeks to continue the program as long as possible. “My dad always talks about how I may be more fortunate or had to go through what they had to go through, and it has made me appreciate what I have gotten,” said Alex. “I want to show students that their hard work is appreciated and someone is noticing them. Until I go away to college, I'll help my dad continue to grow this and help as many people as I can.”

Robert, who practices law in a firm established with his wife Bea, explained having been raised by schoolteachers who pushed an emphasis on education lent to the idea of forming “To The Top with Laptops,” as well as the usefulness of the technological

wonder in today's world. “It is an essential tool and without one it would be a significant disadvantage,” he said. “It is empowering for the kids.” The Drechsler's children Laura, 9, and Alex both are adept with computers.

Looking towards the future, family aims to expand the benefit countywide and have noted furthering interest from other schools, hoping to fulfill relationships as well as develop new ones. “Here, I really see firsthand the results and how it impacts the kids as they send ‘Thank You’ letters or tell me how they are doing and it is very rewarding,” said Robert. “They say the investment was a good one and I want to do what you did for me for another person one day.”

Sponsors have included friends and family of the Drechsler's as well as Verizon, The Hudson Valley National Foundation, The Lucius N. Littauer Foundation and The Robert W. Johnson IV Charitable Trust. Readers may donate checks made out to: To The Top with Laptops, 15 Deer Run, Rye Brook, NY 10573.

## County to offer free program on Medicare “basics”

A free, introductory session on Medicare “basics” will take place on June 12 at the County Office Building, 9 S. First Ave., Mount Vernon.

The talk is presented by the Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services (DSPS), and will be held from 10 a.m. to noon in the eighth-floor conference room.

Speaker Jeanne Pici, a DSPS program administrator, will provide information about Medicare parts A, B, C and D and how to use Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC) for even greater savings. EPIC is a New York State-sponsored plan that helps eligible seniors pay prescription drug costs. She will also discuss Medigap insurance, cost-sharing and preventive benefits.

For more information or to register, call DSPS' Medicare Information Line at (914) 813-6100. The information line is open year-round to help seniors with Medicare issues. More information is available at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov), the government's official Medicare site.