

Spotlight on Janet Allen

When she isn't singing with the New York Choral society, Janet Allen is most likely deeply involved in one of the many social issues that have dominated her working and personal life for 50 years, including through her membership with the LWV Huntington over that entire span of time.

Jan has spent her working and volunteer life in various leadership roles in the non-profit sector. She has been a program director, grant writer, legislative and government coordinator and registered lobbyist. Among the non-profits she held significant roles with are the Family Service Association of Nassau County (now Family and Children's Association), Housing Help -- where she was the first executive director -- the Huntington Housing Authority, the Suffolk Community Council, the Fund for Modern Courts, and the Association of the Bar, City of New York, to name a few.

"I have a lot of connections," says Janet. "I view myself as just part of the community." She says her first job with the American Field Service, where she placed foreign high school students with American host families, gave her an expansive view of other countries and other cultures. "It opened me up to the whole world," she says.

Her League work includes a term as president of the Huntington League, a role that came her way by surprise. "I was a fairly new league member, and the woman who was elected to be president suddenly couldn't do it -- her husband got transferred out of state. And they went around the circle, and everyone said, 'I can't do that.' I had a baby, but I thought, I love this group, they're wonderful people, I'm learning so much in this new town I'm living in. So, I said, if you give me two vice-presidents I can consult with when I have to make a decision, I could do that."

Jan also went on to serve two terms as a New York State League board member. She remains a Huntington League board member and Issues & Advocacy committee member.

An elder at Bethany Presbyterian Church, she says her "spiritual gift is encouragement. I can encourage people when they are nervous or uncertain, helping them to do what they are capable of."

On her current list of advocacy issues are affordable housing, criminal justice reform, universal health care and environmental stewardship. She says she prefers working with small groups to explore issues in depth and finds that educating first and then brainstorming solutions result in "beautiful projects."

Besides her advocacy work, Janet serves as Board President of United Adult Ministries, a nonprofit that operates a senior community of 300 independent living apartments in Flushing Queens.

But don't ask her to any advocacy meetings on Tuesdays. Tuesday night is when she heads into Manhattan for the joy of singing as a first alto with the world-renowned New York Choral Society.