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**NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF  
ULSTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE MIKE HEIN**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**COUNTY EXECUTIVE ANNOUNCES THE 2011  
ULSTER COUNTY SENIOR OF THE YEAR AWARD**

**Ulster County Residents Receive Awards for Volunteer Activity**

Kingston, NY- Esther Coppola and Rafael Diaz were recently announced as the 2011 Ulster County Seniors of the Year at the Hillside Manor in Kingston by Ulster County Executive Mike Hein. The two were recognized by the County Executive at the annual Ulster County Centenarian Luncheon for their efforts to enhance the lives and well being of others in their communities.

“Ulster County is blessed to have two outstanding citizens such as Esther Coppola and Rafael Diaz,” said County Executive Hein. “Esther and Rafael exemplify the Ulster County’s finest tradition of caring, compassion and service to others. I would like to extend my congratulations and my deepest gratitude for their efforts on behalf of our community.”

Esther Coppola has been involved in many organizations and activities throughout Ulster County for decades. She served on the Plattekill Planning Board for over 20 years and served as an Ulster County Community College trustee for 10 years. Esther has volunteered her valuable time for many Ulster County organizations including the Red Cross, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, Highland Cemetery, Highland Chamber of Commerce, Ulster County Mental Health Association, National Recycling Coalition, St Augustine’s School Teacher/Volunteer, Milton Marlboro PTA, Plattekill Civic Association and Plattekill Community Action, to name a few. Still very active, Esther is involved in many senior groups and currently sits on several Town of Plattekill committees. She enjoys visiting with other seniors, and often takes them shopping, to appointments, local activities and senior outings.

Rafael Diaz has enhanced the lives of people in Ulster County as well as the global community. He is the former president of the Highland Rotary Club and he has served as a translator for Rotoplast, a Rotary project to repair children’s cleft palates. Rafael served as a translator in El Salvador for a clean water project. He is a member of the Board of Directors for the Hudson Valley Rail Trail, is editor of its newsletter and is a leader of the organization’s Learn-to-Run classes. As a member of the Highland Landing Park Association, Rafael serves on the Board of Directors and handles its communications. He is a member of the Town of Lloyd Ethics Board and the Mid-Hudson Senior Citizen’s Club of Highland. He has also served as president of the Town of Lloyd Historical Preservation Society.

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