

MAMARONECK *Living*

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Content Due:	Edition Date:
November 25	January
December 25	February
January 25	March
February 25	April
March 25	May
April 25	June
May 25	July
June 25	August
July 25	September
August 25	October
September 25	November
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Dear Friends & Neighbors,

Happy November — a month for gratitude. We begin it by honoring our military veterans - including my husband and both of our fathers among many others - with Veterans' Day on November 11. We are also including a tribute to Emilio "Dee" DaBramo, a WWII veteran and beloved Mamaroneck resident. He is on the bottom left of the photo above. Thank you for your service!

Then, at the end of the month, Thanksgiving allows us to reflect further on the things for which we are most grateful. For many of us, that's our loved ones, and I hope you enjoy meaningful time spent with friends and family.

This issue marks my first as both Content Coordinator and Feature Writer. A big thank you to the Lima family for sharing their story and introducing us to their lovable pup, Gracie Law! I'm also grateful to the extremely talented Jessica Zunic for capturing them so beautifully! This amazing photographer is also available for your family sessions!

Our team enjoys sharing stories about local community members with you. If you or anyone you know is interested in being featured in an upcoming edition, please send me an email to the address below.

As always, thank you to our incredible sponsors! Consider shopping with them while doing your holiday errands and gift-buying. It not only supports the sponsors of this magazine, but it also allows you to make a personal investment in the community. We hope you enjoy this month's edition of *Mamaroneck Living*.

Anne Russo | Content Coordinator
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458th Bombardment Group of the Army Air Corps

back row standing, L-R: Fielding Washington, Bombardier; M.J. Kotwitz, Co-Pilot; Frank Fuson, Jr., Pilot; William Jameson, Navigator

kneeling, L-R: Bauch, Gunner; U.B. Siminoux, Flight Engineer, Gunner; King, Gunner; Harris, Gunner, Asst. Flight Engineer; Emilio "Dee" DaBramo, Radio Operator

**to the best of our knowledge*

NEVER GIVE UP ON A KID

Dee DaBramo's Enduring Legacy in Mamaroneck

By Margaret Käufer President of The STEM Alliance

Photos by The Family of Emilio "Dee" DaBramo

In a quiet corner of Mamaroneck history, the name Dee DaBramo still stirs deep affection. To those who knew him—whether in the high school gym, the village offices, or on the summer fields of Co-Op Camp—Dee was more than a coach or teacher. He was a civic architect, a builder of people and programs, a man who returned from his enlisted service in World War II not ready for rest but determined to dedicate his life to continued service.

Born Emilio “Dee” DaBramo, this son of Italian immigrants became one of Mamaroneck’s most beloved figures. He served his country as a Gunner and a Radio Operator for the Air Force and flew 33 missions in World War II. He then continued his service back in the US as a teacher, coach, athletic and curriculum director, and even as an early Recreation Superintendent for the Village of Mamaroneck. But his greatest legacy wasn’t in titles. It lives on in what he built—not of bricks and mortar, but of summer afternoons, inclusive learning environments, safe playgrounds, youth jobs, and community belonging.

A Vision Born of Experience

When Dee returned from war, he entered Cortland State Teachers College (now SUNY Cortland) on the GI Bill and earned his degree in Physical Education. He began teaching soon after, eventually becoming Director of Physical Education, Health and Safety at Mamaroneck High School in 1960. But he carried more than lesson plans. He carried a vision shaped by war and sharpened by public service. He believed every child, regardless of background or ability, should have access to safe, structured, joyful learning, especially in summer when so many kids can fall behind or feel left out.

That vision took him far beyond the gym. Dee worked with Rose Kennedy and Eunice Kennedy Shriver to lead the first Special Olympics in the US (held in Chicago), championing inclusion of children with disabilities at a time when few others did. He partnered with Jackie Robinson to help launch an overnight camp for underserved children. And he brought figures like Olympian Vinny D’Autorio and tennis champion Arthur Ashe to Mamaroneck students to show that anything was possible. Whether on a ballfield or a statewide stage, Dee lived by one conviction: every child matters.

In 1966, he brought that belief home with the launch of Co-Op Camp, today known as Co-Op Summer Enrichment. A ground-



breaking partnership between the Mamaroneck School District and the local recreation department, Co-Op provided affordable summer programming while employing local teens as counselors. Dee saw summer not as a break, but as a window of opportunity for kids and young adults alike.

Now, 60 years later, Co-Op still thrives, serving diverse children, offering teens their first job, and echoing Dee’s core belief: never give up on a kid.

Infrastructure of the Heart

Margaret Käufer, President of The STEM Alliance, which now leads Co-Op with the Mamaroneck School District, puts it this way:

“In my opportunity to lead Co-Op, I feel a deep responsibility to not only serve the kids of today but to uphold the work of the Greatest Generation that came before us. I see Co-Op as infrastructure that Dee, a WWII veteran, and others like him built from their lessons learned in the field. They brought an exceptional work ethic and a deep belief that the lessons of freedom and access should be brought to our local communities.”

That’s the thing about Dee. He didn’t just create programs. He created systems. He created culture. And it still defines Mamaroneck.



roneck. His roles and accomplishments were many: creator of the A.P.P.L.E. program at MHS, six years as a Village Trustee, six years as Police Commissioner, and as a committee member on the President's Council on Physical Fitness, Sports and Nutrition, and on the Westchester County Youth Board. Additionally, he served as President of the NY State Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation. Across his deep and diverse career, Dee was committed to the belief that recreation was not a luxury, but a right for everyone, and his civic duty to support.

"I never met a kid I gave up on," Dee once said, a quote memorialized in David Hennessey's book *Never Give Up on a Kid*. He meant it. He showed up—in baseball dugouts, in town hall meetings, at playground openings—with relentless passion.

2026: Celebrating a Legacy: Looking for Co-Op Campers Past & Present

Next summer marks the 60th anniversary of Co-Op. In honor of this milestone, The STEM Alliance will host a gala on March 26th as part of its Summer Matters campaign, a fundraising initiative to ensure every child has access to quality summer enrichment. The event will not only raise funds; it will honor Dee.

We're calling on you—yes, you. Were you once a camper at Co-Op? A teen counselor earning your first paycheck? A parent who saw your child blossom? We want to hear your stories.



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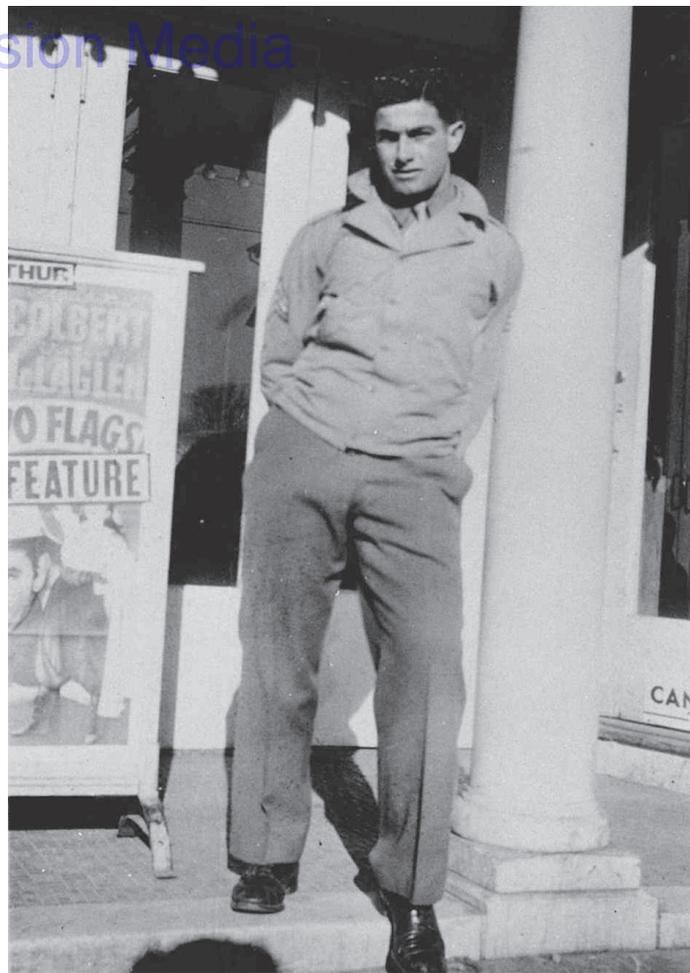
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Visit coopsummer.org/alumni to reconnect. Dee's legacy isn't just about programs. It's about people. To continue this story, we need to hear your recollections of Co-Op and Dee.

A Final Word

In 2014, Dee DaBramo passed away at the age of 91. But walk past a park in Mamaroneck. Visit a summer classroom at Co-Op. Talk to a coach, a teacher, or a parent. Dee is still here. Not in marble or on a plaque, but in the rhythms of community life he helped set into motion.

In a time when civic trust can feel fragile, perhaps we can take a page from Dee's play-book: show up, invest in kids, build programs that last, and never, ever give up on a kid.



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