

STROLL®

Upper Brookville

*Welcome to
Upper Brookville*



**Congratulations to two
Upper Brookville students**

**Meet Unlikely UB Pet
Besties, Roxy & Romeo**

THE CERVINO FAMILY!

A Cause Close to Home: *Meet the* Cervino Family

The co-founders of Coastal Preservation Network (CPN) are bringing their love for the environment to Upper Brookville by launching a community composting program

When Kathryn and James Cervino moved to Upper Brookville with their son Finn and their animals in December 2024, they were drawn by the same qualities that make the village so special to so many families: its natural beauty, preserved open space, and peaceful connection to the outdoors. For the Cervinos, nature isn't just something to admire — it's something to protect, together.

Kathryn, an environmental activist and former science journalist, and James, a visiting scientist at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution specializing in environmental pollution and marine health, are the co-founders of Coastal Preservation Network (CPN), a nonprofit they launched more than two decades ago. Their shared passion for the environment has always been a family affair, shaping not only their careers but also how they raise their son, Finn — with a deep respect for the natural world and a belief in caring for the places they call home. **CONTINUED ►**

Now, as new residents of Upper Brookville, the Cervino family is bringing that same hands-on, community-minded spirit to the village. They are working with local leaders to help launch a pilot food scrap diversion and community composting program, giving families a simple, meaningful way to protect the land they love and model environmental stewardship for the next generation.

What follows is our conversation with Kathryn about the journey she and James have taken together, the mission of Coastal Preservation Network, and how Upper Brookville families can get involved in caring for the land and water we all share.

1. To start, can you tell us a little about yourself and your family, and what brought you to Upper Brookville?

My family moved to Upper Brookville from Queens in December 2024 — me,

my husband James, our son Finn, and our animals. We had visited friends in the area for years and fell in love with the village's beauty and protected greenspaces. We spend a lot of time in nature, so we're truly enjoying the incredible selection of scenic places to walk — the Oyster Bay waterfront, the Planting Fields Arboretum, the woods-to-water of Sagamore Hill, and the many North Shore Land Alliance preserves that provide a place to just wander, often in complete peace.

I'm an environmental activist and worked for many years as a science journalist and a writer for nonprofit organizations, including the Environmental Defense Fund and The New York Academy of Medicine. My husband is a visiting scientist at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and operates a business specializing in environmental pollution. In 2002, we

co-founded Coastal Preservation Network, an environmental nonprofit organization, as a vehicle for local community change.

2. For residents who may be unfamiliar, what is Coastal Preservation Network, and what inspired you to create it?

We created Coastal Preservation Network (CPN) to restore the neglected coastline of College Point, the Northeast Queens community where we grew up. We had been living in South Carolina for a few years while my husband completed his PhD and I was a journalist, and then moved back to Queens in September 2001. We'd see a crazy amount of trash on the coastline when we jogged in our local park — it turned out the waterfront was somehow no one's responsibility. It was maddening.

So we organized a community beach cleanup soon after, and that's how it started. Over the years, we've led projects



“Protecting the places we love starts right at home.”

to combat coastal pollution and illegal dumping, expand public access to the waterfront, improve infrastructure at coastal parks and piers, educate the community on greener living, plant flowers, trees, and seagrasses, expand community composting, and restore oyster reefs. Personally, I am deeply committed to the benefits of composting and am a certified Master Composter through the NYC Community Compost Network.

3. Was there a specific moment or experience that inspired your advocacy?

My husband and I have spent years studying and witnessing the intersection of environmental beauty and environmental damage. We scuba-dived together in remote reefs, observed coral decline from climate change and pollution, and documented **CONTINUED ►**





marine disease and habitat loss around the world. Seeing extraordinary places slowly deteriorate motivated us to act locally, where change is tangible and community-driven.

4. What does your work typically look like throughout the year?

Coastal Preservation Network is dedicated to preserving and restoring the shoreline and natural environment of Northeast Queens and Long Island, which enhances the health of the people who live here. Our work spans shoreline cleanups, oyster and seagrass restoration, composting initiatives, education, research, and advocacy for responsible development and public access to the waterfront. This community composting pilot

program will be our first project in Upper Brookville.

5. Can you tell us more about what you're working on in Upper Brookville?

Even in beautiful, well-maintained communities like Upper Brookville, there is always room to improve how we handle waste, protect habitats, and prepare for climate impacts. Roughly 30% of household waste is organic and compostable, and with local landfills nearing capacity, waste haulers will need to drive hours to the nearest landfills, increasing emissions. Returning food scraps to the soil is a simple, powerful step for both the environment and local resilience.

I first reached out to Mayor Conway by email in late October to share my idea for food scrap recycling and ask

about using village property for a small pilot. After a few emails and a phone call, he was supportive, and I presented the concept to the Trustees at their December Board meeting. We had a really thoughtful discussion about possible food scrap drop-off locations and long-term composting options, and Trustee Jody Burns encouraged me to connect with Orkestal Farms and Planting Fields. We are now exploring future possibilities for larger scale composting operations. The Board has been wonderfully supportive and encouraging, offering village property, help with publicity, and connections to share the program with the community. The board just approved us to operate on the grounds of Village Hall at 24 Wolver Hollow Road, and we plan to launch in March.



The pilot will start with up to 20 families. Each will receive a 5-gallon locking bucket and a small countertop pail, and they will drop the bucket weekly at the composting site. They can fill the bucket with fruit and vegetable scraps, egg shells, and coffee filters, instead of throwing it in the trash. I'll weigh each bucket (to track our success!) and manage the compost on site, layering scraps with leaves. At the same time, I'm in ongoing conversations with local composters, the state DEC, and the Nassau County Soil and Water Conservation District about finding a permanent home for the material in the future. For now, we'll operate with a compost bin on village property as an interim solution while we work toward a longer-term, more robust setup.

6. On a personal note, what keeps you motivated?

There is so much environmental loss in the world. Being part of something that creates positive change — especially outdoors and alongside others — is deeply grounding. When a whole community comes together, that impact multiplies, and that's what inspires me most.



Scan here to sign up for community composting. Space is limited to 20 families, with additional households added to a waitlist.



Why bury food waste when we can put it back into the ground where it belongs?"