

## Volunteer Spotlight: Camille Coppola

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Co-founder of the New Rochelle Opera more than 25 years ago, this life-long New Rochelle resident has made it her goal to always bring professional opera productions to the Queen City.

A number of times during the “Volunteer Spotlight” series, we have seen people who have been enriching their community for a number of years and whether the effort is long-term or short, giving one's time and sharing one's passion to help others always seems to be one of the main reasons why these volunteers do what they do.

For Camille Coppola, her volunteer project began more than 25 years ago in 1985 when she co-founded the New Rochelle Opera with her friend Billie Tucker. Ever since, they have brought many performances to the New Rochelle area, from *Die Fledermaus* and *Hansel and Gretel* to *Madama Butterfly* and *Tosca*.

“So many people have come up to me and said that New Rochelle Opera is the city’s best kept secret,” said Coppola. “It has always been my goal to produce professional productions so that people can walk away feeling as if they had just seen a show at the Metropolitan Opera.”

has taken the stage at many locations around Westchester over the years and just recently held their annual major production in June at the Ursuline Arts Center. The major production scheduled for 2012 will be *Madama Butterfly*, a show that Coppola herself has performed in and is excited to bring back to the New Rochelle area.

“It’s almost a full-time job helping run the New Rochelle Opera,” she said, talking about the long hours that she and Tucker spend between casting, rehearsals, production, fundraising, marketing, putting on the shows and much more.

Coppola also can be found singing at Sacred Heart Church in Hartsdale on Sundays as well as doing other small concerts and engagements throughout Westchester. She said she is thrilled that she has been able to spend her life doing what she loves—both professionally as a performer and as an endeavor in donating her time and resources to add culture to the already culturally diverse city of New Rochelle.

“The New Rochelle Opera is a great alternative to going to New York City because you don’t have to worry about parking, traffic, ticket prices are lower and most importantly, the productions are done by professional performers,” she said.

The organization has also reached out to the youth of New Rochelle many times over the years, working with high school students who have participated in various productions and also at Daniel Webster School, where students put on their own version of *Hansel and Gretel* a few years back.

For more information on the New Rochelle Opera, including a list of past performances and information on when their next production will be taking place, visit them at [Nropera.org](http://Nropera.org).