

THE People of PORT

SUMMER 2021: ISSUE 7



News for Donors & Friends
Community Chest Supported Programs

EIGHT SCOUTS IN PW TROOP 7 EARN EAGLE AWARD THIS YEAR

Have you noticed the brand-new outdoor fitness area open to the public at Lion's Field? There's also a renovated Dog Walk at Christopher Marley Park. Let's not forget the new outdoor classroom constructed for students at Schreiber High School. These are just some of the important Eagle Scout projects completed by members of Port Washington's own Troop 7 this past year.

It's been a banner year for Troop 7 with eight Scouts completing the final leg of their journey toward becoming an Eagle Scout. This is the top award a young person can receive in the Scouting organization and requires an enormous amount of self-discipline, determination and leadership. To be an Eagle Scout you must earn at least 21 merit badges. You also must take on various leadership roles that demonstrate an individual's adherence to the Scouting ideals including trustworthiness, loyalty, and bravery among other traits.

The centerpiece of the Eagle Scout process is the planning and execution of a significant service project that benefits the community. The Scouts go through a rigorous planning process. First, they come up with the idea and present a well-thought-out proposal and budget. Once they get the green light, they begin the fundraising process which often involves raising money or approaching businesses for donations of equipment or supplies. Then comes the best part—the execution.

The Scout enlists the help of other members of the Troop, as well as parents and other willing volunteers to breathe life into their vision. It often requires a lot of grit and sweat. For instance, this past spring nearly 20



Kevin C. opens Schreiber HS outdoor learning classroom.

volunteers from Troop 7 gathered at the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center in Oyster Bay to help Scout, Spencer L. rehabilitate a tangled, overgrown meadow. Under the hot sun, this determined contingent pulled out clumps of stubborn weeds, overgrown grass, and even the odd tree stump or two. Then they planted native grasses and flowers, all donated from local gardening companies. By next spring this 2000 square foot meadow should be teeming with flowers, butterflies, and birds. The journey of choosing just the right Eagle Scout project is a very personal one. For example, inspired by the tranquil setting of Shelter's Rocks Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Shelter Rock, Chris N. created a meditation and



Troop 7 scouts help Spencer L. put the final touches on planting at the Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center

Tobin F. with the help of fellow scouts clear and build a fire pit & meeting area at the Science Museum of Long Island



campfire area. Another Scout, Karl H. erected planters and a book box at Community Synagogue. At the United Methodist Church, Scout Matt M. designed and built a garden and outdoor meeting area. And next time you find yourself walking on the grounds at the Science Museum of Long Island, keep an eye out for a clearing in the woods with a fire pit and benches. It was created by Tobin F. for his Eagle Scout project.

“Projects like these are vital to our community. Knowing they were created through hard work, dedication and commitment of our own Troop 7, is something we can all be proud of.”

Maria Lane, Troop 7 parent



COMMUNITY CHEST THANKS OUTGOING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Julie Meer decided this spring that it was time for her to make a change. Consequently, she stepped down as the Community Chest's Executive Director this past June.

Julie was the first full-time Executive Director at the Community Chest, who has served for the past 11 years. The enormous impact she made goes far beyond the Community Chest's everyday operations but includes strides in campaign outcomes and the success of fundraising events. As the face of Community Chest, Julie has cultivated warm relationships with people and organizations throughout Port Washington.

Julie put her heart and soul, time, and energy into running the organization. She has amassed a lifetime's worth of experience in the nonprofit world through her employment and extensive volunteer work. For those who know her, she has become a "go-to" resource. It is no secret that Julie's commitment at the Chest

was motivated by her hope of making a difference in her community and helping those in need. It is for those reasons; she found her last year as Executive Director most rewarding. During the pandemic, where people experienced devastating hardship, uncertainty, and isolation, Julie understood that it was imperative that the Community Chest act and assist our most vulnerable residents. Julie's early foresight, subsequent leadership, and collaboration with community organizations acted as a catalyst for the community in providing relief.

The culmination of Julie's COVID-19 relief work and years of commitment to the Community Chest and its grantees, is an inspiration to us.

Julie's professionalism, eagerness to help, good advice, and friendship will be sorely missed. It is with gratitude and fondness; the Community Chest's Board and staff wish to say, "thank you, Julie".

PORT ROWING HAS A THRILLING RETURN TO COMPETITION

Port Rowing athletes have been busy over the last few months, returning to a full slate of racing after more than a year of limited competition opportunities. The New York State Invitational Regatta held in May was the first major regatta for the team since October 2019. The boys and girls squad had their most successful State Championship in Port Rowing history, each wrapping up the weekend with first-place finishes. Port boys won victories in the Boys 2nd Varsity 8+ and Junior 8+. The girls also came away with victories in the 2nd Varsity 8+ and Freshman 4+. The team also had strong finishes in their respective 1st Varsity 8+ events, with the girls finishing 3rd and the boys finishing 4th. After a successful State Championship, both teams traveled to Sarasota, FL for the US Rowing Youth National Regatta. Port brought its largest contingent of athletes ever to a Youth National Championship

all five boats made it through the time trial to race in finals. At the end of the regatta, the Boys Under-17 4x, featuring four Schreiber High School athletes, finished in second place, just .24 seconds ahead of third place. This is the first medal at the Youth National Championship for the Port Rowing Boys Team.

Port Rowing had summer sessions for adults and its "Learn to Row program" for athletes entering grades 7-12. Athletes were given the opportunity to learn to row, develop their skills and improve their fitness. There is no better place to spend summer than on the water and at Port Rowing no athlete is ever turned away, regardless of a family's financial situation. Thanks in a large part to the support of the *Community Chest of Port Washington*, need-based scholarships are available.



Port Rowing U17 Boys 4 at the USRowing Youth National

SPOTLIGHT ON A NEW GRANTEE

REWILD LONG ISLAND "SUSTAINABILITY BEGINS AT HOME"

ReWild Long Island was founded in 2018 to protect and increase biodiversity in both public and private spaces using native plants that would benefit the wildlife on the Port Washington peninsula.

Raju Rajan, President of ReWild Long Island, tells us that "We often hear neighbors say they would love to have a pollinator-friendly yard, free of pesticides and chemicals, but they are not sure how to make it look beautiful and enhance curb appeal." As a result, one of the goals of ReWild Long Island became to teach people to turn their yards and public spaces into "rewilded" landscapes. The organization helps neighbors to create beautiful native wildscapes, grow healthy organic food, compost yard waste, build soil and preserve groundwater. Initially, a community organization, ReWild Long Island began with seven families joining to rewild their yard. Within a short time, they have grown and evolved, where membership has

multiplied and collaborations with several local organizations have prompted them to formally incorporate into a legally recognized nonprofit.

ReWild Long Island is committed to addressing the urgency of climate change and the need to mobilize the community around its mitigation, through planting more native trees and plants that can naturally temper the environment against extreme weather patterns while sequestering carbon in the ground. By holding an annual sale each spring and fall, residents who are interested in rewilding can purchase native perennial plants. This past spring, over 5000 perennial plants were sold, which translates into thousands of happy butterflies, bees, and birds.

ReWild's mission of educating youth about the importance of sustainable landscapes involves engaging them

create hands-on change in the community. With the help of a grant from the Community Chest, ReWild was able to work with several local organizations as a principal sponsor for the Summer Program to Fight Hunger and Climate Change. The program aims to combat hunger and climate change at a community level by connecting young and adult volunteers with hands-on experiences of growing food and sustaining biodiversity. The emphasis is on learning by doing. Student interns commit to volunteering four hours per week from June to October, performing many environmentally friendly activities such as growing organic produce for food pantries, removing invasives from nature preserves, turning food waste into fertilizer at a local community compost, and planting native perennials.

ReWild Long Island's initiatives are

overseen by board members and dozens of dedicated volunteers who are both local and from neighboring towns. Raju Rajan states, "Port Washington is uniquely fortunate in having so many environmentally-minded organizations and volunteers. And now, our youth are at the forefront of taking us to the next level with their passion and hard work!"

ReWild welcomes you to volunteer or sign up as a member. For up to the moment information, go to their website: www.rewildlongisland.org.



Students and volunteers at the Summer Program to Fight Hunger and Climate Change 2021 in the garden at the Science Museum of Long Island

COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESPONSE WORKING GROUP UPDATE

The Working Group held Zoom meetings during the summer to ensure that established initiatives were running smoothly, in addition to identifying any new issues. The Port Pantry Supply Squad checked in with participating outreach organizations regularly to keep on top of the required personal care items to be delivered.

In expanding the program, the Lutheran Church of Our Savior joined the initiative by providing space to store and sort personal care items for delivery. The Community Synagogue assists with diapers and wipes, which are in particular demand by families. Meat the Need, with the assistance of

Valley Meat, made weekly deliveries to the local food pantry throughout the summer. It has been an overwhelming success in aiding food insecurity.

These initiatives would not be possible without the dedication of the Nicholas Center's Navigators, who provide the transportation and the manpower to bring the massive number of Community Chest red bags to outreach pantries.

"It's been great meeting new people in Port Washington as we work together to help support our community," reports Pam Ollendorff, coordinator for PPSS.

THE NICHOLAS CENTER IS RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR IMPORTANT WORK IN THE AUTISM COMMUNITY



TNC Navigators partnering with Community Chest's "Meet the Needs" COVID Relief initiative

The Nicholas Center (TNC) was awarded **Nonprofit of the Year by Long Island Business News in June**. The award honors those who exemplify in action and mission good corporate citizenship which contributes to the economic and social well-being of our communities. TNC is proud to support over one hundred individuals with Autism with work readiness skills, pre-vocational training and meaningful community opportunities – partnering with many local nonprofit organizations. Longtime friend of the organization, Senator Anna M. Kaplan says, *"I have known of the important work of The Nicholas Center for many years – experiencing firsthand the impact they have had for the developmentally disabled community on Long Island."*

Nicole Sugrue, Co-Founder, and Executive Director adds that *"Our work is important, challenging at times, and ultimately the most important endeavor we could be involved in – making the world a bit kinder, our communities more inclusive, and offering hope to a deserving population."* Nassau County Legislator, Delia DeRiggi-Whitton who has worked with The Nicholas Center on many projects said, *"The Nicholas Center is dedicated to ensuring that adults on the Autism spectrum have access to the resources they need to thrive. During my tenure as a Nassau County Legislator, I have witnessed the good work of The Nicholas Center firsthand at its Port Washington location."* TNC also received the **NY Senate**

Empire Business Award, *"the most socially innovative agency of its kind in NY State,"* and is a proud member of the Port Washington and Pleasantville Chambers of Commerce and the Business Council of Westchester. Town of North Hempstead Supervisor, Judi Bosworth praises the work of TNC. She comments that *"The Nicholas Center has been a staunch advocate for residents with Autism since 2010. The staff and leadership have demonstrated an immense level of care and compassion for their work and those that they serve. Their commitment to expanding opportunities for Autistic adults to both learn and engage with the community is incredibly inspiring."*

NORTHSHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER ANNOUNCES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Upon Andrew Malekoff's retirement after 45 years of service to the organization, the Guidance Center named its new Executive Director/CEO, Kathy Rivera. Ms. Rivera has a distinguished background. She spent the last 14 years at the Jewish Child Care Association (JCCA), where she was the Senior Vice President of Care Management Services. Her experience at this multi-service child welfare agency, which provides comprehensive social services to children and families, made her a perfect fit for the leading role at the Guidance Center, Long Island's leading children's mental health organization. *"We believe Kathy will provide the strong leadership, experience and the*

vision the Guidance Center needs to move into the future," said Paul Vitale, Guidance Center Board President. *"She has a proven track record in governance and fiscal management, and she has built and developed an expert, interdisciplinary leadership team that successfully operates a wide range of mental health, physical health, education and social well-being programs that serve more than 1,000 youth and families across Metro New York."* Ms. Rivera, who took on the leadership role on June 22, 2021, said, *"North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center's mission not only aligns with my core values but supports my commitment to*

strengthening individuals and families to achieve self-determined optimum well-being. It is an honor and privilege to become part of a dynamic team and outstanding organization dedicated to ensuring equity and access with the highest quality services. I am thrilled to begin this new journey with the Guidance Center and look forward to supporting communities and families on their personal paths toward hope and healing." Regina Barros-Rivera will serve as COO. *"The Board of Directors believes that with Kathy's leadership and Regina's long-standing commitment and value to the organization, the Guidance Center will continue to*

uphold its unwavering dedication to Port Washington and other Nassau communities," said Mr. Vitale.



Kathy Rivera, Executive Director/CEO

LONG ISLAND REACH CALLS FOR INCREASE IN FUNDING

Long Island Reach, with locations in Long Beach, Port Washington, and Franklin Square, have over the years had their budgets cut, then restored, causing significant disruption on service. Meanwhile, depression, suicide, alcohol and substance abuse, opioid addiction, and overdoses are rising to frightening levels, and the post-pandemic era is predicted to be even worse. The demand for Long Island Reach services has increased dramatically due to the disturbing increase in suicides, addiction, substance abuse, and overdoses. Since the pandemic began, Long Island Reach has done over 25,000 Telehealth mental health visits and has had a 19 percent increase in counseling sessions. According to the CDC, substance abuse cases have increased 13 percent since June 2020. The Nassau County Police Department has recently reported a 17 percent surge in fatal overdoses. Lack of funding puts lives at risk by limiting Long Island Reach's ability to serve the

rapidly increasing numbers of individuals and families in crisis on Long Island. Mental health and addiction counseling services are the critical lifelines for people facing crisis. Licensed Psychologist Dr. Joseph Smith, Executive Director of Long Island Reach held a press conference back in February calling for an increase in funding for local social service agencies to make immediate increases of State and County funding and for the State to allocate more resources to prevent a post-pandemic human calamity. The agency advocated for restoration and additional funding for needed chemical dependency and mental health services post-pandemic. Port Counseling Center, which conducts services for children, adolescents, and adults in Port Washington is one of three Long Island Reach locations. Long Island Reach has seen caseloads increased by over 20% in Port Washington since the onset of the COVID19 pandemic. Long Island Reach reported in June that as a direct result of the press conference, funding was eventually restored. In fact, additional funds are to be allocated to programs this year and hopefully beyond. Without the additional financial support, lives would have potentially been lost. State and County elected officials were urged to act to increase funding and provide more for the post-pandemic period. And they did just that.

PRC FAMILY SUMMER FUN

The Parent Resource Center's Summer Enrichment Program, an extension of Stepping Stones, was held on the grounds of the beautiful Sands Point Conservancy for six weeks this summer. Older siblings were invited to join the summer program making it a true family experience. The children were treated to guided nature walks and tours of the beach by the Conservancy's own staff. Each week, visitors stopped by to donate their time by bringing their unique enrichment programs to the group. The Science Museum of Long Island talked about insects and science, the PW Public Library presented storytime, Unlimited Sports organized games, Ranger Eric brought a live animal show and Bach to Rock celebrated with music. On the last day of the program, Port Pays It Forward and Carlo's Pizza showed up with pies for each family! The Port Pantry Supply Squad was able to continue providing personal care necessities to PRC outreach families during the summer months using the Sands Point Conservancy as a drop-off point for the Nicholas Center Navigators. PRC staff and board members were so pleased with the success of the summer program. Making memories, enjoying the outdoors and staying connected were important outcomes.



PRC Stepping Stones students and families at Sands Point.

Hope Pecullan, PRC VP of Outreach said, *"Thanks to the incredible support of our donors and the generosity of the many community organizations, the six weeks of summer fun was just lovely and beyond their expectation."*

NEWS IN BRIEF

PORT WASHINGTON ADULT ACTIVITY CENTER REOPENS

As our entire community emerges from the effects of the pandemic, the Port Washington Adult Activities Center has taken cautious steps to open its doors to our most vulnerable residents.

During its 14 months mandated closure, staff sought to remain connected with their senior citizen members by calling them on a regular basis, to check in and chat for a while. After vaccines became available, the staff reached out to assist members with obtaining and coordinating vaccine

appointments. Executive Director, Linda Livio notes that a Project Independence nurse and social worker familiar with the Center's members also played a part in reaching out and providing support where needed. The importance of the well-being of the seniors cannot be overstated. Everyone involved was thrilled when the Center reopened in May 2021 to fully vaccinated members, offering bingo and a place to socialize twice weekly. In mid-July, the Center added weekly art and exercise classes to

their activity offerings on Mondays and Wednesdays. Due to limited capacity and popularity, members are required to make reservations and participation is rotated weekly. *"The seniors are happy to be back at the Center and get back to normal by enjoying in-person activities. They are enthusiastic about the classes being offered", says Linda Livio.*

The Center will begin offering hot lunches and more varied activities in September.

GIRL SCOUTS OF NASSAU COUNTY SWING INTO SUMMER



Summer celebration at Adventureland, Long Island

Under clear blue skies and an atmosphere of pure joy, Girl Scouts of Nassau County gathered in person at Adventureland for the first time in 15 months. More than 3,000 Girl Scout families, including 27 Port Washington Girl Scouts, enjoyed an evening of interacting with friends, eating carnival food, winning a wide variety of stuffed animals at the arcade and living in the moment on all the thrilling rides. It was truly heartwarming to hear the laughs and to see the smiles of all our Girl Scouts and their families. This was a well-deserved celebration of scouting and a commitment to staying connected amid an unprecedented year of uncertainty.

Girl Scouts across Long Island rose above the challenge where 79 scouts were awarded the highest honor – the Girl Scout Gold Award. Five scouts were girls from Port Washington. The Girl Scout Gold Award acknowledges each recipient's dedication to empowering and bettering herself, but also making the

world a better place for others.

The 2021 projects tackled issues such as educating senior citizens on nutrition and food allergies, stress management for teens, anti-bullying, and opioid awareness. The award embodies a Girl Scout's contribution to making meaningful and sustainable changes in their communities. Randell M. Bynum, GSNC CEO, says to the 2021 Gold Award class of 2021 "Achieving your Gold Award is remarkable. You are already the changemaker others strive to become. You saw a need and made a difference. This past year was a challenge for everyone and while we were all figuring it out along the way, you saw an issue and found a sustainable solution which helped make the world a better place...You have shown us that you have grit and ambition, And you have shown us that the world will be in good hands with you."

SCIENCE MUSEUM OF LONG ISLAND OFFERS A NEW CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP

The Science Museum of Long Island (SMLI) is a not-for-profit science education center located on the Leeds Pond Preserve in Port Washington. SMLI is committed to providing young people learning opportunities through active discovery and problem solving. Its goal is to elevate the level of science literacy.

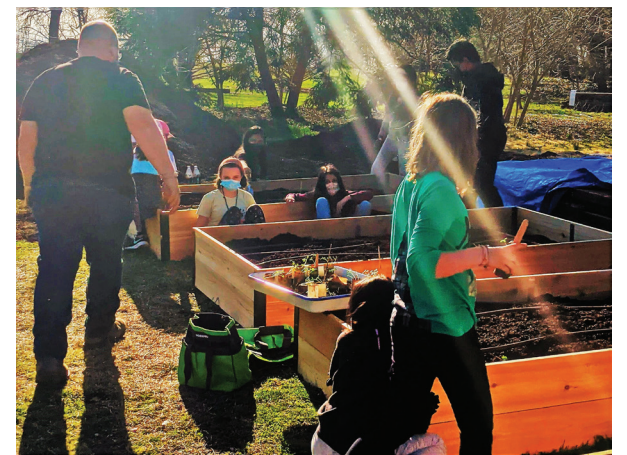
Thanks to a generous grant from the Community Chest Mertz Fund, the Science Museum of Long Island was thrilled to be able to offer a new Children's Garden Workshop introduced this spring. Funding not only helped purchase all of garden beds, soil and other materials needed to start and run the class but it also provided the funding for an irrigation system to water both the new Children's Garden and neighboring Plant-a-Row Garden located at the Science Museum. This new 10-week workshop for children ages 7-12 offered the perfect opportunity for kids to learn and grow from gardening while

getting outside and engaging their natural curiosity and wonder. Students got their hands dirty as they learned about botany and how to plant, tend and harvest a garden. They grew various vegetables and herbs over the ten weeks that they were able to taste and even take home with them. The workshop covered a variety of topics from dissecting and learning about the biology of flowers, to learning about and foraging for mushrooms in the forest.

At the workshop conclusion, the children threw a garden party, making a salad of their bounty. They harvested and helped package the extra food to be donated to the Port Washington based food-distribution organization Plant-A-Row for The Hungry.

SMLI was pleased that they were able to provide scholarships to five local children to participate in the workshop.

SMLI Executive Director, Kristen Laird said, *"The workshop was a tremendous success and it was so popular that we are planning to add another class to the program next spring."*



Participants working on planting in garden beds at SMLI.

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