

Pattersquash Creek Civic Association

Congratulations



to all of the



2009 Graduates

**Congratulating future community leaders like
Wm. Floyd Board President Bob Vecchio and
Father Todd of St. Jude's Church, this year's Community
Leadership Award Honorees to be recognized on
Sunday, September 13th, 2009, at 5pm at Ladakins Restaurant.
Call 487-0595 or email norton2526@peoplepc.com
for more information.**

Community Center for Brain Injury Rehabilitation Coming to Medford

■ *by* BARBARA LAMONICA

Imagine having all of the resources for rehabilitation following brain injury and surgery provided under one roof. Those hopes will come to fruition for many patients and clients who are on the path to taking control and gaining back a productive quality of life they once knew.

Construction on a 'New Beginnings Brain Injury Community Center' for long-term rehabilitation is expected to break ground in the Town of Brookhaven in Medford near Long Island Expressway Exit 65 in September. According to Allyson Scerri, executive director of New Beginnings, the modern, state-of-the-art facility will boast 8,700 square feet of the newest technology for rehabilitation in space specifically designated for individuals or groups who are interested in providing treatment to individuals with traumatic brain injury and other physical and cognitive disabilities.

Allyson, (whose father, Al Barone, sustained brain trauma following a motorcycle accident in 2007 and has since achieved an 85 percent rehabilitation recovery rate), notes that the road to recovery, in fact, took them to several different locations for her father to receive the services he needed to get to where he is today. The wealth of information Allyson obtained from

witnessing her own father's recovery sparked a passion for her to help others who are following the same path for their own loved ones. "Imagine how much easier it would be to have everything under one roof?" Allyson explained in foresight and hopeful anticipation of the community center's eventual completion.

Once completed, the Community Center will contain a centralized list of resources for survivors of traumatic brain injury and other physical and cognitive disabilities offering referrals to appropriate licensed professionals; it will offer training and educational opportunities for survivors, families and professionals; develop research into effective strategies and techniques for long-term rehabilitation from these injuries; and will be the center for advocating for the needs and resources for members of the community on an on-going basis.

To that end, hundreds of supporters convened on the grounds of the Holtsville Ecology Site on Sunday to take part in the Walk for Peace of Mind: Traumatic Brain Injury in memory of Irene Walsh, with the event major sponsor being Suffolk County National Bank. Among those who attended the walk were head injury survivors, themselves. Anthony Mastroianni of Huntington Station,

who fell coming out of church in August 1998, miraculously lived to tell his story. The 78-year-old (who spent his life in physical lifestyle with his livelihood in construction, including serving the country in the Navy's Construction Battalion for the 'Sea Bee' during the Korean War, was twice misdiagnosed after his fall, until neurologist Beatrice Entrand ordered an MRI, which ultimately revealed Anthony developed blood clots in his brain. Two surgeries later, it is hard to tell Anthony experienced any of his previous misfortunes. He attributes his success story, in part, to his wife, Ona. "She took care of me night and day, and in fact, I was released earlier from the hospital because doctors knew she would help me with my therapy and walking," Anthony recounts.

Lisa Manganaro's mobility at the moment is via wheelchair, but her recovery, too, is yet another miraculous story. She was shot in the head six years ago, lived to tell her story, and looks amazingly vibrant. Speaking about Sunday's walk as participants were arriving, Lisa stated, "I love this event, and I'm glad it's happening." Lisa attends RES (Rehabilitation Education Systems) programs, and attributes her success, by and large, to a loving support group. "My family

members, loved ones, friends and God helped get me to get through this . . ." Lisa says with love and affection in her voice for those who have been there for her in her journey to recovery.

Sunday's walk was a family affair of sorts, for many, also. Thomas Maher brought his wife and sons in the fundraising effort. The Mahers are close friends with the Scerri Family, and they turned out to support Allyson for her father.

Fundraising efforts for New Beginnings will be a work in progress as the not-for-profit organization seeks to acquire state-of-the-art equipment aimed at rehabilitating clients and patients on their road to recovery and an improved quality of life. A Veterans Day Dinner Dance for brain injury rehabilitation will be held on November 11 from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. at Leonards of Great Neck. The event will consist of a buffet dinner, casino night, open bar, topped off with entertainment by Ric Mango. For more information on attending the fundraiser call 631-245-0333, or 631-608-2091.

To make remittance contributions to New Beginnings, send checks payable to New Beginnings and mail to P.O. Box 407, Medford, NY, 11763, or log on to www.nbcommunitycenter.org.