

PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release

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Mill Neck Services Group Leads by Example at Self-Advocacy Event

Recently, the Self-Advocates group from Mill Neck Services, Inc. (MNS) participated in a kick-off event at this year's Self-Advocates' Open House. Held at the regional office of the Long Island Developmental Disabilities Service Organization (LIDDSO) in Hauppauge, the event was packed with over 100 advocates and support staff. After being introduced, the MNS participants chatted with other self-advocates about their experiences, including a presentation about Deaf culture.

Among the topics the group discussed, with the assistance of a PowerPoint slide show, were how language and communication access are crucial, ways to approach a Deaf person, and the importance of the words used in identifying people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The MNS self-advocates wrapped up their presentation with a mini lesson teaching the ASL (American Sign Language) alphabet and the numbers 1 through 10.

Toward the end of the event, Bridget Cariello, the Long Island Regional Coordinator had a chance to introduce the MNS participants to Jacquelyn Best, the new Regional Office Director, at which point the Mill Neck Self-Advocates expressed how they are looking forward to developing new ideas and collaborating in the near future with the regional office. Caitlin Dold, Medicaid Service Coordinator at Mill Neck Services, who also attended the Open House, emphasized the participants' dedication to self-advocacy by saying, "On a daily basis, the individuals we serve advocate for themselves and their wishes, whether it's for programs that

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they want to be involved with or enroll in – socially, in educational settings, or in programs through MNS. In fact, their presence at the Open House and previous events, such as last fall’s Self-Advocacy conference, allowed them to put their advocacy, as Deaf individuals, into action by sharing their unique experiences and educating other participants.”

Long Island Self Advocacy consists of regional groups that are part of the Self Advocacy Association of New York State (SANYS). Founded in 1986, SANYS is run by and for people with developmental disabilities. Among the core activities that SANYS promotes are: teaching individuals with developmental disabilities about self-advocacy; educating self-advocates and families about individualized supports; providing support for regional self-advocacy groups.

Established in 1986, Mill Neck Services, Inc. has placed more than 1,000 Deaf, Hard of Hearing or otherwise disabled workers in over 400 businesses operating on Long Island. Mill Neck Services is part of the Mill Neck Family of Organizations, which also includes Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf and Mill Neck Manor Early Childhood Center. For more information, please call (516) 922-4100 or visit www.millneck.org.

Photo Caption:

Members of Mill Neck Services, Inc. recently attended an Open House at the Regional Self Advocates office. Standing: Matt Birn, Advisor and Mill Neck Services’ Coordinator of Habilitation Services, Kelly Kildare and Caitlin Dold, Advisor and Medicaid Service Coordinator for Mill Neck Services. Seated: Mark Reid, Sandy Pereira, Edgardo Cruz and Susan Cohen with Bridget Cariello, Regional Coordinator, Long Island Chapter of the Self Advocates Association of New York State (SANYS).

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