

## **PRESS RELEASE**

*For Immediate Release*

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## **Mill Neck's 6th Annual Spring Swing *A Successful Tee-off Held for Early Childhood Center***

The Mill Neck Family of Organizations hosted their 6th annual Spring Swing Invitational Golf Tournament on June 14, 2012 at the North Hills Country Club in Manhasset. Sunny skies and pleasant temperatures made a perfect day to tee off and to kick-off the "Restoring Hope, Building Dreams" Campaign for Mill Neck's Early Childhood Center (ECC). Part of the Mill Neck Family of Organizations, the ECC provides early and intensive assistance to children, ages 3 and 4, who may have deficits in speech, language/communication, cognitive and gross and fine motor development. This year's Spring Swing proceeds will assist in funding the planned \$800,000 much-needed building renovation project in order to upgrade and enhance the ECC's internal structure and functionality.

Before teeing off, golfers had an opportunity to meet with Bud Harrelson, who made an appearance during brunch. The former shortstop, who played with the New York Mets during their legendary 1969 World Series Championship, graciously signed autographs and related his personal connection to deafness. Harrelson, current co-owner of the Long Island Ducks and member of the coaching staff, explained that a cousin in his father's family was deaf. Additionally, Harrelson's mother was a sign language interpreter at church services. As a result, there were, he said, "Lots of deaf people coming to my house." The sports personality went on to commend the Mill Neck organization for its lengthy history of service to the Deaf community and the scope of services provided today.

Following brunch, golfers enjoyed a day on the course, golf challenges and refreshments. Many, along with non-golfers, gathered in the dining room after the tournament for cocktails and the

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Champions Dinner. Raffles, silent auction, golfer awards and recognition of honorees were all part of this memorable evening. In his speech prior to the presentation of this year's honorees, Dr. Mark Prowatzke, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Mill Neck Family of Organizations said, "Encouragement, hope and progress are powerful antidotes for life's difficulties. Many of you know this firsthand. And we know how your enthusiastic support of our work helps us, together with families, make life less difficult, and life's good days, more abundant."

Dr. Prowatzke's words set the tone when it was time to introduce the 2012 honorees. Among them was The Home Depot, acknowledged as a committed employer of Mill Neck Services clients who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Maryann and Herb Rocchi were recognized as long-time supporters of Mill Neck Manor. Since 1998, the Rocchis have been active champions of Mill Neck's mission. Maryann is currently a member of the Mill Neck Family's Fundraising Committee and is also involved with a sub-committee for Mill Neck's upcoming "Sail the Sound for Deafness" Sailing Regatta to be held on August 9, 2012.

Throughout her career as a speech/language pathologist, Marian Boehm has had opportunities to work with developmentally disabled adults, some of whom have also been deaf. She began employment at Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf in 1981. During her speech at the recognition, Boehm spoke of her background and of a particular young man she worked extensively with in her early years as a speech therapist. With the numerous challenges she faced in her sessions with him, she nevertheless credited him with making her the therapist she is today. Boehm acknowledged her colleagues at the ECC in helping her learn more about deafness as well as infant and toddler development. These experiences, along with personal ones, were reflected in Boehm's words, when she said, "I have learned that parents cannot do it all by themselves, and that the professionals cannot do it all by themselves either. I have learned to help my students better, and how to help their families. I have learned that you can't do one without the other, and that when you help one, you help the other as well."

Putting the ECC's vital work further in perspective was Steve Castar, who golfed earlier that day. Caster's son, now 15, attended the Early Childhood Center from pre-K to age 5. Praising the ECC program for putting his son on the path he is today, Caster, Executive Director of Roosevelt Island Day Nursery, said, "It made all the difference in his life."

The Mill Neck Family of Organizations wishes to thank all guests, volunteers, committee members, parents and students, and the following sponsors and contributors for helping to make the tournament a huge success and by extension, ensuring that the hopes and dreams of the ECC's special-needs preschoolers become reality.

**Sponsors:** *Hole In One:* The Rocchi Family; *Birdie:* Clifton, Budd & DeMaria; Fiduciary Investment Advisors, LLC; R.S. Abrams & Co., LLP; *Par Sign:* Applebee's; Core BTS/Alcatel Lucent; The DiBartolo Family; Emigrant Savings Bank; J & B Auto Repair of Oyster Bay; Panera Bread; Pasta, Needham & Taylor, Esqs.; PBI Payroll; Scott Sloane Foundation; The Silver Family; Ted B. Smith; United Service Workers Union; Hon. Douglas & Gwen Watson;

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In addition to specialized services for 3 and 4 year olds with special needs, the Early Childhood Center also provides full evaluations of preschool children suspected of having developmental delays. Most children who attend the program graduate and attend kindergarten in their home school districts. For more information about the Early Childhood Center, please call (516) 922-4100, ext. 276, or visit <http://www.millneck.org>.

The Mill Neck Family of Organizations is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for people who are Deaf, or who have other special needs, through excellence in individually designed educational, vocational or spiritual programs and services. For more information, please call (516) 922-4100 or visit <http://www.millneck.org>. "Like" us on [facebook.com/millneck](https://www.facebook.com/millneck).

*Photo Captions:*

1. New York Mets former shortstop and current Long Island Ducks co-owner, Bud Harrelson shares the spotlight with Nancy Leghart, Director of Advancement, Mill Neck Family of Organizations (left) and Kelly Barbu, Administrative Assistant at Mill Neck Services for Deaf Adults.
2. A mixed foursome takes a photo break between holes.
3. Pleasant weather made these golfers smile.
4. Maryann and Herb Rocchi were honored for their long-time support of Mill Neck Manor.
5. Early Childhood Center (ECC) Speech Therapist, Marian Boehm (center) along with some of her ECC colleagues.

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