

EDITORIAL Smart rebuild

It's already been more than a month since Hurricane Sandy tore through our communities destroying public and private property, setting our lives in disarray. Though the initial shock of the storm might have worn off for most, sadly there are still so many people reeling from that disaster, displaced from their homes and with no idea of when that situation will end. Some however are moving ahead and for them, the rebuilding has already begun.

One of our readers in a flooded out neighborhood raised what he believes to be a smarter rebuilding idea that he plans on taking to the Islip Town Board. He said he'd ask the town to allow damaged one-family homes to be reconstructed into two-family or Mother/Daughter dwellings without going through the long, drawn-out hassle of applying for that special permit to do so. It's not a bad idea.

Rebuilding is going to be tough for these unfortunate families. Although some of the cost of construction is covered by insurance, much of the original homestead will be difficult to recreate. The added cost of building, along with the higher insurance rates that will most likely occur, and the ever increasing cost of taxes will make it even harder for many families to stay in their neighborhoods without the benefit of drawing some income from their homes.

However, every plan for conversion should be considered on a case-by-case basis, and each one examined by the zoning department so it does not affect the character of the neighborhood or even property value. That shouldn't happen though. We're not talking about SROs (single room occupancy) here.

A private home with one rental property could make a difference in whether or not some senior citizens and young families decide to stay on Long Island. But there are many other long-term advantages to having rental income, too. If young adults do decide to stay local and raise families, perhaps the extra income will eventually help them send their children to college. And when the kids graduate from college, those apartments will be an affordable place for them to stay before they can get out on their own. Now that's a smart way to rebuild.

Come to think of it, maybe this is something all homeowners in Islip should consider. After all, taxes certainly aren't going down and most everyone would agree that it's becoming way too hard to keep up with the high cost of living locally.



Tiana Christoforidis (center) and the YMCA's "Act Out Theatre."

Jingle Bells in town

BAY SHORE—On Dec. 1, the Bay Shore-Brightwaters Beautification Society, a sub-committee of the Bay Shore Summit Council, held its annual Winterfest at the Main Street Band Shell in downtown Bay Shore. Despite the cold, many residents turned out to enjoy the music, wreaths, hot chocolate (donated by Bay Shore's own Milk and Sugar) and tree and menorah lightings.

Bay Shore Middle School sixth and seventh grade student council members assisted with the festive holiday wreath decorating, bell distribution, clean up and Light the Night kit sales. Bay Shore High School's recently formed Youth Service Committee also joined in the volunteer fun by organizing a community bell signing.

The crowd was regaled with songs by the Bay Shore High School showstoppers, the YMCA's "Act Out Theatre" members, under the direction of Tiana Christoforidis, and students from Fifth Avenue School. In keeping with the Bay Shore Chamber of Commerce's holiday theme of Jingle Bells ringing throughout Bay Shore, bells were distributed to all children in attendance before being hung on the tree. Later on, the Fifth Avenue Fire Department brought Santa and Frosty to the festivities.

This year's tree and menorah lighting honorees were John, Gail, Deirdre, Erin and Karen Wahlberg for their work on behalf of the Bay Shore community. Bel Pagdanganan, Bill Ryan and Terri Kelly, all representatives from National Grid, were also honored for being true partners in Bay Shore's revitalization. ■



Beautification Chairperson Susan Boudreau, Lenny Jaworowski (Milk and Sugar), and Chamber of Commerce President Donna Periconi

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