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ISLIP BULLETIN

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Photo By:

Rebuilding after Sandy

Story By: RICK CHALIFOUX, Reporter

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ISLIP TOWN—On a beautiful day last Friday, over 100 National Grid employees generously volunteered their time to help beautify the Bay Shore Marina, which had been severely devastated by Superstorm Sandy last October. The event capped off the energy company's large-scale marina cleanup effort that took place over the previous three weeks. The day also showcased an opportunity for the company to contribute to struggling south shore waterfront businesses through its rebuild grant program. In all, the company ended up contributing a total of \$300,000 to seven different businesses in dire need of financial aid. The event was also attended by a number of local politicians, including the entire Islip Town Board, Sen. Phil Boyle and Suffolk Legis. Tom Barraga.

Inside this week . . .

"Many people still haven't fully recovered from Sandy, and this is a way to help businesses get back on their feet," said National Grid Spokesperson Wendy Ladd. "Combined with the cleanup efforts of our volunteers makes for a big impact in one day."

Grant recipients expressed their deep gratitude for the company's contribution to their rebuilding efforts. "It's awesome," said John Casey, owner of the Cull House restaurant in Sayville, whose grant totaled \$25,000. "We can do a lot of extra things with this grant that we need to get done before the summer season. Ultimately our goal is to get our place back to where it was before the storm, and this going to help us to do just that."

"This is a great boost and a real big help that's going to help us get back open more quickly," said Pete Higgins, owner of Molly Malone's restaurant in Bay Shore, which received a grant total of \$50,000. "We've been closed since October because of the storm, and since then we've had no income. There's a lot of damage not covered by FEMA or insurance, and this grant will offset many issues we weren't able to cover."

Back when Sandy first hit, the Bay Shore Marina was completely submerged, and it has been closed for clean up and repair ever since. The goal of National Grid's volunteer efforts was to boost the Town of Islip's ability to open it up to

SITE INDEX

- Homepage
- News
- Editorials
 - Columns
 - Letters To The Editor
 - Email Us
- Local Sports
- Obituaries
- Real Estate
- Classifieds
- Public Notices

- Dining & Entertainment
- Calendar
- Local Links

- The Islip Bulletin
 - About Us
 - Staff Roster
 - Advertise With Us
- Special Sections
- Suffolk County News
- The LI Advance

the public before the summer. Much of the activity that took place Friday included the planting of beach grass, trees and about 5,000 plants.

All of the National Grid volunteers were in good spirits and were more than happy to contribute to the cleanup efforts.

"I've lived here a long time, and I'm just trying to do my part to help keep this marina beautiful," said Bay Shore resident Magda China. "It feels great to see everyone helping out like this."

"It feels great to give back and work out here in our own backyard," said Oakdale resident John Tirone, who works as a customer planner for National Grid.

"My own property was badly damaged by Sandy, so I have a real personal connection with it all."

"You get a good feeling of pride to help out like this," said West Babylon resident Michael Loos. "I worked a large number of mandatory hours during Sandy and saw its impact firsthand. The vibe today is quite different than it was back then. It's a great day where everyone is smiling and feeling good. To be able to be a part of something like this is so awesome."

"I used to work at this marina all the time, and a day like today makes it all worthwhile," said National Grid Supervisor Mike Draws while digging a hole for a tree. "This is something that everybody should be doing, and the place looks a lot better already. To be here on such a great day and give back to the community like this is an amazing feeling. It doesn't get any better than this."

[Homepage](#) | [News](#) | [Editorial Columns](#) | [Letters to the Editor](#) | [Local Sports](#) | [Obituaries](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Public Notices](#) | [Dining & Entertainment](#) | [Calendar](#) | [Local Links](#) | [About Us](#) | [Staff Roster](#) | [Advertise With Us](#) | [The Long Island Advance](#) | [Suffolk County News](#)

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