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Spotlight Long Island

Long Island Cares

Ever since it was founded in 1980 as the first food bank on Long Island by the late Grammy-winning singer-songwriter and social activist Harry Chapin and his wife, Sandy Chapin, Long Island Cares has been helping feed the hungry.

Paule Pachter, who has served as its CEO since 2008, recently spoke with us about the organization's mission, what makes it unique, how it uses technology, the challenges it's facing, and more.

Q: Are you planning any special event or events to mark the organization's 40th anniversary?

A: We're going to be having our 40th anniversary fundraising dinner on March 12 at the Heritage Club at Bethpage State Park. All of the events we do this year ... are aligned with our 40th anniversary.

Q: What is the mission of Long Island Cares?

A: The overall mission of Long Island Cares is to end hunger on Long Island by mobilizing and coordinating all the available resources we have, with our member agencies and local and state government, to really address the needs of people who are hungry and food insecure.

Q: What makes Long Island Cares unique?

A: In addition to distributing emergency food to 580 community-based member agencies, we provide career counseling, we provide job placement for veterans, and we try to provide internship-type programs for single women and other people who are struggling in an effort to lift them up out of poverty.

Q: What is your favorite part of your job?

A: The best part of my job is really meeting with the organizations that we support, visiting the soup kitchens and the food pantries and the daycare programs, to get to meet the staff and the volunteers who are actually on the frontlines in assisting people who are hungry and food insecure.



Paule Pachter, CEO of Long Island Cares

Q: How did you get started in the work that you do?

A: I am a licensed social worker and I've had 40 years of experience working in the nonprofit sector right here on Long Island. I was attracted to Long Island Cares not only because of its mission and the good reputation it had, but because I was very, very familiar with Harry Chapin.

Q: What is the biggest challenge of your job and how have you worked to overcome that challenge?

A: I think the biggest challenge that we have is raising enough money to continue to support the expansion of the organization. And the challenge to that is that there are so many nonprofits on Long Island that are doing good work and we have limited resources in terms of corporate support, foundation support, government support.

Q: Since the changes that were made in the U.S. tax law affecting charitable donations, have you seen any decline in donations?

A: Fortunately not. Actually we closed out 2019 and it was probably our most successful year since 2008 regarding fundraising. [But] although we continue to increase the number of donors we have, we are seeing in certain cases, people giving less – not much less, but less.

Q: How do you use technology to accomplish your mission?

A: First of all, we are heading to becoming a paperless organization. Number two, we rely very heavily on social media to get our message out. Technology has been critical in allowing us to expand our programs.

Q: Has social media helped Long Island Cares get more donations from outside the area?

A: Yes. We have seen an uptick in the number of donations coming in from places other than New York. And, yes, social media has played a role in that. But also, Harry had a very big fan base of loyal followers.

Q: How have things changed at your organization since Long Island Cares started?

A: When I came here in 2008, we were one location: 10 Davids Drive in Hauppauge. Now, we're seven locations, with satellite centers in

Freeport, Huntington, Hampton Bays and two in Lindenhurst, in addition to our distribution hub in the Hamptons and our facility here in Hauppauge. The other thing, in the last 12 years, is that our budget has gone from \$8.5 million to \$19 million.

Q: Are there new initiatives or programs at your organization that you can tell us about?

A: We just this past December opened up the very first freestanding pet pantry. It's called Baxter's Pet Pantry. It's in Lindenhurst and it provides free pet food and pet products to families who are struggling with food insecurity, but also have a dog, a cat, a fish, whatever. On March 1, we're going to open up our new center in Hampton Bays.

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Lindenhurst Annex which features a free standing pet pantry (1st of its kind in the nation) and our retail rescue center



Volunteers sorting and packing in our main warehouse located in Hauppauge