



The Life Enrichment Center AT OYSTER BAY

A Look Back At 2015

By Silvana LaFerlita Gullo, Executive Director

The Holiday Season inspires us to look back on the year and remember the individuals and things that impacted our lives.

For me, caring for my mother and exploring all the best solutions to the challenges we face defines 2015. What I learn as a result of her situation applies to my work here at the Center. I'm hopeful that for my mother and our Members it will be lessons that help improve services for seniors in the future.

This year our Board undertook a major fundraising event held at Brookville Country Club for the benefit of our Center. The Havana Nights Gala, co-chaired by Laura Dougherty and Kathy Lough, and their committee which included Diane Aerne, Patricia Azmitia, Deborah Kupperman, Judy Palumbo, Susan Peterson and Lillian Soricillo engaged over 100 merchants in donating items for a silent auction and raffle. The Gala featured Cuban cuisine, activities such as Salsa dancing led by our own Kathy Pagano, cigar rolling and live music by "The Cuban Cigars". The Gala exceeded the committee's expectations for revenue. The Board's commitment to hosting an event like this annually as well as supporting other activities throughout the year is deeply appreciated.

Community organizations embraced our mission and promise future contributions. The Oyster Bay Civic Association, Oyster Bay/East Norwich Rotary, Syosset Rotary, Locust Valley Rotary and Bayville Rotary all welcomed a presentation about the Center and our quest to expand transportation services for our Members. Oyster Bay Rotary Club included the Center as beneficiaries of this year's Oyster Festival which should result in a substantial donation towards our transportation programs. Building a community network of support is critical to our long-term well-being so this is a great start. Thanks to volunteer drivers John Zimmerman, Captain Bob Pollack and Richard Schultz, we are offering transportation two days a week to Syosset and Woodbury Members.

Birthday and holiday festivities brought many milestones in both the number of Members attending as well as new corporate friends providing funding for entertainment. Sponsors underwrote accordion music on Columbus Day, a banjo duo on Veterans Day, DJ's, entertainers, specially prepared birthday cakes and goodie bags for our Members. What a wonderful way to celebrate special days with our new friends' generosity. Celebrating Belle Santoro's 104th Birthday was a momentous occasion. Her love of life, generosity of spirit and kindness to those she called friends was truly a blessing. Though Belle made 2015 her final year all those fortunate enough to know her will never forget bidding her a fond farewell. Thank you Belle for sharing your time with us. You will be missed.

2015 flew by but not without impacting our Center and each of us in some way. Thank you all for allowing me to become part of this special family and most especially for sharing your precious time with us.

Silvana LaFerlita Gullo, Executive Director

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