



## December Program Updates

### Seasons Greetings from Sunshine!



Warm holiday greetings to each and every one of you!  
It is the season of giving and the perfect time to reflect on all our blessings  
and also to find ways to make life a little brighter for those around us.

The Sunshine staff has been wonderfully busy these past several weeks rolling  
out our holiday programs, which are designed to assist families in the  
community who are facing a variety of challenges or hardships during the  
holiday season.

We are so thankful for all those who generously supported our Holiday  
Assistance Programs! With the help of our generous community, Sunshine was  
able to deliver an abundance of toys, gifts, warm clothes, food and needed  
items to more than 40 families and 170 individuals this holiday season!

We hope you enjoy reading about Sunshine's holiday programs and all of the  
wonderful events and holiday happenings that have taken place over the past  
several weeks.

Wishing you all a peaceful, joyful holiday season and blessings in the New Year!

# Sunshine Alternative Education Center



December was a very busy month at Sunshine between the school program and holiday projects. Our English class embraced the spirit of the season while strengthening key literacy skills. We read “A Christmas Carol” together as a class, exploring Charles Dickens’ timeless themes of redemption, generosity, and social responsibility. Alongside our reading, students practiced compare and contrast skills by examining characters, themes, and adaptations of the text. Through discussion and written responses, students deepened their understanding of the novel while sharpening their analytical thinking in a festive and engaging way.

Overall, students in Social Studies have demonstrated steady progress in both American history and Global Studies. Students are developing a stronger understanding of key historical events, timelines and cause and effect relationships. Continued practice with primary sources, vocabulary and critical thinking discussions will help students strengthen their understanding across these subject areas. The seniors in Economics class have been learning about money, banking and checking account. We have incorporated real life skills such as filling out a check, reconciling a checkbook and completing deposit and withdrawal slips.

Our December field trip took us to **Gallery North**, a not-for-profit gallery and studio located in Setauket. We enjoyed a guided tour of the gallery and gift shop, both filled with impressive artwork and beautifully handmade gifts. During our visit, we participated in a printmaking class, met with the museum curator, and took part in a Q&A session with gallery staff. One of the highlights of the visit was the Deck the Halls exhibition, which we especially enjoyed. We are thankful for our experience at the gallery. (See pictured below)

We also had a special guest join us. **Melek, a nutritionist from Cornell Cooperative Extension**, educated our students and led an engaging discussion on the differences between whole and refined grains. Students then participated in preparing a healthy pasta salad using fresh vegetables and whole-grain pasta—an activity and meal that everyone appreciated. Thank you, Melek!

# FIELD TRIPS



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**Many thanks to Gallery North for hosting this month's field trip.**

## Holidays Around the World



Sunshine's Alternative Education students and staff worked hard all month to prepare for a holiday trip around the world with the students from Ms. Foster's 5th grade students class.

During their visit our young guests moved through stations which were set up to highlight different holidays celebrated across the globe. Throughout the event students learned a little bit about about the holiday's of Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Christmas, Navidad and the Chinese New Year. They created arts, crafts and treats that aligned with each holiday!



# Sunshine Brightens the Holidays



## Adopt-A-Family

Through our Adopt-A-Family program **we were able to brighten the holidays for 22 families and 100 individuals!** This would not have been possible without our generous supporters. Each supporter was given a specific family to shop for and a wish list of items provided by the family. They shopped for these items, wrapped and delivered the gifts to Sunshine and all were distributed to families in time for the holidays. We would like to express our sincere gratitude!

### Thank You to Our 2025 Adopt-A-Family Supporters

Halle Abrams and Little Rascals Learning Center  
Arnika Edwards and The Stony Brook University  
Women's Swim & Dive Team,  
Women's Basketball Team and Women's Softball Team  
Derrick Bliss, Shannon Pousson and the Thump Local team  
Dawn Borchers  
Danielle G.  
Mary Capobianco  
Sandra Caravano, Deana Kuehm and Straight Set Orthodontics,  
Port Jefferson Team  
Jennifer Diaz and Family  
Denise Ferraiolo  
Jaelyn Gunter and Stony Brook University's Delta Sigma Pi  
Joanne Liff  
Sharon & Lois Cox  
Sara Majid  
Stacy Blaschuk and Nick Blaschuk  
Tracie Morley  
Nadine Scalzo  
Jennifer Veltman and the Zurich Insurance Team

**We are endlessly grateful for all of the generous contributions!**



Deana Kuehn and Sandra Caravano,  
Straight Set Orthodontics



Kiah Gillespie,  
Stony Brook University Women's Basketball Team



Halle and Margot,  
Little Rascals Learning Center

# Christmas Magic



Many thanks to Lion **Linda Eicholz** and other members of the **Port Jefferson Lion's Club** for their dedication to the community and for their support of Sunshine this holiday season.

Sunshine participated in their annual Christmas Magic Program along with many families and children from the community, including 12 Sunshine families and 17 Sunshine children.

Through this wonderful event of giving, Lions club members and community supporters collect toys and monetary donations to purchase toys for underprivileged youth in the area. These generous donations are then wrapped and distributed to children at the event. The Port Jefferson's Lion's club Christmas Magic event features a breakfast for the families, music and entertainment!

It was such a joy to take part in this magical celebration of giving!  
*(to view more photos of this event please see our photo gallery at the bottom of the newsletter)*



# Toys, Gift and Food Drives

Many of our supporters organized toy, gift or food drives through their local business, family event, organization or agency. We appreciate everyone's help which allowed us to share gifts with over 30 families from several local agencies, recovery homes, and shelters.



A very special Thank You goes out to our Board Members, **Nick Hanley** and **Tony Ciervo** for their work this holiday placing donation bins into retail locations, sharing our needs and collecting holiday items for families. We are so **grateful** for everyone's help. We could not do what we do without the support of people like you all!

*Also, thank you to retailers **Retro Fitness, Ronkonkoma** and **Five Below, Selden** for hosting Sunshine's donation bins.*

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to **Sherri Leiva, Deanna McCartin** and Wellbridge employees!



The Wellbridge Employee Engagement Committee organized a clothing & toy drive this holiday season. Donations of outdoor wear, gifts, toys, toiletries and cleaning supplies were collected in support of Sunshine's Holiday Assistance programs. These items were given to Sunshine to distribute to families who are in need of assistance in the community. Their work, generosity and partnership are enormously appreciated.

*Wellbridge is a pioneering organization committed to the advancement of substance use disorder treatment methods and outcomes. They aim to create a positive healing experience for all patients and families through innovative interventions and compassionate care. The Wellbridge mission is to help every person affected by addiction and the people who care for them achieve long-lasting recovery.*



*Pictured: Deanna McCartin, Wellbridge*



*Pictured: Dr. Carol Carter and Patti Kelly/Barker at the Wellbridge Holiday Dinner Event*

## Caring in Comsewogue

Thank you to **Diane Enright** and **Caring in Comsewogue** for all of their hard work collecting food donations, and for generously delivering an abundance of food items to Sunshine Center! Caring in Comsewogue is a local, grassroots organization founded by community member Diane Enright. The organization works with Comsewogue School District to meet the immediate needs of the community. From food drives to hands-on outreach, they believe small efforts can make a big difference. *We couldn't agree more! We are thankful for their support!*



Pictured: Diane Enright



A heartfelt thank you to **Melba Pabon** and the **Middle Country Central School District** for the Generous Food Donation made to Sunshine Prevention Center. Thanks to your team we were able to assist families this holiday season. Donations were collected through **The Best Buddies Fundraiser**.



We Are So Grateful! See below to learn more about the *Best Buddies* Fundraiser

*The Best Buddies Fundraiser was initiated by a community member and Middle Country School District employee, Melba Pabon, whom along with Brian Csorny, Donna Donnelly and Lettice Washington, organized a basket raffle event held on Nov 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025 that brought together staff, students and community members for a fun filled evening filled with games, music and picture opportunities with Disney characters. The event also encouraged donations of non-perishable food items to benefit the community. Over 5 boxes filled with food items were donated to The Sunshine Prevention Center.*

*Funds from the fundraiser will be used to supplement extra-curricular clubs and programs that promote inclusion amongst students with and without special needs. Programs that will benefit this year will be the Best Buddies Club and the Unified Basketball program which encourage socialization and inclusion and promote interaction among all students to hopefully form special bonds that can last throughout the school year and beyond. Additional programs that will benefit will be the Life Skills and the Extended School Year programs. Special thanks to the NHS Honor Society students who supported the fundraiser by playing games and constructing friendship bracelets with children of all ages during the event. The NHS Cosmetology Dept. also offered face painting to all those who wanted to express a little pizzazz on their face. It was a great event that was enjoyed by everyone.*



Pictured: Melba Pabon with Sunshine Center staff



*Thank You*



Sunshine recently received the heartbreaking news of two young teens in the community who tragically lost their mother this holiday season. We are so thankful to have collected so many generous gift card donations for these two children from our wonderful supporters. Your generosity provides a glimmer of light during an uncertain time

We must extend a heartfelt thank you to all those who so generously donated gift cards for this family and other families in the community who are experiencing hardship this holiday season.

***Thank You***

Claire C.  
Kathy and Tony Ciervo  
Sharon Cebulski  
Sharon Cox & Lois Cox  
Deborah C.  
Alison D'Ambrosio  
MaryAnne and Shawn Dumas  
Arnika Edwards & Stony Brook University Women's Basketball Team  
John Dima  
Jackie F.  
Nick Hanley  
Ellen Houston  
Mary K.  
Joanne Liff  
Jen L.  
Danielle McMath  
Keith Brandow  
John & Irene Michalos  
Kait Reilly  
Margaret Sobel  
Jessica W.  
Kathy W.  
and other anonymous donors

# Supporting Sunshine's Mission



A tremendous thank you goes out to the **Suffolk County Youth Bureau** for additional town funding awarded to the Sunshine Prevention Center. Your ongoing support enables us to continue our work to build drug-free & violence free communities in Long Island.

We'd like to thank **Priscilla S. Knapp and The Knapp/Swezey Foundation, Inc.**

for the very generous donation made to the Sunshine Prevention Center.



We are incredibly grateful for their continued support of Sunshine's mission over the years and the meaningful impact they have helped us make.

Join us in sharing our sincere thanks to

**Roanoke Sand & Gravel**

for their generosity to Sunshine Prevention Center. We value their ongoing support and dedication to our mission of making a positive impact in our communities.



Morgan Stanley

A heartfelt Thank You to  
**Linda L. Sanders** and  
**Michael G. Lockhart** and  
**The Morgan Stanley Investment  
Banking Company**

for their generous financial support  
and the matching grant from **The American Giving On-line  
Foundation.**

We truly appreciate their belief and commitment to Sunshine and for  
being an important part of our journey!

We're deeply grateful to the Long Island  
Charities Foundation for their ongoing  
partnership and for the meaningful  
impact they've helped us make over the  
years.



Thank You so much!

We must express out sincere thanks  
to the Port Jefferson Rotary Club for  
their generous donation to  
Sunshine. Their support and  
dedication to Sunshine's mission  
means the world to us. Thank you for your partnership!



We would like to thank  
Long Island Cares for funding recently  
awarded to the Sunshine Prevention  
Center. We value their continued  
support of Sunshine's mission.



# Community Collaboration

## Boyle Road Elementary School

### "Kindness Bucks"

We would like to thank you for your generosity!

When the **Boyle Road Elementary** 5th grade student's in **Ms. Foster and Ms. Taormina's** class last visited Sunshine, Dr. Carter expressed her appreciation for the assistance she receives and highlighted the numerous fantastic businesses, individuals, and organizations that provide support throughout the year. This led to a discussion in their classroom about **Giveback Tuesday** and the idea of paying it forward. Sticking with this idea, Ms. Foster and Ms. Taormina decided to have the kids do good deeds at home for someone to earn "Kindness Bucks" in the classroom. These "bucks" were then used to purchase wrapping paper, pantry items, and items for the holiday store at the Sunshine Center. (See pictures in our gallery below)

*What a wonderful way to plant seeds of service and kindness!*



## Gabriel's Giving Tree

Sunshine staff loved being a part of **Gabriel's Giving Tree's** family holiday event. Families enjoyed snacks, games, crafts face painting and a puppet show from the Friends from Sunshine Center!

Gabriel's Giving Tree is a grassroots charity organization that raises money to provide financial assistance to local families in need who have lost a loved one to substance use disorder. Founded by **Paulette Phillippe, Claudia Frizell and Lori Carbanaro**, it honors the memory of Gabriel Phillippe, Paulette's grandson who passed away in 2010 due to an accidental overdose.



## Crafting and Connection

On December 11th, Sharon Cebulski from Sunshine Center participated in the *Crafting & Connection* event, hosted by the **Horizon Counseling and Education Center** in Smithtown.

This event provided a wonderful opportunity for Community members to take a much needed break from the holiday stressors to enjoy some light refreshments, crafts, comfort, support and connection.



*Pictured above: Carol/Purple Rock Foundation, Lori/Gabrielle's Giving Tree, Sharon/Sunshine Prevention Center and Irene/Horizon's Counseling.*

## New Light Program

We are thrilled to continue our work with the Suffolk County Sheriff's Office in 2026 to deliver our New Light Program to incarcerated adolescent offenders in their custody. We want to extend our sincere gratitude to the Suffolk County Sheriff's Office & for their partnership in helping to make this program a success.



### **The Suffolk County Sheriff's Office recently shared the following *Letter of Thanks with Sunshine:***

*"I am writing on behalf of the Suffolk County Sheriff's Office to extend our sincere gratitude to the Sunshine Prevention Center for Youth & Families for your recent support and partnership. Your organization's willingness to provide educational and behavior-modification services to the incarcerated adolescent offenders in our custody has been invaluable, and the program has already proven to be a success.*

*Our students consistently express how much they look forward to your team's visits and the engaging materials you provide. They have been especially enthusiastic about the art-based activities, including painting, which have offered them both a creative outlet and a constructive way to build new skills. The dedication and professionalism of your staff have contributed to cognitive skill development and have supported our ongoing efforts in youth behavior management. We are particularly appreciative of the anger-management programming you deliver, as it plays a vital role in promoting safety and stability within the facility.*

*In closing, your partnership has meaningfully enhanced our ability to foster emotional growth, stability, and positive behavioral change among the adolescents in our care. Your contributions help to increase each young person's potential for success—both during their time in our facility and upon their return to the community.*

*Thank you once again for your commitment and service."*



**Thank you Kurt Hall and Girl Scouts of Suffolk County- Service Unit 46 for donating a beautifully decorated Christmas tree and art supplies to the Sunshine Center. These wonderful gifts were donated to a Sunshine family and surely brightened their holiday. We are so grateful!**



*Pictured: Kurt Hall*

## We are always in need of support for Sunshine

### Donations for our Food Pantry and Blessing Box

You can drop off any food, toiletries, pet foods, baby items, etc. at Sunshine or place in the box 24/7!!

### Summer sponsorships for families in need

Our summer prevention program is just around the corner!!

### Financial donations to support our programs

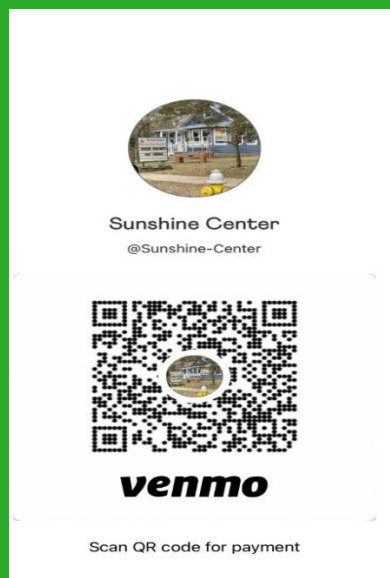
### Improvement Project Support.

We will begin our renovation and building project in 2026 and need assistance in many ways, including all materials, in-kind services, contractors, etc.

### We are always making it easier to donate and make payments.

**VENMO, Zelle, Paypal, or mail it in to Sunshine**

You can Click the photo below for Venmo



### Spring Clean-ups

We will be needing a lot of help to get the property ready for our spring and summer programs.

Individuals, families, groups or organizations are invited.

We have a few tentative dates set now (see below).

If you would like to schedule another date for your group or organization, please let me know.

**Feb 28, March 14,**

**April 18, May 2**

Work includes raking, playground clean-up, gardening, flower planting, painting, light maintenance, some indoor work. Children are welcome but MUST be supervised by parents at all times.

- Please bring any equipment you may have (rakes, shovels, gloves, wheel barrel, etc.)
- Donations for flowers, mulch, decorations, paint and other equipment are appreciated

**Click here to email**

**Dr. Carter if you would like more information or have questions about how to help**

# We Appreciate All of Our Supporters!

We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to ALL of the individuals, families, businesses, agencies, and financial supporters who have made a contribution to Sunshine, this holiday season and beyond.

**Without You Sunshine's Work Would Not be Possible**

## GOLD Supporters, Financial Supporters, Grants

Town of Brookhaven Supervisor & Town Councilmembers  
Town of Brookhaven Parks Department - Commissioner Ed Morris  
Brookhaven Youth Bureau  
Suffolk County Youth Bureau  
Councilwoman Jane Bonner  
Councilman Jonathan Kornreich  
Roanoke Sand and Gravel  
Knapp/Swezey Foundation  
Ridgewood Savings Bank  
Linda Sanders and Michael Lockhart  
Long Island Charities Foundation  
NY Community Trust  
Patti Kelly/Barker  
Home Depot Selden  
Home Depot Foundation  
Lois Cox & Sharon Cox  
Long Island Cares  
Long Island Community Foundation  
Long Island Cares  
Plumbers Union # 200  
Port Jeff Lion's Club  
Port Jeff Rotary Club  
The Barker Family

## Personal Donations

Ashley Moran  
Allison D'Ambrosio  
The Barker Family  
Bob Cohen  
Clare C.  
Carol Davis-Wiebelt  
Danielle B.  
Danielle McMath  
Dawn Borchers  
Deborah C.  
Denise Ferraiolo  
Ellen Houston  
Jackie F.  
Jay Hart  
Jennifer Diaz and Family  
Jen L.  
Jessica W.  
Joanne Liff  
Joanne Wilson  
John Dima  
John & Irene Michalos  
John Venza  
Kait Reilly  
Kathy and Tony Ciervo  
Kathy W.  
Keith Brandow  
Ken & Elizabeth Combs  
Kurt Hall  
Linda Sanders/Lockhart Family  
Liz Kotseas DeLucia  
Lois Cox & Sharon Cox  
Madeline and Vincent Pauletti  
MaryAnne and Shawn Dumas  
Margaret Sobel  
Mary Capobianco  
Nadine Scalzo  
Nancy Campo  
Nick Hanley  
Patti Kelly/Barker  
Sara Majid  
Sharon Cebulski  
Stacy Blaschuk and Nick Blaschuk  
Tackett and Dalske Families  
Tracie Morley

Vincent Muller  
Anonymous Contributors...we appreciate you!!

## Local Business, Agency, School Supporters

Bank of America Charitable Foundation  
Big Brothers Big Sisters  
Boyle Road Elementary School  
Brookhaven Irrigation  
Buttercup Dairy Store  
Caring in Comsewogue, Diane Enright  
Chick-fil-A PJS  
Child Protective Services  
Comsewogue Public Library  
Consolidated Energy  
DASH  
Department of Health  
Department of Social Services  
Donoghue Printing Company  
DRP Solutions/Dan Jacoby  
Family Service League  
Five Below  
Girl Scout of Suffolk County  
Hinck Electrical  
Home Depot - Selden  
It's Time Restoration/John Dima  
Jeffrey Melgar Scholarship  
Kurtis Konstruction  
KS Mechanical  
Little Rascals Learning Center/  
Margo and Halle Abrams and staff  
LI University/CW Post  
Long Island Cares  
Long Island Advocacy Center  
Long Island Volunteer Center  
Madison Lohrius  
Melba Pabon - Middle Country Central School District  
Mike Contino/Contino Landscaping  
Mount Sinai Congregational Church  
National Waste Services  
O'Brien Insurance  
Ohara & Company and Henry DeBlasi Accountants  
Pal-O-Mine Equestrian  
Pat Davis Technical Support  
Retro Fitness  
Rick Weaver - Transformative  
Ridgewood Savings Bank  
Serve All - True North Church  
SC Department of Labor  
SC Department of Health  
SC Probation Department  
Shawn Kean/Olde Towne Gardens  
Shyla Silva-Shyla Cares  
Arnika Edwards and the Stony Brook University Women's Swim & Dive team, Women's Basketball team, Women's Softball team  
Stony Brook University, Delta Sigma Pi  
Straight Set Orthodontics, Port Jeff - Sandra Caravano & Deana Kuehn  
Stop & Shop, Port Jefferson Station  
St Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Suffolk Intensive Case Management (SCIM)  
Thump Local/Derrick Bliss and Shannon Pousson  
TomKat Business Solutions  
Usher Plant Care  
WellLife Network  
Welbridge Addiction Treatment & Research  
Zurich Insurance/Jennifer Veltman

## School Districts

Babylon, Central Islip, Comsewogue, Eastport South  
Manor, Longwood, Middle Country, Patchogue-Medford, Sachem,  
Sayville, Three Village