

Suffolk Independent Living Organization (SILO) – partnering with Suffolk to provide access for all



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The **BEACON**

WINTER 2009

Welcome to 2009 at SILO

We hope you enjoy our new format of *The Beacon*. For 25 years, Suffolk Independent Living Organization (SILO) has been Suffolk County's Independent Living Center (ILC). This year will be an exciting year for SILO as we strengthen our mission to demystify the perception that individuals with disabilities cannot be productive members of our society. ILC's are vital community resources. SILO continues to be that resource for Education, Advocacy and Empowerment. ***SILO is your Independent Living Center.*** Call SILO today at **631-880-7929**. Our Independent Living Specialists are ready to assist you with your concerns. Our offices are located on Route 112 in Coram, just one block south of Middle Country Road (Route 25).

Longwood's pre-vocational class volunteers at SILO

The students of Longwood's Pre-Vocational class come each Thursday to volunteer at SILO. This vocational program's purpose is to prepare participants to be independent, self-sufficient and productive individuals. We strive to provide students with different career paths available to them upon graduation

by offering the opportunity to observe a typical and learn various office skills — folding, collating, stapling, envelope stuffing and copying to name a few.

In recent weeks SILO staffer Tony has been instructing the students in basic culinary craft and allowing them to sample their handy work. The students and teachers are so grateful for the wonderful learning opportunities offered each week!

Assistive Technology Lab

SILO has always endeavored to assist and empower individuals with disabilities to access comprehensive, community-based services and other supports available to live a full and productive life in the community. It has always been, and will continue to be, the policy and philosophy of this agency to educate these individuals to become more functional and independent in the community.

This year, SILO will have an Assistive Technology (AT) lab for individuals with disabilities. Assistive Technology is any

item, piece of equipment or product system that is modified or customized to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. This computer lab will be the central and only AT training center in Suffolk County for individuals with disabilities. It will offer training on various types of assistive technology such as JAWS, MAGIC, OPEN BOOK, Window Eyes, Kurzweil and others. It will also offer training in basic computer skills.

For more information, please call Ray at 631-880-7929.

Visit our website at: WWW.SUFFOLKILC.ORG

What Independent Living Means to Me

Every edition of the Beacon will feature an article detailing one person's view of Independent Living in their own words. We welcome submissions and invite you to share your own experience. Please e-mail your article to: contact@suffolkilc.org

“My name is Noel Melitz and I have a disease called Duchene muscular dystrophy. This means that my muscles have been slowly weakening and now I am unable to walk. In my case, I am now bound to a wheelchair. After coming to SILO, I am now able to set goals for myself so that I can do things on my own. I have learned to write a job resume, how to act at an interview and how to sell myself with confidence. The most exciting part of being at SILO is sharing my ideas with peers. We even made Christmas wreaths to raise money for our special events. We are even learning to cook with assistive technology.”

Board Insight

Celebrating the Past — Planning for the Future

by Kevin L. Hymms, M.B.A.

SILO Board Treasurer

As SILO approaches its twenty fifth anniversary, now is the time to reflect on our growth and accomplishments over the past 25 years and plan ahead for our next 25 years.

This is a very important and exciting time for SILO, as your new Board of Directors, along with SILO staff, are currently creating new programs and opportunities while expanding existing ones. We will continue with our initial goal of breaking down barriers for ALL people with disabilities and work together with our consumers, our elected officials, local municipalities, school districts, places of employment and other non-profit agencies.

SILO will keep you informed about new developments. Look for details in future SILO *Beacon* newsletters, in special mailings and on our web site. With your support and participation, 2009 promises to be a very special year for all of us.

SILO Annual Meeting

Join the Board of Directors, staff and friends of the Suffolk Independent Living Organization (SILO) at its Annual Meeting on Monday, April 20, 2009 from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM at SILO, 3680 Route 112 in Coram, NY 11727.

2009 is the best year yet for SILO, filled with exciting, innovative new programs, upcoming events and more! Celebrate with us and enjoy a buffet of snacks, hors d'oeuvres and desserts. The agenda will allow ample time for informal networking, raffles, and the launch of SILO's membership drive.

B-I-N-G-O!

Start your weekend off right!! SILO holds four fundraising Bingo games per weekend with great prizes, good food and lots of fun! Friday & Saturday night games start at 7:30 PM (doors open at 5:00 PM).

Sunday games start at 1:00 PM (doors open at noon) and 7:00 PM (doors open at 5:00 PM). All games held at:

*Suffolk Bingo Palace
407 Middle Country Rd.
(just west of Route 112)*

Coram, NY 11727

Call 631-704-0302 for more info



SAVE THESE DATES

April 20, 2009
Annual Meeting

July 2009

*Americans With Disabilities
Celebration (ADA)
Picnic & Countdown to
Independence Raffle*

Autumn 2009

*25th Anniversary Gala —
Date to be announced*

NEW OUTREACH: If you can't come to us, we'll come to you! SILO has started outreach programs in Babylon and Riverhead. We can provide information about advocacy, referrals and agencies for people with disabilities. SILO continues to be the 'go-to' resource and is *your* Independent Living Center!

Free Tax Return Preparation For You

Puzzled by the tax law or which credits and deductions to take? Need assistance completing your tax return? The IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) offers free tax preparation help for those with low- to moderate-income and the Tax Counseling for the Elderly Program offers free help to those aged 60 or older. To locate your nearest Tax-Aide site, call SILO at 631-880-7929

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**FREE MATTER
FOR THE BLIND
AND
PHYSICALLY
HANDICAPPED**

*Serving the disabled
through
Education,
Advocacy
and
Empowerment!*