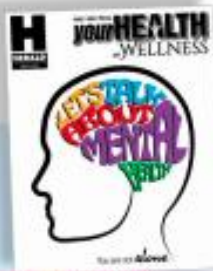


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Courtesy Freeport Public Schools

Over 150 people gathered at Cow Meadow Park for the South Shore Guidance Center's annual Spring Fling last Saturday, many with their dogs.

At Spring Fling, walkers focus on mental health

By MOHAMMAD RAFIQ

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Freeport's Cow Meadow Park was bustling with excitement and wagging tails last Saturday as the South Shore Guidance Center hosted its annual Spring Fling Dog Walk. The event brought together community members, local schools, and four-legged friends to raise awareness of mental health and support the services provided by the Guidance Center.

The center, in Freeport, belongs to the EPIC Family of Human Service Agencies, a Long Island organization that seeks to benefit those with epilepsy as well as intellectual and emotional challenges through a variety of programs. It is an outpatient behavioral health clinic offering a wide range of services, including individual, group, and family psychotherapy, substance abuse treatment, crisis stabilization, and medication-assisted treatment.

The event had more than 150 attendees — people and dogs — and raised \$8,000 of its \$20,000 goal.

"This year's event was a tremendous success, and helped

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Sam's Scoops brings sweet memories back to Mile

By MOHAMMAD RAFIQ

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A familiar sweet aroma is once again wafting through the streets, along the historic Nautical Mile in Freeport.

For more than two decades, Pip's Ice Cream Parlour was more than just a local favorite — it was a cherished institution. The family-run business brought joy and a sense of community to the area, with patrons becoming friends and countless memories being made.

The beloved ice cream shop was forced to close its doors two years ago due to a combina-

tion of flooding and rising rents — but its spirit lives on in a new venture: Sam's Scoops.

Donna Arca, the original owner of Pip's, along with her husband, Bill, a pharmacist, initially bought the establishment in 2001.

"He said, 'Our children are getting older, I want to keep the family together,'" she said. "He said, 'I want to buy an ice cream parlor.' I said, 'What are you crazy?'"

Named in honor of Arca's late mother, Julia Josephine, affectionately called Pip — short for "Pipina," Italian for Josephine —, Pip's Ice Cream Parlour was a popular hub for the



community for 21 years.

The ice cream shop — complete with a fireplace and wooden floors reminiscent, according to Arca, of a Norman Rockwell painting — provided a welcoming atmosphere and became a second home for many.

"People came in as strangers and left as friends," Arca said.

However, Hurricane Sandy wreaked havoc on the quaint shop, damaging freezers and causing repeated flooding. Despite the Arca family's best efforts to rebuild, increasing rent demands eventually made it impossible to continue.

Shutting Pip's in 2022 was a heartbreaking moment for Arca, her family and the Free-

port community. However, in true community spirit, she found a way to give back, deciding to sponsor a new venture to carry on the legacy of Pip's.

That's when Robyn Workman and Sam's Scoops came to the rescue.

Workman, the owner and proprietor of Sparkle on Stage

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Photos courtesy Freeport Public Schools

EPIC Long Island raised \$8,000 of its \$20,000 goal to help expand the South Shore Guidance Center's mental health services and advocacy efforts.

People and dogs come together to raise funds

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

bring our community together in a meaningful way to support mental wellness," said Lisa Burch, EPIC's chief executive. "The Spring Fling Dog Walk for Mental Wellness is an event we look forward to every year, and we were overjoyed by the incredible turnout. In addition to bringing together the community to endorse mental wellness and tangibly show the strength of support residents have for one another, the funds that were raised will further enhance our ability to provide necessary advocacy and counseling services throughout Long Island that truly make a difference in people's lives. We're grateful to everyone who participated, donated and volunteered to make this day a success."

The Spring Fling Dog Walk for Mental Wellness is an event we look forward to every year, and we were overjoyed by the incredible turnout.

LISA BURCH
CEO,
EPIC Family of Human
Service Agencies

The event featured family-friendly activities and a dog walk through the park, and performances by the Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corp and the Freeport High School Color Guard added to the excitement. The J.W. Dodd Middle School Select Chorale sang "America the Beautiful," and village Trustee Jorge A. Martinez spoke about the importance of community support for mental health initiatives.

The money raised will help support the guidance center's behavioral health services and advocacy initiatives. It will help expand access to mental health resources, provide critical support to those in need, and enhance the center's efforts to promote mental wellness in the community

"The success of the Spring Fling Dog Walk was a



The Freeport High School color guard performed at the event.

testament to the strength and generosity of the Freeport community," Irene Rodgers, EPIC's associate executive director of development and epilepsy services, said. "Participants came together to support a cause that touches many lives, demonstrating a collective commitment to improving mental health and wellness. The event also provided an opportunity for community members to learn more about the services offered by the South Shore Guidance Center and how they can get involved in future initiatives."

The event goes beyond a community gathering,

servicing as an initiative to highlight mental health issues. Fittingly, it takes place in May, observed as Mental Health Awareness Month.

"When people come together for events like this ... they see that they're not alone — that there are other people who are also trying to get through, day to day, and that there's a whole community there for them," Rodgers said.

To find out more, or to contribute to the guidance center's fundraising efforts, go EPIC's fundraising page, <https://www.epicll.org/fundraising/donation/>