Port Washington’s cultural landmark

By KENNETH R. CERINI

A unique cultivation of local history, culture, recreation, arts and community, Landmark on Main Street continues to be an integral part of the Port Washington and Long Island community. Recently celebrating their centennial, Landmark continues to be a gathering place for Long Islanders of all ages.

"The building was constructed in 1916 and was utilized as a school from 1920 until 1939," said Executive Director Sharon Maier-Kennelly. "It took 15 years worth of grassroots effort to renovate and make it into a community center that is dedicated to strengthening the spirit of community through various efforts."

How does Landmark help the community contribute to the Port Washington community? Visiting the Landmark is an experience in itself. We’re a professional theater with professional technical equipment, and from the moment you enter the building that was once a school, you feel the unique charm and history. We provide diverse programs that range from children’s theater to big names such as Joan Osborne, Brian Stokes Mitchell, Rickey Lee Jones, Martin Sexton, The Bacon Brothers and former Mot’s pitcher Ron Darling. We also rent our theater for very low costs and are home to three other nonprofit organizations that provide essential services throughout Port Washington.

Do you work with the organizations you share the building with? The Landmark is home to the Port Washington Youth Council’s Teen Center, the Port Washington Parent Resource Center, the Port Washington Young Women’s Center, the Joanne Bismark Theater and the Doctor’s Gymnasium. We definitely try to support each other’s programming efforts and work together whenever possible. In addition, the upper floors have 10 apartments used for low-income housing for senior citizens and nine for adults with disabilities. The residents will often come to the shows, and if we’re not sold out they can attend for free.

Over the last year, did the economy have an effect on your programming? Long Island’s art community saw a lot of losses – IMAC closed, Friends of the Arts is no longer present – so the arts-presenting community has become smaller. It’s a challenge to make sure we remain valued in our community and find where our place should be. Despite the economy, we’ve had more sellouts over the last year, and we’re expanding our programming to make it more multi-generational to attract youth.

What does 2010 have in store for the Landmark? We are launching our Roots Rock and continuing our Fabulous Folk series; both hosted by John Platt of WFUV Radio. There’s a special performance by Duncan Sheik, an exciting tap dance performance, as well as some very exciting performances in our Main Stage Series, the first being Kevin Sivitz in “Night and Days.” We also have Conversations from Main Street, which is a free series comprised of lectures, presentations, etc. from authors, journalists and celebrities on a variety of topics. We hope to continue to become more well-known throughout Long Island and remain a staple of Long Island culture.

Organization Landmark on Main Street Address 232 Main St., Suite 1, Port Washington, NY 11050 Executive Director Sharon Maier-Kennelly Phone (516) 767-1384 Web site www.landmarkonmainstreet.org Founded incorporated 1978; opened 1995 Paid staff 11 Annual budget $1 million Fundraised budget 45 percent Program service 80 percent

Power to the energy center

The New York Power Authority announced that it will provide up to $750,000 in funding for the Advanced Energy Research and Technology Center at Stony Brook University. Funds will support efforts to advance energy research, education and technology deployment, with a focus on efficiency conservation and renewable energy, to help establish New York as a leader in the clean energy economy.

NYPAs will contribute $350,000 for broad-based energy research and up to $250,000 for smart grid-specific research. This commitment will help advance Gov. David A. Paterson’s “45 by 15” program, whose goal is to create 45 percent of the state’s electricity needs through improved energy efficiency and renewable sources by 2015, while creating 50,000 new jobs throughout the state.

AERTC is operated by the Research Foundation of the State University of New York, a nonprofit educational corporation at Stony Brook University.

Walking and talking about a new scholarship

Farmington State College President W. Hubert Keen recently joined students, resident advisors and volunteers in participating in Project GRAD Long Island’s Walk for Success in Westbury. The group of nearly 140 people visited homes of ninth-graders to inform their families of a new college scholarship program that helps disadvantaged students attend college.

Project GRAD Long Island, which is part of a national non-profit organization, has formed a long-term partnership with the Westbury Union Free School District, which has more than 4,000 students, 70 percent of whom qualify for free or reduced-price lunches. The current ninth-grade class will be the first to graduate under the Project GRAD program, which guarantees a college scholarship for eligible students, who must meet certain criteria, including a cumulative grade average of 81 points. College scholarships of up to $5,000 will be distributed over the course of four years.

NuHealth to pilot a 24/7 medical hotline

The Long Island Medical Foundation, which is the philanthropic arm of the NuHealth Systems in East Meadow, has received $100,000 two-year grant to pilot a 24/7 nursing medical management line. Funds were donated from the J.P. Morgan Private Bank, Trustee for the William E. and Maude S. Pritchard charitable trust.

The new nursing line, which will be administered through the organization’s NuCare program, will provide a triage service and health information library to the community health center’s patient population. The nursing line will assess symptoms to assist each caller in determining the proper course of action. The new line “will empower our patients to make good health care decisions and obtain access not previously available to them,” Diane Cohen, director of the NuCare program, said in a statement.

An educator of note

The Long Island Music Hall of Fame in Garden City announced that the late Joseph R. Sugar will be the recipient of its 2009 Music Educator of the Year award. Sugar, who passed away in November, was most recently an adjunct professor at the New York State University at Stony Brook, where he taught music education.

Executive Director Sharon Maier-Kennelly said the Landmark is expanding its programming to attract younger people.

- BERNADETTE STARZEE
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