Brookhaven Announces Expansion and Renovation of Sunshine Prevention Center

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PORT JEFFERSON STATION, NY - Brookhaven Supervisor Mark Lesko, Deputy Supervisor Kathleen Walsh and Councilman Steve-Fiore Rosenfeld today announced the plans for the expansion and renovation of the Sunshine Prevention Center.

"Over the past 12 years, the Sunshine Prevention Center has taken a dilapidated building and converted it into a place of hope and possibilities for the children and families in our Town," said Supervisor Mark Lesko. "Now, by working together as a community with other levels of government, businesses and organizations, they will be able to reach more people with their message of prevention of violence and substance abuse through intervention and communication."

The renovation and expansion will more than double the size of the existing facility using a former New York City Subway modular building. This project will be a collaborative effort with all levels of government, businesses, trade unions, schools, families, and communities working together. Through donations of materials and labor, no capital funds will be spent on this project.

"We are very grateful for the assistance of the Town of Brookhaven and the many officials and organizations that have come together to make this expansion possible," said Carol Carter, co-founder and chief executive director of the Sunshine Prevention Center. "Just as businesses are struggling during these difficult economic times, so too are the families, schools and communities that need the help Sunshine Prevention Center can provide. With schools and youth programs the first to feel the effects of reduced budgets, we don't want our youth to suffer or become victims of this economic downfall."

The Sunshine Prevention Center was created in 1992 out of concern for children and the problems, peer pressure and concerns that they have. The mission of Sunshine is to prevent or reduce substance abuse and violence through prevention, intervention and communication through direct connections and positive working relationships with schools, families and communities.

"The Sunshine Prevention Center has saved countless families and children, giving them a positive future, and a better life," said Councilwoman Kathleen Walsh. "Because of them, kids who might otherwise have continued on paths leading in negative directions of violence, drug abuse, etc., are being redirected on a path of self-awareness, confidence, renewed sense of purpose and a commitment to a brighter tomorrow."

In 1996, the Town of Brookhaven gave the use of a building in severe disrepair at 468 Boyle Road in Port Jefferson Station to the Sunshine Prevention Center, in return for the center renovating the building and bringing it to code. The steel modular NYC Subway building was later donated to the center to expand the facility. The renovation, which will begin in the spring of 2010, will increase the size of the center to 5,409 square feet. The new space will allow for additional classrooms and group rooms, and create a large community room for the center.

"This project is the first of its kind in Brookhaven Town. By working together, and with the donation of time, material and labor from so many organizations, the renovation and expansion of this building will not require any capital funds from our Town budget," said Councilman Steve Fiore-Rosenfeld.

Sunshine offers a variety of other family-focused services that provide a variety of learning experiences and assistance throughout the year. These programs are designed to reduce the factors that put children and families at risk for future problems with alcohol, drugs and violence and enhance protective factors to ensure a healthy future. Programs include:

- Social Skills Programs; SafeKids - Violence Prevention Programs
- Multi-cultural Programs and Holiday Camps
- Anger Management Workshops for children, teens, adults
- Pre-teen/Teen Support Groups and Leadership Opportunities
- Summer Prevention Programs
One of the newest and most successful and effective programs is their "Prevention, Not Suspension" program that is in high demand and provides a positive alternative to high-risk youths. While the main focus is on prevention and intervention with young men and women, they also offer support groups for parents, legal guardians and siblings so that all family members benefit through healthy communication, education, life skills and positive goals.

Organizations making donations of time, material or labor include:

- American Red Cross Community Service Program of Suffolk County
- Campani & Schwarting
- Carpenter's Union - Local 7
- Habitat for Humanity of Suffolk
- H2M Group
- Home Depot of Selden
- International Union of Operators Engineers Local 138
- Painters & Allied Trades
- Roanoke Sand & Gravel
- Savik & Murray
- Suffolk County Sheriffs Office
- Trailer Transport
- Verizon