

# LevittownPatch

## ELIJA Foundation Holds Annual Halloween Gala for Autism in East Meadow

**Sen. Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. and The Ladies Philoptochos Society of Holy Trinity were honored at the event.**

Story and photos by Stephen Fiorentine – November 2, 2012



Long Island's autism community dressed up for a good cause Friday night, as the [ELIJA Foundation](#) held its Annual Halloween Gala at [The Carltun](#).

It was a "spooktacular" night for those in attendance, as the costumed attendees were treated to a night of Halloween fun, including an illusionist, tarot card readers and a silent auction. All proceeds from the night went to benefit the ELIJA Foundation's Community Outreach Program.

Founded in 2002, the foundation focuses on improving the quality of programs and

services available to children with autism. In 2006, the foundation opened up a school in Levittown to extend its mission.

"Tonight's a special night," Michael Giangregorio, ELIJA board president said. "This is one of the best parties that the autistic community puts on."

The honorees for the night were N.Y. State Sen. Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr. and The Ladies Philoptochos Society of Holy Trinity of Hicksville. Fuschillo, a Long Island native, was the recipient of the Champion of Hope Award for his efforts in the passing of the Autism Insurance Reform bill. Effective Nov. 1, the bill requires insurance companies to provide coverage to children and adults for evidence based, medically necessary autism therapies.

"It's a tremendous honor to be recognized by families and kids that have gone through so much in their lifetime," Fuschillo said. "I really appreciate it, but they are really the true heroes and champions and I'm just really pleased to play a part in it."

"He is one senator who has never given up on our community," Giangregorio said. "He supported autism when it was not so popular for politicians, or anyone for that matter, supporting autism."

The bill met many roadblocks over the years, but Fuschillo's persistence in getting the law passed paid off, as Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed the law a year ago, making New York the 29th state to adopt the Autism Insurance Reform.

"It's been over a six year battle for me," Fuschillo said. "When you meet families like the Giangregorio's and see their son Nick, it's worth the fight. I'm really proud of this accomplishment, but they get all the credit."

The Ladies Philoptochos Society of Holy Trinity received the Autism Community Award for their charity towards the foundation.

“Over the past several years they have grouped together and tried to collect funds so our children could get iPads, supplies that they need and training education for the community,” Debora Thivierge, co-founder and director of the ELIJA School and Foundation said. “They've been amazing as far as advocating for our families.”

Anyone interested in getting involved with or finding more information on the ELIJA Foundation can go to its website at [www.elija.org](http://www.elija.org).

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