

Long Island's Elija School Celebrates Autism Awareness

Volunteers Make Event a Success

The Elija School for Autism celebrated a week-long Autism Awareness event as scores of volunteers and officials came together to help the school. Raising awareness about autism and the impressive work of the Elija School for Autism, the school hosted five days of building and school grounds improvements that ended with an open house event on Friday, April 9.

The week-long event was spearheaded by the school's dedicated founders Debora Harris and Nicole Dibra who worked with parents, professionals, local groups and government officials. Volunteers came

from neighboring towns, Manhattan and as far as South Africa to help the school over the week.

"As they say, to raise a child of any ability, it takes a village," Manhasset resident Lynne Koufakis stated. "My son has been with the school since it opened four years ago, and I feel that the Elija School has fundamentally and incredibly changes our family's lives."

"We are very proud of our school and our students," school founder and Executive Director Debora Harris said. "Opening our doors to the community, we hope



Elija makes a garden.



Elija with the new sign

this week inspires Long Island to get involved with us and the autism community at large," she continued.

The community was indeed inspired. Local Boy Scout troops, fire departments, volunteers from corporations including JP Morgan, and residents from Long Island worked side by side with students and staff to do schoolwide improvements to the building and the grounds. Dozens of volunteers came to clear plants and gardens, paint the entire interior and exterior of the school, plant gardens, post the new school sign, clean and organize the school rooms and collect games and toy donations. After five full days of work and improvements, an

open house barbecue brought together the volunteers and local officials to celebrate the school and the Autism Awareness week event.

The Elija School for Autism was founded in September 2006 to provide educational and intervention programs for school-age children with autism and their families in Long Island. The school is a nonprofit organization that welcomes donations from the community. Log on to the school's new website at www.elija.org for details about the school and services. Contact the school at 516-216-5270 or by email at Elijaschool@aka-pr.com or Deb@elija.org find out how to help or to make a donation.