

Long Island Press Power List Celebrated Leaders

By Long Island Press

Hundreds gathered at the Crest Hollow Country Club in Woodbury to celebrate Schneps Media's annual Long Island Press Power List presented by First Central Savings Bank, including individuals from business, government and nonprofits celebrated for their and their organizations' accomplishments and involvement in the community. From attorneys to accountants, healthcare providers to technology advisors, bankers to builders, entrepreneurs to entertainment venue operators and government officials, they gathered on June 11 to be celebrated as honorees who also networked and lit up the red carpet. "Events won't be hosted through AI. They might be, but not the ones we're going to do," Schneps Media CEO Joshua Schneps said. "People who are successful, by and large, love other people. They're motivated, good leaders. They can motivate with that mindset." Many at the event said the economy is doing well in this region, where housing prices have continued to rise even without declining interest rates. "Consumers are doing well. Most businesses are doing well," said Keith Lawlor, TD Bank's senior vice president and regional vice president for Long Island and Fairfield. "Rates are impacting decisions, whether it's buying equipment or buildings, or short-term working capital. Others said consumers are continuing to spend at a good pace in the region, where unemployment remains low. "The economy is strong as ever," said Lou Grassi, CEO, Founder, and Managing Partner of Grassi. "It's reflecting in the opportunities in our business." Joe Petrocelli and Bryan DeLuca, both of the Long Island Aquarium, were honored with TD Bank's Outstanding Entrepreneur Award. "It's not going to be a better time than now," Petrocelli said. "Down the road, it won't be any better. It's probably the best time." Aaron Hilger, executive director of the Association of Wall, Ceiling & Carpentry Industries of New York, said the construction trades are doing well. "People are building," Hilger said. "Our guys are really busy. It's a pretty good time to be in the construction business." Some companies made announcements, such as First Central Savings Bank, the event's presenting sponsor, founded 26 years ago as a community bank that would do commercial and corporate loans. Michael Serao, executive vice president and chief administrative officer at First Central Savings Bank, said the bank reached \$1 billion in assets and was entering the Florida market with a branch in the Aventura, North Miami area. "First Central does banking the way it used to be, only better," Serao said. "Local branches, local people, local decisions." He said the bank provides hands-on support, helping entrepreneurs grow "without getting lost in red tape," matching "digital convenience and hometown service." The nonprofit economy Nonprofits remain a big part of the Long Island economy, along with companies that provide services to them. Adam Cole, BDO assurance and nonprofit practice leader, talked about the pivotal role nonprofits play in the economy and region from healthcare to education and social services. "The concept of repairing the world one charity at a time," Cole said. "We work with some of the largest non-profits on Long Island and in New York City." He said many nonprofits are getting the funding they need, but that cuts could be coming. "They're doing pretty well. Funding is always in delay," Cole said. "They're still getting cost-of-living increases. There may be an impact a year or two from now." He said they help nonprofits strategize to be more efficient, use technology and operate sustainably. "It's helpful to get our story out and talk about our clients," Cole added, noting BDO serves many nonprofits as well as businesses. "Nonprofit is just a tax status." Breaking down barriers Educational institutions are busy connecting with businesses, providing training to connect students and graduates with jobs. Nassau Community College Chief Administrative Officer Dr. Maria P. Conzatti said NCC, with about 18,000 students, has been experiencing growing enrollment. "We have a lot of resources," Conzatti said. "It's a wonderful opportunity for students to get an education at a very cost-effective rate. It's affordability and opportunity." She talked about building bridges and breaking down barriers between industry and academia. "We added vocational and workforce development programming in response to the needs of the workforce and New York State," Conzatti added, noting

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a wide range of medical professions. Farmingdale State College has also been increasing connections with companies and industry. "We are deepening our ties across Long Island to the corporate world and community to for-profits and non-profits. These are the people hiring our students," said Farmingdale State College President Dr. Robert S. Prezant. Prezant said the event was "a great opportunity to talk about what's new at Farmingdale State with a lot of people." Causes and connections Many companies and nonprofits said it's important to tell their story, which can be done through networking. "Our organization is doing well, but every day we need to talk about our mission," said John Miller, President and CEO of the Guide Dog Foundation and America's VetDogs, providing service and guide dogs free to veterans, first responders and the blind. "The more exposure our mission has to companies and people in this room, the better. It helps us attract applicants, volunteers and donors." And Shannon Werkhoven, Special Events Sales Manager at Jones Beach Theater Live Nation, said they have over 50 concerts scheduled this year, including the Doobie Brothers and Santana. But people can do their own events there as well. "We do private events with a capacity from 50 to 15,000," Werkhoven said. "People aren't aware they can do private events at the amphitheater." They do everything from celebrations to corporate and client entertainment events, sometimes connected to concerts and sometimes not. "A company wants to bring their clients in, entertain them," Werkhoven said. "You can do show days or non-show days." Variety is the spice of networking Many said the event's diversity of industries provided a window into much of the economy as well as opportunities for business. "It's a unique event with a mix of industries," Lawlor said. "Most events have one or two industries. This is non-profit, business, banking, accounting." Jordan Fensterman, executive partner at Abrams Fensterman, said to match faces with names you may already know. "We're meeting a lot of great people. It's always wonderful to interact with a lot of people in your community, figure out what's going on in different people's businesses and their lives," Fensterman said. "It allows you to figure out how you'll take advantage of it." Aliyah Harith, Founder and CEO of QwintiQ Consulting, which helps companies build strategic partnerships and grow business through referrals, resellers and co-marketing, was happy with the event. "I connected with many other leaders on Long Island," she said. "We've been able to briefly talk about ways we can work together and connect to have a conversation later. It's been great for relationship building." Brian Busto, CEO of BMB Solutions, said he made appointments with people he met at the event that could "hopefully generate some business." "A non-profit walked up to us that needs a loan to expand," Serao said. "Events like this bring businesses and non-profits together." Schneps Media President Vicki Schneps talked about Schneps Connects, providing smaller networking opportunities along. The next Schneps Connects Networking Breakfast is slated for Tuesday, June 30, at the Blue Point Brewery in Patchogue, featuring Irwin Simon, CEO & Chairman of Tilray, a global consumer packaged goods and cannabis organization, as keynote speaker. "People want to connect and do business with each other," Vicki Schneps said. "You should be able to network after tonight. That's our mission, keeping you connected. Tonight, we are connected." Every Schneps Event raises money for a cause and this evening, money raised from a raffle, silent and live auction to benefit Paws of War. To learn more about the honorees, visit LIPPowerList.com, to nominate for the next event - Dan's Power List of the East End, visit PowerListEE.com and to attend the Schneps Connects breakfast and learn more about the networking club, visit SchnepsConnects.com 2026 Long Island Press Power List honorees: Mistress of Ceremonies Elizabeth Hashagen - TV Host & Wellness Advocate ICON Leonard Achan - President, CEO, LiveOnNY Anthony Bagnuola - Shareholder Greenberg Traurig, LLP Michael A.L. Balboni, JD - President Adelphi University Geri Barish - President; Executive Director The Long Island Breast Cancer Action Coalition; Hewlett House ICON Bruce A. Blakeman - Nassau County Executive Nassau County ICON Jonathan R. Blau - President/Chief Executive Officer Fusion Family Wealth ICON Donald R. Boomgaarden, Ph.D. - President St. Joseph's University, New York ICON Frederick K. Brewington, Esq. - Principal The Law Offices of Frederick K. Brewington Kelley Brooke - CEO Brooke Management Group ICON Lisa Burch - CEO EPIC Family of Human Service

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