

Waldinger Library hosts Great Give Back

By **KARINA KOVAC**

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On Saturday, the Henry Waldinger Memorial Library held an event for families to make Christmas cards for kids in hospitals. The event was sponsored by the Great Give Back program created by the Suffolk County Public Library Directors Association and the Suffolk Cooperative Library System in conjunction with the Nassau Library System. The mission statement of The Great Give Back is “to provide a day of opportunities for the patrons of the Public Libraries of New York State to participate in meaningful, service-oriented experiences.” This year, the Great Give Back partnered with the Little Saint Nicks Foundation to provide seasonal joy and cheer to hospitalized children.

The Little Saint Nicks Foundation was founded in 2004 by Raymond Mohler, Jr. At age 4, Mohler was diagnosed with a rare hip-joint disease. He recalled that after an eight-hour stay at the hospital, the image of other hospitalized children was seared into his memory, and he wanted to do something for them.

Estephani Arroyave and her children Khalessi, Kailyn and Alana Arroyave were at the event in service of the community. “We’re very Catholic. This month, we’ve been praying every day and my kids always pray for sick kids...I saw a post this was happening, and since they pray for the kids, I thought the kids can come here and send a card, so they knew we’re thinking of them. We’re going to make a couple. Its very relaxing. You feel good. You’re doing something good—each card they try to write something different.”

More than two dozen cards were collected with words of comfort and blessing. “Hope this card makes you smile,” “Hoping for a speedy recovery,” and other such sayings were made by the kids in colorful letters.



Karina Kovac/Herald

ESTEPHANI ARROYAVE AND her daughters Khalessi, Kailyn and Alana color in numerous cards, finding it relaxing and good to give back to the community.

While at the outset of the library’s participation in The Great Give Back, library officials focused on library-oriented activities like making bookmarks and a book drive, now they’ve expanded by hosting something different every year. In the past five years, Waldinger has held a pet food drive, created snack bags for The Interfaith Nutrition Network in Hempstead, and hosted other events. But this year, due to health concerns from Covid-19, the library had to strategically think of an event that would mitigate the spread of germs. Consequently, they chose to make cards so that

any age group could participate and be given the option to make the cards at the library or make them from home and send them over via a no-contact drop off.

“Everyone is limited because of Covid, but still thinking of creative ways to participate ... it’s still grown every year which is nice,” said a library official.

Library director, Mamie Eng, added that she wanted “to get the kids to think out of the box and think about someone else...this is low-key for any age.”

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