

**District 17 • WINTER/SPRING 2009**

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# LEGISLATIVE WATCH

from Suffolk County Legislator

# LOU D'AMARO

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Legislator D'Amaro hosted four Walt Whitman High School Students at the Job Mentoring Partnership of Long Island's 2009 Job Shadow Day.

## *A Message From Legislator D'Amaro*

### **Dear Neighbors:**

Since my last newsletter, I am pleased to report that I have passed two new laws in the Legislature that will positively impact people's health and well-being for many years to come.

As detailed inside, my 2009 health initiatives ban the use of artificial trans fats in County food establishments and require chain restaurants to post the caloric content of food items on their menus. Together, these initiatives will go a long way toward fighting obesity and reducing a host of serious health problems, especially among children. Both measures were supported by many local and national health organizations, medical centers, and school districts. Some sent representatives to testify in support of the bills at multiple legislative meetings.

The passage of these bills is a perfect example of democracy in action. The Executive and Legislative branches of County government worked together, responding to valuable testimony from health professionals and the public. As a result, Suffolk will now benefit from two bold measures that will ultimately save lives, decrease healthcare costs, and lead to healthier lifestyles.

With respect to the economy, you have my commitment that I will continue to focus on fiscally prudent legislation that protects you as a taxpayer during these difficult economic times. Fortunately, the budget I supported for 2009 did not increase General Fund property taxes.

Finally, as always, please know that my office stands ready to assist you, and I encourage you to participate in my email communication system (pg. 4) so I may keep you informed on upcoming events, activities, and legislative initiatives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lou D'Amaro".



## Volunteers Gather 1000 lbs. of Food

Legislator D’Amaro recently teamed up with Island Harvest to host two holiday food drives to help fill the shelves of local pantries in Babylon and Huntington. Volunteers and generous residents came out to support the cause, donating 1000 pounds of canned and non-perishable boxed goods.

## Students’ Voices Light Up the Holidays

Community members came together to catch the holiday spirit at the annual Town of Huntington Tree Lighting ceremony in December. Supervisor Frank Petrone served as Master of Ceremonies and choral students from Birchwood Intermediate School in Melville brought warmth and entertainment to the chilly evening.



## A Front Row Seat to Government

Seizing the opportunity to give young voters and government students a more intimate view of the political process, Legislator D’Amaro accepted an invitation from Suffolk Community College Political Science Professor Chad Lupinacci, a South Huntington School Board member, to address his POL 103 class, “State and Local Politics and Government.”

### *For Your Information:*

## Free Alzheimer Caregivers Programs Planned

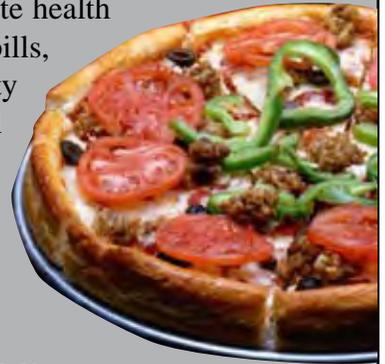
Legislator D’Amaro and Day Haven Adult Day Services ([www.dayhaven.org](http://www.dayhaven.org)) invite you to “Alzheimer’s and Caregiving: A Workshop for Families.” Families caring for a person with Alzheimer’s or dementia will gain a better understanding of the disease by attending one of these free programs. Topics to be discussed include the incidence of Alzheimer’s in the population, symptoms, treatments, community support services, elder law and safety in the home. Refreshments will be served. Programs will be held in Huntington and Babylon so those who are interested can attend the most convenient location:

- **Wednesday, May 6, 2009**, 7 pm at the **South Huntington Library**, 145 Pidgeon Hill Rd, Huntington Station. For more information, call (631) 549-4411.
- **Tuesday, June 2, 2009**, 6:30 pm at the **North Babylon Library**, 815 Deer Park Avenue, North Babylon. For more information, call (631) 669-4020.

# Coming Soon to a Restaurant Near You!

In an important step toward enhancing the County's ongoing efforts to promote health and fitness, and to combat obesity, Legislator D'Amaro recently sponsored two bills, both already signed into law by County Executive Steve Levy, directing the County Board of Health to ban the use of artificial trans fats in food establishments and requiring chain restaurants to prominently post caloric content on their menus.

Suffolk County Health Commissioner Dr. Humayun Chaudhry joined other medical professionals, nutritionists, and experts from health-advocacy organizations in support of the proposals. They detailed the grim statistics:



- *At least 400,000 deaths nationwide may be attributed to obesity each year. Unfortunately, Suffolk County ranked 13th from the bottom out of 62 counties in New York State in terms of the number of annual heart disease fatalities.* – Suffolk Health Commissioner Dr. Chaudhry
- *There is no known safe level of trans fats in our diets.* – Nancy Rau, RD, Stony Brook University Department of Medicine
- *The obesity epidemic is threatening to reverse many of the gains we have made in reducing deaths from heart disease over the past decade.* – Julianna Belelieu, American Heart Association
- *14% of cancer deaths among men and 20% of deaths among females can be directly attributed to obesity* – Leah Jefferson, American Cancer Society.

Similar bills have been passed in New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, Albany, Nassau County and California, where a state-wide trans fat ban was passed. While the trans fat ban will be phased in over time, Suffolk County residents could start seeing the calorie counts on menus by the end of the year.

For more information on these or any other legislative matters, please contact Legislator D'Amaro's office at (631) 854-4433.

## Community Concerns Addressed

Local concerns were the primary discussion topics when Legislator D'Amaro was joined by representatives from the Suffolk County Police Department's Second Precinct and Huntington Town Council Member Susan Berland at a recent meeting of the Strathmore Hills Civic Association. Contact the District Office at 854-4433 if you would like Legislator D'Amaro to meet with your group.



## Local Rabbi Opens Legislature Meeting

At the request of Legislator D'Amaro and with a message of tolerance, understanding and respect, Rabbi Ian Jacknis of the South Huntington Jewish Center opened the Suffolk County Legislature's General Session in November by offering an inspiring non-denominational prayer.

## Young Resident Chooses Charity Over Candy

For the past two Halloweens, Huntington Station Fourth-grader Ally Marie Gottesman (pictured here with her parents Pam and Vincent) went trick-or-treating for charity instead of candy. Ally raised \$4,000 which she donated to the Don Monti Memorial Research Foundation, a cancer research organization, in memory of her late aunt. Legislator D’Amaro honored Ally before the full Legislature for her selfless efforts. In addition to a Proclamation, Legislator D’Amaro presented her with a basket of candy.



## Huntington Chamber Hosts Forum

Huntington business and community leaders had a unique opportunity to speak one-on-one with Legislator D’Amaro and other local elected officials at the Huntington Township Chamber of Commerce’s annual Legislative Breakfast, recently held at the Melville Marriott.

## Shining a Light

Seeking to make County government more transparent and accessible, Legislator D’Amaro co-sponsored a new law aimed at bringing New York State’s highly praised “Project Sunlight” program to Suffolk County. This web-based program will provide easy access to information about County elected officials, services and departments. Here he is pictured with, from left, bill sponsor Brian Beedenbender (D-Centereach) and Brian Herrington from the New York State Attorney General’s Office.



In keeping with the spirit of Project Sunlight and his commitment to bringing more transparency to government, Legislator D’Amaro has established an email distribution program to provide local residents with updated information on events, activities, news and legislation that impact the community. If you would like to receive notifications, send your email, name, address, phone number, number of adults and number of children under the age of 18 in your household to:

[karen.klafter@suffolkcountyny.gov](mailto:karen.klafter@suffolkcountyny.gov)