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The Nicholas Center marks milestone year at annual Night in White Gala

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Posted on July 30, 2026



Gala honorees Michelle and Des Rea with their son Steph and local officials at The Nicholas Center Night in White Gala.

Photo provided by The Nicholas Center

JOBS ON LONG ISLAND

+ ADD YOUR JOB

SE BUSCA SUPERINTENDENTE DE EDIFICIO

Stony Brook University

Nurse Practitioner/Physician Assistant, Clinical Instructor, Internal Medicine, Cardiology (178813)

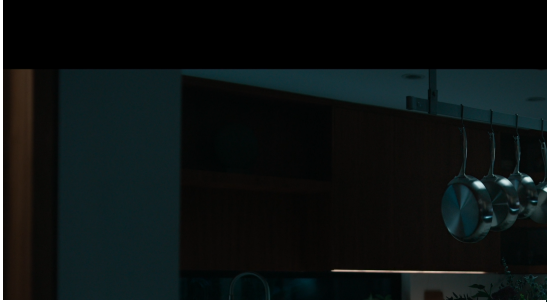
Rush Builders

Bookkeeper

VIEW ALL JOBS...



Bringing together community leaders, lawmakers, business partners, and families, The Nicholas Center hosted a packed house for its annual Night in White gala to celebrate expanding vocational opportunities and community inclusion for Autistic adults.



For honoree Michelle Rea, recognized alongside her husband Desmond and son Steph, the evening's impact hit close to home.

"As parents, we all hope our children will find their place in the world. Thanks to The Nicholas Center, our son has found his," said Rea.

Executive Director and Co-Founder Nicole Ferrara reinforced that sentiment during the program. "At The Nicholas Center, we have the privilege of witnessing something extraordinary every day—what happens when someone who has been underestimated is finally given a real opportunity. We watch them build confidence, independence, and real lives."

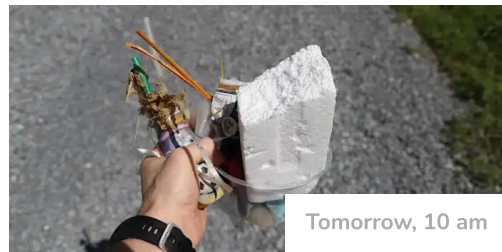


Night in White honorees, Michelle & Des Rea with son, Steph with The Nicholas Center Co-Founders, Stella Spanakos and Nicole Ferrara.

The gala highlighted a banner year of growth driven by that mission, including: 23,000+ hours of hands-on job coaching provided in the past year, 53 job placements for Autistic young

THINGS TO DO ON LONG ISLAND

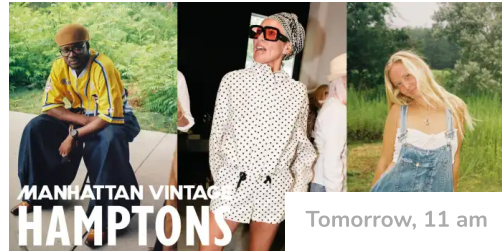
+ POST AN EVENT



Tomorrow, 10 am

AMSEAS Beach Walk & Cleanup at Hallock State Park

[Hallock State Park Preserve](#)



Tomorrow, 11 am

Manhattan Vintage Hamptons Show

[Parrish Art Museum](#)



Tomorrow, 6:30 pm

Apollo in The Hamptons

[Sí Sí at EHP Resort & Marina](#)

adults, 50,000th product milestone for the TNC Chocolate Lab, expansion of TNC Provides Pantry Program delivering aid to 10 food pantries and 80th episode milestone for the TNC Podcast, Agents of Humanity.

Have your say.

Leave a comment below and let us know what you think.

Be the first to comment

Co-Founder Stella Spanakos welcomed attendees and recognized TNC staff, board members, the Rea family and, with a special acknowledgment, TNC's director of administration and human resources, Laura Wootton, for her 10 years of steadfast leadership and resilience.

Special thanks were given to gala sponsors, including honoree benefactors – Michelle and Desmond Rea and Pella Windows, event sponsors – Loren and Wayne King Family and Ellen and Joseph Leonides and dinner sponsors – The Braunstein Family and Liane Kupferberg Carter and Marc Carter.

The event brought together key community leaders and public officials who stand alongside The Nicholas Center in driving systemic change, including Nassau County Legislator Delia DeRiggi-Whitton, Nassau County Comptroller Elaine Phillips, Town of North Hempstead Supervisor Jennifer DeSena, Receiver of Taxes Mary Jo Collins, Mayors Robert Weitzner and John Popeleski and Port Washington Police Commissioner Sean McCarthy.



Aug. 2, 6 pm

Bridgehampton Chamber Music 2026 Summer Festival

📍 Bridgehampton



Grown Up & Me – Early Childhood Summer Program

📍 Center For Jewish Life – Sag Harbor



Sample Your Way Through Montauk with our Cookie Fries at the Montauk Farmers' Market!

📍 Montauk Farmer's Market

QUOGUE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ART SHOW

📅 Aug. 8, 10 am

Quogue Art Show/Sale sponsored by the Quogue Historical Society

📍 Quogue Village Green



Dan's Grill Hampton

📍 Clubhouse Hamptons



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Proceeds directly support The Nicholas Center's vocational training, supported employment, community integration and peer support initiatives.

For more information about The Nicholas Center or to make a contribution, visit

www.tncnewyork.org.



 For more [scene & seen](#) event photos, [click here](#).

Conversations

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Start the conversation, Puny-Bobcat-

ALL COMMENTS

NEWEST ▾



Start the conversation



Active Conversations

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BOLI SPOTLIGHT



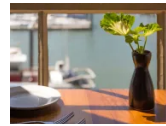
What is the best shooting range on Long Island?



Where can you find the best winery on Long Island?



What is the best BBQ sauce on Long Island?



What restaurant has the best water view on Long Island?



Best of Long Island Spotlight: Top Wedding Pros