



JUST IN TIME to share the joy this holiday season, our local superstars at The Nicholas Center launched its newest endeavor: TNC Chocolate Lab.

This is a new shop and cafe located right here in Port Washington that is dedicated to... you guessed it ... CHOCOLATE!

TNC Chocolate Lab is the center's newest program focused on revolutionizing the way autistic and neurodivergent individuals learn, live, and work in the community.

The Nicholas Center, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, is dedicated to highlighting the positive impacts neurodivergent individuals have in the workplace and training them for meaningful employment. The new TNC Chocolate Lab is set up to ensure each individual can contribute through jobs that best highlight their abilities from creating the products to designing the logos and selling in the shop.

Sweet Treats: The Nicholas Center's TNC Chocolate Lab Debuts in Port Washington

By KIM JONES

We spoke with Stella Spanakos, co-founder of The Nicholas Center, which is named for her son, on the opening of this exciting endeavor.

When asked how the idea for the shop came about, Stella told *Port Washington Living* that "It was really the next step in our progression to enrich the lives of individuals on the spectrum."

Stella reiterated how The Nicholas Center has fantastic connections in the community and now they can offer even more through the shop. "These are quite capable individuals. Even my son, who can't speak [can participate]. He can fold shirts, fix labels, [and more], so there's always a job for everybody. And they flourish here and they're so happy and they're so proud of their work. We're enriching and enhancing the community," Stella says.

Stella gave "kudos" to establishments in the community like Smusht, that step up and employ neurodivergent individuals.

When employing individuals through The Nicholas Center, they come with a job coach and are trained in order to support their success.

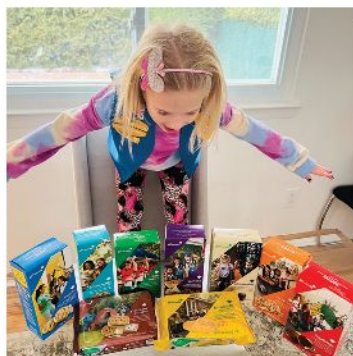
Right now, there is an 85% unemployment rate for those with neurodiversity and Stella points out that we have to change that.

"We're very excited, there are rockstars here," she says.

Not only does the TNC Chocolate Lab sell delicious treats, but they are a fantastic place for gifts, including sweet treats, candles, T-shirts, and more.

Check them out at 195 Manorhaven Blvd., Port Washington.

<https://tncnewyork.org/tnc-chocolate-lab>



COOKIE TIME | Reach Out to Your Local Girl Scout For Everyone's Favorites

By KIM JONES

IT'S EVERYONE'S favorite time of year! Support your local Girl Scout while enjoying your favorites (Samoas are my weakness!). And this is your last change to stock up on the S'mores cookies before they are discontinued! Now until March

Willow Eisner with available cookie varieties

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