



An evening to be proud of: USGBC-LI holds annual gala

June 25, 2012 - Long Island

On Wednesday, May 23rd, the Long Island Chapter of the USGBC held its fifth annual Building Green Long Island Gala. Our honoree this year was Russell Albanese, chairman of the Albanese Organization. Each year we attempt to select an honoree whose accomplishments and practices are closely aligned with the mission of the USGBC and our chapter. For all who know Russell and the Albanese Organization there can be no doubt that he deserved this honor. It was an incredible evening watching Russell with his lovely wife, Marilyn, by his side as well as so many family members, friends and supporters.

The evening along with delicious food and the beautiful surroundings of Oheka Castle included a few presentations. Jed Morey of the Long Island Press was our MC and a fine job he did. Those that were introduced by Jed will not soon forget his humor! Some of those include Vince Capogna the chapter's executive director that spoke about some of our recent accomplishments, followed by Suffolk County executive Steve Bellone. Steve spoke about his support of the USGBC and some of his accomplishments as supervisor of the town of Babylon. Those accomplishments continue to have a positive impact on residents and businesses in Babylon. It should also be said that those of us who know Steve have to admire his energy and leadership.

Each year our chapter holds a scholarship competition where students from Long Island High Schools compete for four scholarships. The night of the gala we had the pleasure of introducing our platinum scholarship winner, Graham Turk of the Wheatley School. Graham made a short presentation where he described his project. Graham started an initiative in his school to eliminate plastic water bottles and replace them with refillable stainless steel bottles and installing filling stations around the school for students and faculty to use. Graham's project had eliminated over 700 plastic bottles each day from the trash! Graham also created and launched a website so that other schools can follow this example.

Then, I had the distinct pleasure of introducing Russell. I've known Russell for over 20 years and as I said that night he always has been a real gentleman. He is the leader of a fine organization and is continuing the work started by his Dad. Thank you, Russell, for accepting this honor. With your help the gala raised over \$250,000 for our chapter and we sincerely appreciate you and everything you stand for. We sincerely appreciate and want to thank so many gala and chapter sponsors and all in attendance that evening. Lastly, I need to personally thank all of our board members and committee members that worked tirelessly to make this evening a success, as well as the staff at Oheka, DJS Events and the many "behind the scenes" people that it takes to create an evening such as this. Thank you!

For anyone who would like to find out more about the USGBC-LI Chapter, how you can get involved or to help support our mission, please visit www.USGBC-LI.org.

Rudy Holesek is the chairman of USGBC-LI and the president of Apollo HVAC Corp., Bay Shore,

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