



12TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 15, 2015

CONTACT: Zach Viola
LEGISLATIVE AIDE
PHONE: (631) 854-3735
FAX: (631) 854-3744
Email: zachviola@suffolkcountyny.gov

Leslie Kennedy Joins Dedicated Runners at 5k for Special Needs



(Leslie Kennedy takes group photo with the 5k participants)

July 12th, 2015 – On a sunny, thunder free Sunday morning, Leslie Kennedy (R-Nesconset) attended the 17th Annual Rolling Thunder 5k Run and Family Fitness Day at Hidden Pond Park in Hauppauge, NY. This fulfilling event is hosted and organized by the Rolling Thunder Special Needs Program (RTSNP), a nationally recognized nonprofit group centered in Suffolk County. The RTSNP is devoted to helping children and adults of all ages; they provide special needs individuals with training for athletic sports (such as running, wheelchair racing, etc.) and help them to build confidence and independence as well as achieve individual goals.

People from all over the county came to support the group and participate in the 5k. All proceeds that were raised during the event went directly to the RTSNP; these contributions will allow the RTSNP to continue their goal and help disabled people all across Long Island to participate in successful events like this in the future. Legislator Kennedy was thrilled to be a part of this annual event.

“I had a wonderful morning with the fabulous athletes! I am honored to be a part of this event and congratulate all on a job well done!” said Leslie.

After all of the competitors crossed the finish line to conclude their race, they were each awarded a participation medal for their dedication, endurance and compassion.

The RTSNP is able to put these events together thanks to the help from tireless coaches like Steve Cuomo. Mr. Cuomo is the founder and President of the RTSNP and has also been the USA Track and Field Chair for Disabled Athletes since 2009. For over a decade, Mr. Cuomo has changed the lives hundreds of special needs children and adults through his work in the organization. Because of his unparalleled commitment and devotion, he was awarded the USA Track and Field President’s Award.

Through the coaching expertise of Steve Cuomo, his students are able to reach their fullest potential. 17 year old Mikey Brannigan, a senior at Northport High School, is a part of the RTSNP and is coached by Mr. Cuomo. Mikey was diagnosed with Autism at a young age, but with the help of Mr. Cuomo, he was able to overcome his personal disadvantages. Mikey is one of the top high school runners in the nation and has a Cumulative GPA of 84. The skills he has able to develop through running have helped Mikey to prove to himself and to others that no obstacle is too great to overcome. Mikey is now working to fulfill his dream of representing the United States at the 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio Di Janerio, Brazil. This was all possible due to the guidance and opportunities given to him by the RTSNP.

To learn more about the upcoming events for the Rolling Thunder Special Needs Program, or to make a donation, go onto their website at www.rtsnp.org.

For more information about other exciting events in Suffolk County coming up this summer, please contact the office of Legislator Leslie Kennedy at (631)-854-3735.

###