

A walk to raise health funds

Multi-venue event helps hospitals for children, women

BY TIFFANY CUSAAC-SMITH
tiffany.cusaac-smith@newsday.com

With her young daughter in her arms, a smiling Megan Rasiak strolled around Jones Beach on Sunday morning to raise money for healthy mothers and infants — issues that hit close to home for the Franklin Square resident.

Nearly two years ago, Rasiak's health as a new mother was precarious after her heart rate dropped while she was in labor, and she underwent an unplanned C-section, Northwell Health officials said. Four days after giving birth to her daughter, Stella, Rasiak, 25, had shortness of breath and "this overwhelming sense of anxiety that something was wrong."

She went to North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset and was diagnosed with blood clots in her lungs, Northwell Health said. She also had anxiety.

But running also became part of her recovery — a solace that helped her focus on breathing and being in the moment. On Sunday, she was joined by thousands of people who took part in the Northwell Health Walk to help Cohen Children's Medical Center and the Katz Institute for Women's Health. The funds will go toward mental health care for



Franklin Square pediatric nurse Megan Rasiak walks with her daughter, Stella. ■ Video: newsday.tv

children and women, and research on improving women's health, Northwell said.

From 2016 to 2020, the number of people between 3 and 17 who were diagnosed with anxiety grew by roughly 30%, according to a report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. And in 2021, more than 1,200 women in the United States died of maternal causes, up from about 755 in 2019, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said.

The walk was held simultaneously in Riverhead and Port Jefferson on Long Island. It also was held on Staten Island and

in Yorktown Heights in the Hudson Valley, Northwell said. More than \$7 million has been raised by the walk since its start in 2010.

Despite Northwell Health having an annual budget of \$13 billion, mental health for youth is often not funded adequately and it also loses money on research, said Brian Lally, chief development officer for Northwell Health. "We do it for [a] mission, but we need the community to help us in that," he said.

Reflecting back on her birthing experience, Rasiak said she was glad that doctors didn't dismiss her symptoms.

"But they heard my concerns, and they understood, and they didn't brush me off as a new mom, and I was able to get the care I needed," she said.

Things are better now, she said. She is now a nurse in pediatrics at Lenox Hill Hospital in Manhattan. And by participating in the health walk, as well as running on her own, she is finding healing.

"It's getting my strength back and trying not to be scared of all the scary things that happened to me and getting over that and enjoying my time with my daughter," she said.

With Steve Langford

Northern State repaving done ahead of schedule

A major stretch of the Northern State Parkway used by nearly 166,000 cars daily has been repaved ahead of schedule, state officials announced.

Two new inches of asphalt replaced the top layer of 24 lane miles on the parkway, between the Meadowbrook and Wantagh parkways through Westbury village and the Town of Hempstead in Nassau County.

The project began in October on the parkway's westbound lanes. This spring, work started on the eastbound lanes. The total cost is expected to fall under the initial projected budget of \$9 million, which used state and federal funding.

Pedestrian sidewalk ramps at the parkway's interchange with

Post Avenue in Westbury also were rebuilt.

"The completion of this paving project on the Northern State Parkway will improve travel conditions for the tens of thousands of Long Island motorists who use this important roadway every day," Gov. Kathy Hochul said in a statement.

Westbury Village Mayor Peter Cavallaro said this would help residents and others. "We are pleased and grateful that the State has completed this important repaving project, which benefits our local residents who use the Northern State Parkway on a daily basis, as well as motorists who are traveling through our region," he said in a release.

— LORENA MONGELLI



Newly repaved westbound Northern State Parkway is seen Sunday.

Newsday

Long Island Office
6 Corporate Center Drive,
Melville, NY 11747

Have a Tip?

Email the newsroom at
LI@newsday.com

On the Web

For a list of Newsday departments, their emails and telephone numbers, go to newsday.com/contact

For Reprints, Rights & Permissions

NewsdayReprints.com

Home Delivery

800-NEWSDAY

(800-639-7329)

helpme@newsday.com

Director of Customer Service & Distribution

circulation@newsday.com

Newsroom 631-843-2700

Place an Ad/Change an Ad

631-843-SOLD (7653)

Letters to the Editor

Email letters@newsday.com

CORRECTIONS

Newsday strives for the highest level of accuracy and fairness and is committed to promptly correcting errors. Readers can report problems or concerns about content in the paper or on Newsday.com by emailing nd-editor@newsday.com, calling 631-843-2700 or writing to 6 Corporate Center Drive, Melville, NY 11747. Attention: Corrections.

THIS DATE IN HISTORY

1862 President Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act, which was intended to encourage settlements west of the Mississippi River by making federal land available for farming.

1927 Charles Lindbergh took off from Long Island's Roosevelt Field aboard the Spirit of St. Louis on his historic solo transatlantic flight to France.

1932 Amelia Earhart took off from Newfoundland to become the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic. (Because of weather and equipment problems, Earhart set down in Northern Ireland instead of her intended destination, France.)

1956 The United States exploded the first airborne hydrogen bomb over Bikini Atoll in the Pacific.

1961 A white mob attacked a busload of Freedom Riders in Montgomery, Alabama, prompting the federal government to send in U.S. marshals to restore order.