



Nick Vuono Charity Fund Established 1985

August 24, 2022

Westerly Town Beach Pavilion
365 Atlantic Ave
Westerly RI 02891

Present at the dedication event for adaptive beach equipment were board members of the Nick Vuono Charity Fund, Paula J. Vuono, President; George Champlin, Vice President; Joseph Manfredi and auxiliary member Marty Champlin. Also in attendance were Shawn Lacey, Westerly Town Manager, Paul Gingerella, Westerly Chief of Police; Julia Beasely, Westerly Recreation Director; Town Council Members; Westerly Town Beach Managers and additional supporters of the Nick Vuono Charity Fund.

On this occasion the Nick Vuono Charity Fund reached out and partnered with the Westerly Town Manager, Town Council and Recreation Dept on a project to purchase mobi mats and floatation chairs to make the Westerly Town beach more accessible.

We awarded the Town Council a \$10,000.00 check towards the project which covered more than half of the expense and in addition purchased and shipped 2 floatation chairs with the entire project coming in at a little over \$15,000.00.

This partnership was successful due to the work of many individuals, a real team effort with the majority of the NVCF contacts being between Shawn Lacey and Julia Beasely and Board Member George Champlin. The current NVCF Board includes, Paula J. Vuono Martasian as President, George Champlin – Vice President; Paige DiBiasio as Treasurer, and Members Joseph Manfredi, Dawn Paxton and Joseph Celico. Some of our members are on medical leave.

This wasn't an overnight project. The NVCF had been wanting to approach the town with this project back in 2020 and the town has been researching sustainable and eco-friendly products. This was the year that we connected and here we are!

My father, the late Nick Vuono for whom this Charity was formed to continue good works in our Westerly-Bradford community, my Aunt Lucy, his youngest sister who recently passed and served on the NVCF board and was President for over a decade and the late Mario Celico one of the Charter members and active board member and President for many years are all smiling to see this come to fruition. They liked a good time and even more, they liked to see others, especially children laugh and play. Board Member Dawn Paxton first proposed this project back in 2018 and helped educate board members on the equipment needed for making a beach accessible.

My Aunt Lucy Bellone and Mario Celico brought me onto the Board over 20 years ago and taught me how to successfully lead the NVCF on projects and outreach to the Westerly-Bradford area. Aunt Lucy and Mario dedicated a great deal of time towards keeping the Charity going during lean times and growing the financial base so that the Charity continues to thrive in its work. I am forever grateful for being able to keep the legacy of my Dad's community action alive and well because of all of those who have served on the Board and on many functions over the past 37 years and I hope to usher in a 50th year anniversary of the Nick Vuono Charity in the year 2035.

This year, along with this Town Beach Accessibility Project, the Nick Vuono Charity purchased and distributed with the guidance and help of many special education teachers and social workers and Physical Therapists in the Westerly School system over \$15,000.00 of adaptive equipment, iPads, chrome books, language development and educational programs, musical instruments, sensory calming devices and more to children and youth in the Westerly -Bradford school system. Those special education teachers, social workers, physical therapists and parents who work with us to meet these needs are earth angels for sure!

We seek to continue to be true to our mission:

The mission of the Nick Vuono Charity Fund is to respond to the needs of individuals in the Westerly - Bradford Community who experience cognitive, emotional and /or physical challenges.

Help us to continue to serve the needs of the Westerly-Bradford Community by putting in an application if you have a need that meets our description and mission or filling out a willing to volunteer form for future events or making a money donation. No one on the board takes a salary so donations go towards purchases of those who put in an application. Our Application cycle opens in September of each year and closes in November with awards being made between January and February. See the Application Buttons for specific dates and the application and cover letter. In the past we have been able to fund projects by the Westerly Public Library, the Frank Olean Center, the Johnnycake Center and the YMCA to name a few local organizations. Individuals and Organizations are encouraged to apply as their needs match our mission.

Thank you! The Nick Vuono Charity Board Members hope you will enjoy the Westerly Town Beach!

Paula J. Vuono Martasian,
President of the Nick Vuono Charity Fund and
Daughter of the Late Nick Vuono