

People in The NEWS

Serving community

Smithtown's Joani Madarash honored as 2017 SBPLI Volunteer of the Year

School-Business Partnerships of Long Island, Inc. (SBPLI) has presented longtime Board Member and former Executive Director Joani Madarash, of Smithtown, with the organization's 2017 Volunteer of the Year Award. A fully volunteer-run non-profit organization, SBPLI relies on the dedication and support of its members year-round. As such, the organization takes the time each year to recognize the countless hours and efforts of a devoted volunteer.

Presently part of SBPLI's Executive Management Team, Ms. Madarash joined the organization in 1992 as an Advisory Board member. She, along with other board members, secured SBPLI's involvement with the FIRST Robotics program and, in fact, brought the FIRST Regional event to NY state. Since that time, Ms. Madarash has served as a member of SBPLI's FIRST Robotics Competition Development Council, which each year is tasked with organizing the program's associated events. This includes, among other things, the Long Island Kick-Off at Stony Brook University and the SBPLI Long Island Regional at Hofstra University.

In 2002, Ms. Madarash was invited to join the SBPLI Board of Directors and served as the organization's Vice President of Events Coordination (2007-2010), President (2011-2012), Executive Director (2012-2014) and Interim Executive Director (2014-2016). In her role as Events Coordinator, Ms. Madarash held a key role in multiple fundraising events, including the organization's signature "60 Over 60 Gala," scholarship fundraisers and SBPLI's annual golf tournament, among others.

Her involvement with many of these events continues still today. Ms. Madarash was instrumental as a founding committee member in the creation of the Fred Breithut Scholarship at Farmingdale State College in 2009. She also helps to select a winner of the organization's annual Musical Theme Award, presented by School Construction Consultants, Inc.

In addition to her involvement with SBPLI, Ms. Madarash has an impressive career that began with her rehab counseling position at the Long Island Developmental Center in Melville in 1973, where she worked her way up the ranks to Director of Vocational Rehabilitation Services before leaving in 1989.

From there, Ms. Madarash went on to hold several titles at the National Center for Disability Services in Albertson, New York. Ms. Madarash stepped down from her position as Co-Director of the Smeal Learning Center for that organization in 2002 to start Smithtown-based accessLinx, Inc., for which she serves as President and CEO still today.

A graduate of Queens College, from which she earned a bachelor's degree in psychology, Ms. Madarash went on to earn a master's degree in counseling from Long Island University's C.W. Post Campus (now known as LIU Post) and has authored several curricula, newsletters, journals and articles.

She is an active member not only of SBPLI, but also sits on the boards of the New York State Association for People Supporting Employment First, the Suffolk County Disabilities Advisory Board and the Suffolk County Rehabilitation Council, and is a community fundraising advisor for Future Child Advocates. Ms. Madarash's involvement with these organizations has earned her a variety of awards, including LIBN's Most Influential Businesswoman and the National Rehab Association's (Metro NY Chapter) Schwartz Humanitarian Award, and was recognized by the Huntington Chamber as one of 101 Volunteers of the Year in 2003.

After winning her personal battle with breast cancer, Ms. Madarash has proudly served as an American Cancer Society team leader for many years, achieving Pacesetter status for the organization's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk. Her efforts earned her the Walbaum's Foundation's Breast Cancer Survivor of the Year Award in 2005 and again in 2011 from the A&P Foundation.



Joani Madarash, of Smithtown, has been honored with the title of SBPLI 2017 Volunteer of the Year.