



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kenneth P. LaValle

Shirley Ruch

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Women of
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HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Shirley Ruch

Shirley Ruch has dedicated her career to improving the quality of life for special needs students and their families. A tireless advocate, devoting both her time and talents to improving her community, Ms. Ruch is deserving of recognition as the “Woman of Distinction” for the First Senate District.

Prior to moving to New York, Ms. Ruch worked as a teacher in a multi-handicapped classroom in the public school system. Over the past 30 years, she has run a private speech and language practice in Sag Harbor, providing speech and language services across the East End of Long Island. Her specialty is working with clients who have diagnoses of autism, attention deficit disorder and learning disabilities. Ms. Ruch has a coaching certification through the Mentor Coach program and was trained in the Relationship Development Intervention program. She received her Bachelor’s Degree from Miami University and her Master’s Degree from Ohio State in Communications, with a minor in Special Education.

Ms. Ruch frequently presents at various organizations to educate and train parents and colleagues on techniques to facilitate communication development in children, teens and young adults. She has operated social skills groups and mentoring programs to facilitate the development of meaningful communication for special needs clients. Ms. Ruch also provides group training sessions for parents, as she believes in educating and training the whole family when working with a client.

Ms. Ruch witnessed first-hand the frustration parents experienced when helping adult children look for employment after leaving the school system. She put her professional expertise to use, addressing that critical need by founding the South Fork Bakery. South Fork Bakery provides focused skill training and employment for special needs adults.

A native of Ohio, Ms. Ruch moved to Sag Harbor in 1980. She and her husband have lived and raised their three adult children there. Ms. Ruch’s contributions have positively affected her community, and established a legacy for future generations.