



# Women of DISTINCTION

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## HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

*Evelyn Vollgraff*

Evelyn Vollgraff's parents moved her family to Lake Ronkonkoma when she was just two years old. Growing up in a family that was very community-focused, the Lake and the surrounding pristine area was her playground.

With deep roots in the Lake community, Ms. Vollgraff became a member of the Lake Ronkonkoma Historical Society, a not-for-profit organization that relies strictly on fundraisers, dues and donations. A volunteer organization with a paid membership of approximately 125 members, Ms. Vollgraff was voted in as President in 2008. Today, she oversees the everyday operations of the Historical Society's Museum, which is housed in the 1916 building that originally served as the Lake Ronkonkoma Free Library. She also oversees maintenance of The Fitz-Greene Hallock House, built in 1888, which contains the Hallock family's original furnishings.

In 2016, Ms. Vollgraff collaborated with two other people to start a group called the Lake Ronkonkoma Improvement Group (LRIG). LRIG took on the task of cleaning the shoreline so that people could once again enjoy the beauty of the Lake. Over the next two years, the Group's volunteers and interested parties, now almost 2,000 people strong, removed hundreds of tons of debris from the shoreline. Ms. Vollgraff collaborates with various agencies with interests in the Lake, coordinates the group's volunteers and oversees cleanups.

Not long after cleanups began, LRIG's efforts were noticed by elected officials in the three townships and Suffolk County. With their help, Ms. Vollgraff and LRIG have been able to clean and preserve historic areas surrounding the Lake, including the 100-year-old bridge that is now part of the Suffolk County Parks System, and the site of Larry Holzapfel's Used Paperback Bookstore, which had burned and was left to tumble down onto the beach. Through the group's efforts, the decaying and decrepit building once known as the "Bavarian Inn" was razed and the area was cleaned and remediated. It is now a beautiful addition to the Suffolk County Park System.

Ms. Vollgraff selflessly dedicates her time to the Lake Ronkonkoma Watershed Intermunicipal Organization (IO), is Vice President of the Lake Ronkonkoma Cemetery, Inc., and is Membership Director for the Vanderbilt Cup Car Club.

Married to a man with deep roots in Lake Ronkonkoma and Lake Grove, volunteering has always been a family endeavor. Ms. Vollgraff began volunteering as a Girl Scout Leader when her daughter was young. She later became a Sunday School teacher, and while working for the Association of Retarded Children (AHRC), she was so impressed with the courage and love that the clients possessed that she volunteered her time to organize their Candlelight Balls, car shows, client holiday parties and vacations.

***Evelyn Vollgraff was selected as a  
2019 Woman of Distinction honoree by Senator Monica R. Martinez.***

