

WHAT TO WATCH Today

RIVERHEAD

ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM.

The annual environmental forum sponsored by State Sen. Kenneth P. LaValle (R-Port Jefferson) will be held today at 5 p.m. at Suffolk County Community College's Culinary Arts and Hospitality Center (20 E. Main St.). The forum brings together elected officials, environmentalists and civic leaders for a two-hour roundtable discussion of environmental problems and concerns. Check Mitchell Freedman's **Twitter updates @eastwatch.**

ISLIP TOWN

PLANNING BOARD.

The Islip Town planning board meets tonight at 7:30 at Town Hall (655 Main St.). The public is welcome. Check Nicole Fuller's **Twitter updates @nicolefuller.**

GARDEN CITY VILLAGE

FIRE DEPARTMENT.

Garden City Village's board of trustees will meet today at 8 p.m. in Village Hall (351 Stewart Ave.). The board will consider laying off six paid firefighters and demoting one fire lieutenant. Read Aisha Al-Muslim's **Twitter updates @AishaAlMuslim.**

NOW ONLINE

Catch up with these stories today at newsday.com/towns

TOPtweet



I would love a huge snow storm this weekend . . . c'mon Long Island . . . gotta have at least one a year

@SenseiVeets

CORAM

A PERSONAL development

Disabled daughter inspires builder's plan for adult day center

BY SOPHIA CHANG
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As the father of a developmentally disabled daughter, Cary Staller is well aware of a looming deadline: the day his child turns 21 and ages out of the state public school system that provides her with programs and structure.

Parents of developmentally disabled children in Suffolk County have few options after that deadline, said Staller, an Old Field-based developer, SUNY trustee and philanthropist whose family funded the Staller Center at Stony Brook University.

"They go to school until they're 21, and they age out of the school," said Staller, whose daughter Ysabel is now 20 years old and will age out in about six months. "A lot of parents, they feel that they have to put their kids in a residential setting, and that's the only way they get a day care setting."

To offer a nonresidential alternative, Staller hopes to build a day center for developmentally disabled adults on the northwest corner of Route 25 and Winfield Davis Drive in Coram.

The \$2 million center, which he intends to pay for with private funds and then lease to the state for a dollar a year, would be about 8,000 square feet. It would include exercise facilities, a lunchroom, walking trails, and space to learn kitchen, laundry and computer skills. The facility would accommodate about 60 adults, some of whom would go into the surrounding communities



Cary Staller hopes to build a day center for developmentally disabled adults in Coram.

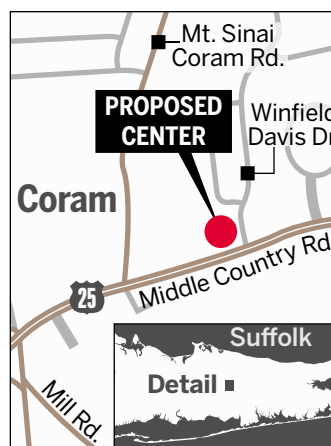
for lessons and volunteer opportunities.

All of them would go home in the evenings, where they may be happier than in a residential setting, Staller said.

"They go to the place, they have people stimulating them, and they're active," he said of the benefits of people attending day centers. "And then they go home, and they're tired, and they feel good about it."

Staller has acquired the Coram property and applied to the Brookhaven board of zoning appeals for variances to build the center. A decision is expected before the end of March.

Carl Owens, who lives next to the property and testified at a hearing on the project last month, said he's worried about increased traffic and garbage. "Right now, it's beautiful —



ty entrance next to his home. "If they insist on putting it there, then the Dumpsters and the entranceway are on Winfield Davis," Owens said. "There appears there is more concern about the way it will look from Route 25."

Councilwoman Connie Keper, who represents the area, said she supports the project. "It's a great project. It's needed," she said.

Staller said he hopes his daughter can use the facility some day. "The education system is great, but then you fall off the cliff," he said. "It's a long pipeline after 22 [years old]. We're just starting to fill that pipeline."

"These people have nowhere to go. It's a huge problem," he added. "We'll take care of a bunch of them and create a model for the future."

trees, deer and turkey there," Owens said. "The speed of the traffic and the amount of the traffic is going to be a problem."

He said the plan also places trash receptacles and the facili-

PHOTO BY DANIEL BRENNAN

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