



Luca Ingrassia, 10, of Garden City visits pilots after his allergic reaction during the flight was resolved.

Allergy causes a nightmare flight

BY LAURA BLASEY

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A vacation to Aruba quickly turned into a nightmare for a Garden City mom when her 10-year-old son had a dangerous allergic reaction to a cashew on the flight home.

Thanks to quick-thinking passengers and staff on the American Airlines plane, Luca Ingrassia survived. Now, his mother, Francine Ingrassia, is trying to raise awareness about food allergies and the limited medical care available on airplanes.

"It was a nightmare on a plane," Ingrassia said.

In a Facebook post last Wednesday, Ingrassia called for airlines to include EpiPens in their emergency kits, especially on flights where nuts are served.

Ingrassia and her four children were on their return flight on Feb. 27 when airline staff handed out a snack of mixed cashews, almonds and pistachios, which her children eat regularly. But 15 minutes later, Luca said he had chest and stomach pain and was having trouble breathing.

A flight attendant called for any passengers with medical experience. A nurse on the plane examined Luca, whose airway was closing up, while the flight attendant put out a call for an

EpiPen, Ingrassia said.

Two passengers offered up theirs.

The pilots had originally planned to make an emergency landing in the Dominican Republic but continued to Miami when Luca stabilized after the EpiPen injection.

"We are grateful that Luca is OK and that our crew members and passengers, including a nurse, came together quickly to provide him the care he needed," said Michelle Mohr, an American Airlines spokeswoman.

Mohr said airline flight attendants receive basic first aid, CPR and AED training. Emergency kits contain four vials of epinephrine — the medication dispensed by EpiPens — and syringes, but airline policy requires a licensed medical professional to perform any injections.

An EpiPen, meanwhile, is an "auto-injector," which already contains epinephrine and does not require additional time to fill a syringe with the medication.

Ingrassia said she had not been made aware of any epinephrine vials on the flight.

At home, a doctor diagnosed Luca with a tree nut allergy. The family said they also received an apology from American Airlines.

COURTESY FRANCINE VALERIE INGRASSIA

Trees felled amid pine barrens rift

BY MARK HARRINGTON

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The head of the Pine Barrens Society called for the resignation of the director of the Pine Barrens Commission as the start of tree-clearing for a Mastic solar farm highlighted a divide among environmentalists.

After three days of court battles, developer Gerald Rosengarten of Middle Island Solar Farm resumed clear-cutting of trees on Monday for the first 20-acre phase of development that calls for 60 acres of clearing, his spokesman said.

Rosengarten, who in another career popularized the leisure suit, has called solar the "least impactful" use of the land, which is zoned light

industrial and could be cleared for warehouses.

But Dick Amper, executive director of the Pine Barrens Society and a party to a lawsuit seeking to block the plan, called clear-cutting of any type a "deliberate frontal attack" on the environment.

In a statement, Amper called for the resignation of Pine Barrens Commission executive director John Pavacic for "promising to provide the governor's staff with siting alternatives" for the solar farm, "then reneging on that promise."

Tim Motz, a spokesman for the Pine Barrens Commission, said it would have been "irresponsible" for Pavacic to take "any significant action" on the Mastic case without direction

by the commission, "since the site is not within the central pine barrens."

Motz said Pavacic "acted properly in this case and has the full support of the commission's members."

Amper also criticized Adrienne Esposito, executive director of the Citizens Campaign for the Environment, for her role in lobbying Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo to veto legislation that would have preserved the Mastic property as part of the core pine barrens, along with 800 acres in Shoreham that had been slated for a solar farm.

The bill passed the State Legislature with a large majority, but Cuomo vetoed it in December.

Amper said Esposito and an-

other environmentalists gave Cuomo "bad advice by promoting veto of a bill to save the pine barrens."

"They are not environmentalists," Amper said in an interview. "You can no longer present yourself as an environmentalist having been responsible for this."

Esposito acknowledged urging Cuomo to veto the preservation bill. But she said she supports preserving the Shoreham property, now that the proposal is under consideration as part of Cuomo's budget bill.

"We need to do both, save land and trees and site solar farms," she said. "... I refuse to pit the two against each other."

Amper also criticized Esposito's group for accepting contributions from another company that proposed a solar farm in Shoreham.

Esposito, who issued a letter in support of the Shoreham solar farm by NextEra and National Grid when it was announced in 2016, acknowledged receiving a donation of between \$3,800 and \$5,000 from NextEra for her annual gala, but said it didn't influence her support.

"We supported solar when the option for land preservation wasn't available," she said. "The donation means nothing."

Esposito also stressed that she never received money from Rosengarten.