COVER STORY

Conscience Point Shellfish Hatchery is helping to grow clams and oysters. Find out why…

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Photo credit: Ari Mintz
If you want to start a fund and do the kind of work like our generous donors, contact Marie Smith, director of donor relations and communications at (631) 991-8800, ext. 223; msmith@licf.org.

With nearly 40 years, the Long Island Community Foundation has supported programs that enrich the lives of all Long Islanders. We look for opportunities where we can make a difference. Join our family of funds today.

Q&A with LICF board member, Robert S. Barnett, CPA, Esq.

With the new 2018 tax plan approved by Congress, donors are asking, “What does it all mean for my charitable giving?”

Robert is a founding partner of Capell Barnett Matalon & Schoenfeld LLP. His practice is highly concentrated in taxation, trusts, estates, corporate and partnership law and charitable planning.

Can I still claim charitable deductions for 2018 on my income taxes?

Yes. However, the standard deduction — the amount taxpayers can subtract from their adjusted gross income without itemizing deductions — will rise to $12,000 for individuals and $24,000 for married couples. Donors can continue giving under the new tax rules, but due to the increased standard deduction, planning is important. Proper timing of charitable gifts can save taxes.

What role can a donor-advised fund play in my charitable planning?

Although donor-advised funds are not subject to any new rules or reporting requirements, the new law highlights some of their advantages. Donors can “bunch” several years of donations to a donor-advised fund into one year, and take the deduction. The fund will be used to pay the annual gift to charity, even in years when the donor did not itemize deductions. A donor-advised fund is an ideal solution for charities concerned about the new tax law impairing cash flow.

What other provisions in the new tax law should I be aware?

The tax law increases the maximum deduction taxpayers can claim for cash donations to public charities to 60 percent of adjusted gross income from the current 50 percent. It applies to a gift to the donor-advised fund and helps secure the maximum deduction.

If you’re 70 ½ or older, you also might consider a qualified charitable distribution, or a direct transfer of funds from your IRA custodian to a qualified charity. While, the federal tax law does not allow donors to apply qualified charitable distributions to a donor-advised fund at the Long Island Community Foundation, donors can give to a non-advised fund or to the Annual Fund, which will support the issues and causes you care about — children, hunger, the environment, or critical needs of Long Islanders.

Improving Water Quality for People and Nature

Nitrogen pollution has reached crisis levels in Suffolk County, affecting water quality in the aquifer, fueling toxic algae blooms in bays, harbors, and ponds that restricts fishing and recreation. Our Long Island Unitarian Universalist Fund has given $20,000 to The Nature Conservancy for a communication campaign and workshops to align nitrogen-reduction strategies among communities and nonprofits. Tens of thousands of East End homes get water directly from the aquifer. This “free water,” which many poor residents of the East End rely on, is some of the most polluted in Suffolk County.

As a result of The Nature Conservancy’s efforts, Suffolk County, and the Towns of East Hampton, Southampton and Shelter Island adopted rebate and incentive programs for the upgrading of existing, substandard septic systems in 2017. In addition, New York State passed a $75 million septic replacement and rebate program (over 5 years), and much of the funding will go to Suffolk County. In general, each program will pay about $10,000 toward replacing an eligible cesspool or conventional septic system with a nitrogen-reducing system.

“Since the County began accepting applications in July, the response to the Septic Improvement Program has been overwhelming,” says County Executive Steve Bellone. “The success of the program to date is proof positive that the people of Suffolk County care deeply about water quality.”
Happy Clams (and Oysters) Make for Clean Water

Clams and oysters (bivalves) are nature’s most efficient water filters, cleaning up pollutants in bays and harbors as they consume algae. But erosion, overharvesting and habitat destruction have decimated Long Island’s once-abundant bivalve population. With $20,000 from the Long Island Community Foundation, Conscience Point Shellfish Hatchery is growing bivalve seeds, helping boost the clam and oyster populations and improving Long Island’s water quality.

Restoring Native Habitats in Long Island Waters

Long Island’s once-abundant migratory fish are severely depleted, due mainly to dams or faulty culverts that block access to spawning and foraging areas. In Nassau and Suffolk counties, more than 100 dams were designed without considering fish passage, and most of the dams are no longer needed. To replenish migratory fish, fragmented habitats must be reconnected by removing obstructions and installing fish passage devices in dams.

We gave the Seatuck Environmental Association at the Suffolk County Environmental Center in Islip $20,000 for projects to restore migratory fish habitats on Long Island.

“As a result of barriers to water flow and access, habitat and ecosystem functions in Long Island’s lakes and streams have been reduced significantly,” says Sol Marie Alfonso Jones, the Foundation’s senior program officer. “Seatuck has laid the foundation for restoration improvements and is a respected leader in these efforts.”

Stop Polluting and Bag It

Single-use plastic bags are a menace to the environment. Not only are they expensive and difficult to dispose of, but millions of tons of plastic end up in oceans every year, killing thousands of marine mammals that mistake it as food. Only about 2 percent of plastic bags are recycled; most end up clogging waterways and roads. On Long Island, more than 50 independent stores have pledged to stop using plastic bags, and Suffolk County, along with six of its towns and villages, has passed legislation mandating a 5-cent fee for each plastic bag customers use. However, businesses and municipalities remain concerned about inconveniencing customers, and many residents are still unaware of the pollution hazards, or just forget to bring reusable bags.

All Our Energy in Point Look Out, is leading a campaign, with the help of $17,500 from LICF, designed to educate Long Islanders and change public behavior.

The nonprofit is launching education programs, meeting with local legislators to develop reusable bag policies, encouraging local businesses to support and publicize reusable bags, and providing reusable bags to soup kitchens, food pantries, and other organizations to distribute to their clients.

“All you realize that a plastic bag is used for just 12 minutes of ‘convenience,’ but then it will remain in the environment forever, you see we’ve made a mistake as a society. We must stop doing it, and change,” says George Povall of All Our Energy. “The fact is, it’s actually easy. Switch to reusable bags. One reusable bag eliminates a thousand plastic bags!”

Is LICF in your will?
The projects you’re reading about here are possible because people left bequests. You can set up a permanent fund. We’ll make grants supporting the causes you care about. Forever. Call us today.

licf.org
Why do you give?

It’s more than just charitable giving for Denise Deitchman and her family.

“My family supports the National Stuttering Association,” Denise says. “They provide support and education for people who stutter and their families. My daughter has a stutter and this organization has been life-changing for all of us.”

We are honored the Denise chose the Long Island Community Foundation to do her giving. You can do the same.

WHAT DO YOU CARE ABOUT?

Set up a fund that will support your passions — forever.
Call Marie Smith at (631) 991-8800, ext. 223