

Staten Island Legal Services Marks Its 10th Anniversary

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New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, Serena Stonick, an associate at Cullen and Dykman, SILS advisory board member and luncheon committee cochair ; Nancy Goldhill, director, Staten Island Legal Services; Raun Rasmussen, Executive Director, Legal Services NYC; Hon. Jonathan Lipmann, Chief Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals

Staff members of Staten Island Legal Services gathered last week for a cake cutting ceremony and open house to mark the organization's 10th anniversary.

The organization opened its doors a decade ago in response to what it described as "dramatic" increases in the borough's poverty rate. It started with a staff of four and has grown to 25, expanding its assistance from family law to foreclosure prevention, immigration, disaster recovery and eviction defense.

According to founder and director Nancy Goldhill, Staten Island Legal Services has, since its inception, assisted 946 victims of Hurricane Sandy to repair and rebuild their homes; helped more than 1,000 domestic violence survivors get orders of protection, custody, child support, and

the economic necessities they need to escape violence; saved 520 homes from foreclosure; and secured citizenship or other legal immigration status for 505 immigrants.

"It's very gratifying to provide free legal services in a community where the need is so great and the resources so scarce," Goldhill said. "If we weren't here, Staten Islanders would not have a place to turn when the most important things in their lives—their homes, their families and their safety—are at risk."

Staten Island Legal Services is part of a nearly 50-year-old citywide agency, Legal Services NYC, with offices in every borough.