

# “SOMEONE SPECIAL NEEDS YOU” STARTS ITS SIXTH YEAR OF FRIENDSHIP AND FUN

By Tony Senk

The “Buddy System” is once again alive and well — and thriving in Colts Neck.

That was clearly evident last month as the “Someone Special Needs You” special needs kids and their buddies again reunited, starting their sixth season of love and laughter, caring and compassion, and fun and friendship at the annual SSNY fall carnival in the parking lot of the Colts Neck Reformed Church.

For each of those six years, the buddy system has been the hallmark of the SSNY parties. For an hour last month, the kids and their buddies slid down a long slide, chomped away on cotton candy and popcorn, had their ups and downs on a giant trampoline, and generally enjoyed one another’s company as they talked about what they did over the summer.

There was laughing, hugging and high-fives all around — not only from the kids, but from their parents and the SSNY volunteers, too.

The special needs kids and the buddies in the program now number 27 and that’s a number that Vince Scanelli, one of the SSNY original founders, says is very impressive and encouraging.

“We’re happy with how SSNY continues to grow,” said Vince. “Some of that growth comes from word of mouth. Sometimes, buddies tell their friends about SSNY, and they stop by to check us out. Also, buddies seem to run in families. We have a number of brothers and sisters who are buddies. Just before the carnival, we had a little introduction to SSNY for our three new buddies who came on board this year. We talked to them about SSNY and what we are trying to accomplish here, and we told them that the most important part of being a buddy is that they really need to be committed to it and that they’re here every month for the kids. They need to put their hearts into this because the



Christina Assuncao, Colts Neck, and Justin Guilano, Freehold, who is new to SSNY, “buddy up” at the SSNY fall carnival, held last month at the Colts Neck Reformed Church.



SSNY event organizers take a quick break during last month’s fall carnival that kicked off the sixth year of the program. They are, left to right, Pam Wood, Vince Scanelli, Karen Veralli, Gina Scanelli, and Angela Kelly.



Megan Jackson from South Amboy, another new buddy with SSNY, and Joe Vitarelli — and the monkey behind them — were “going bananas” at the SSNY fall carnival last month.

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