



OPINION/EDITORIAL

Long Island Rebels With A Cause

The Long Island Rebels Youth Hockey players are prime examples of the fortunate helping the less fortunate. These players have been taking the ice at the Dix Hills Ice Rink for more than 10 years, and although these talented athletes have enjoyed continued improvement over time, they have not forgotten those who could benefit from their services.

Long Island Rebels hockey players between 6 and 18 years old joined with students from the Genesis School for Autistic Children on December 31 to participate in the annual Buddy Skate program. Buddy Skate allows peer-to-peer contact between the hockey players and the Genesis students, who are between 7 and 20 years old, and each Rebels player is matched with one Genesis student.

Program originator John Zerillo credits the programs with fostering a bond between the Rebels players and the Genesis students, and said the players serve as inspirations for the staff at the Genesis School.

Programs like these break barriers and foster relationships between groups that otherwise may not have much contact at all, and the staff at the Half Hollow Hills Newspaper is grateful for that. It is common for people to develop misconceptions about various groups when they are not exposed to the people who comprise them, and thanks to programs like Buddy Skate, many Half Hollow Hills children will be less inclined to believe certain stereotypes.

Additionally, early participation in community service events will further prompt these athletes to continue giving back to the community as they get older. In a time when tsunami relief and Hurricane Katrina relief has taken control of the not-for-profit sector, it is good to know that people are still thinking of community-minded ways to help out.