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## **\*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 29, 2017**

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## **LOCAL GIRL SCOUT TROOP CREATES GARDENS FOR RESIDENTS OF SPECIAL NEEDS HOMES**



**Pictured: Suffolk County Girl Scouts Renee, Sydney, Chloe, Jessica, Rianna and Troop Leader JoAnn Tortorici-Balz with FREE residents April, Ester, Philip and Joseph and staff Latisha and James at a FREE Residence.**

**Old Bethpage, NY** – As part of its efforts to more fully integrate their individuals within their communities, Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. (FREE), welcomed members of Suffolk County Girl Scout Troop #1853 of Ridge to two of their residences for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities.

More...



**Girl Scouts Renee, Sydney, Rianna, Chloe and Jessica with Troop Leader JoAnn Tortorici-Balz helped beautify the house as part of their Silver Award Project**

The Girl Scouts moved hostas, planted flowers, created signage, painted stepping stones, made wind chimes, and birdhouses. The Girl Scouts project at FREE also had to include sustainability, so many of the items they made were from recycled components. The project is part of their Silver Award—the highest award a Girl Scout Cadette can earn.



**The Girl Scouts Silver Award Project included sustainability and included recycled components.**

Left front to back: Girl Scouts Sydney, Chloe, Jessica; FREE residents of house Beth and Jessica and FREE Staff Marquex  
Right Side Front to Back: Girl Scouts Mackenzie, Rianna, Renee; Troop Leader JoAnn Tortorici-Balz and FREE resident of house Diana

Individuals in FREE's residential programs receive skills development in such areas as socialization, recreation, problem solving, personal development, activities of daily living, travel training, health care and medication maintenance, and many more. FREE provides residential services for individuals who are differently abled in over 100 communities, throughout Long Island and New York City.

**Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. (FREE)**

Family Residences and Essential Enterprises, Inc. (FREE), founded in 1977, benefits and proudly supports more than 4,000 individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities, mental illness and traumatic brain injury. It is the mission of FREE to assist individuals of all abilities realize their full potential. FREE provides a diverse array of supports and services including: housing; recovery services; transition to work; employment; day, community and family services; respite; crisis services; education and after school support; specialty health services; and advocacy.

FREE also collaborates with a variety of diverse 501(c)(3) nonprofit partners on educational, vocational, rehabilitative and a myriad of other creative initiatives to enhance the local communities and the lives of more than 25,000 people that reside within them. Each of the valued partners of the FREE Network has a unique mission, vision and strategic goals that are aligned in purpose, and embody the spirit of the meaningful work we do every day. For more information, please call 516-870-7000 or visit [www.familyres.org](http://www.familyres.org).

**Girl Scouts of Suffolk County**

Girl Scouts of Suffolk County is the largest youth-serving agency on Long Island. It serves more than 40,000 girls between the ages of 5 and 17, with the dedicated support of more than 7,000 volunteers. For more information about Girl Scouts, please call 631.543.6622 or visit [www.gssc.us](http://www.gssc.us).

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