

Knox School honors Christine Fitzgerald

Smithtown Children's Foundation founder awarded at annual golf outing

By SETH WALLACH

It was a beautiful day for golf Monday, May 23 and an even better day to celebrate community.

At its annual golf outing at the Nissequogue Golf Club in St. James, the Knox School honored Smithtown resident Christine Fitzgerald, founder of the Smithtown Children's Foundation. Each year the Knox School chooses an honoree who has made a positive impact on the local community.

Since 2008 the Smithtown Children's Foundation has worked with local families to help them financially in times of crisis. The nonprofit will pay bills, help organize fundraisers and much more.

"Her involvement in the community is tremendous," said Knox School Director of Advancement Meredith McCaslin. "Raising money as well as awareness for so many families in need."

When Ms. Fitzgerald, Kristy Middleton and Christina Carnemolla learned that 5-year-old Smithtown resident Kaylee Rivers was battling Stage 4 Neuroblastoma eight years ago, they joined forces and helped bring the community together to fight with Kaylee, who died in July 2009 after fighting the disease for 13 months.

The three women, all mothers themselves, and Smithtown residents pooled their resources and organized three different fundraising events for the Rivers family: a golf outing, a holiday breakfast prepared by Maureen's Kitchen and a dinner dance at The Watermill.

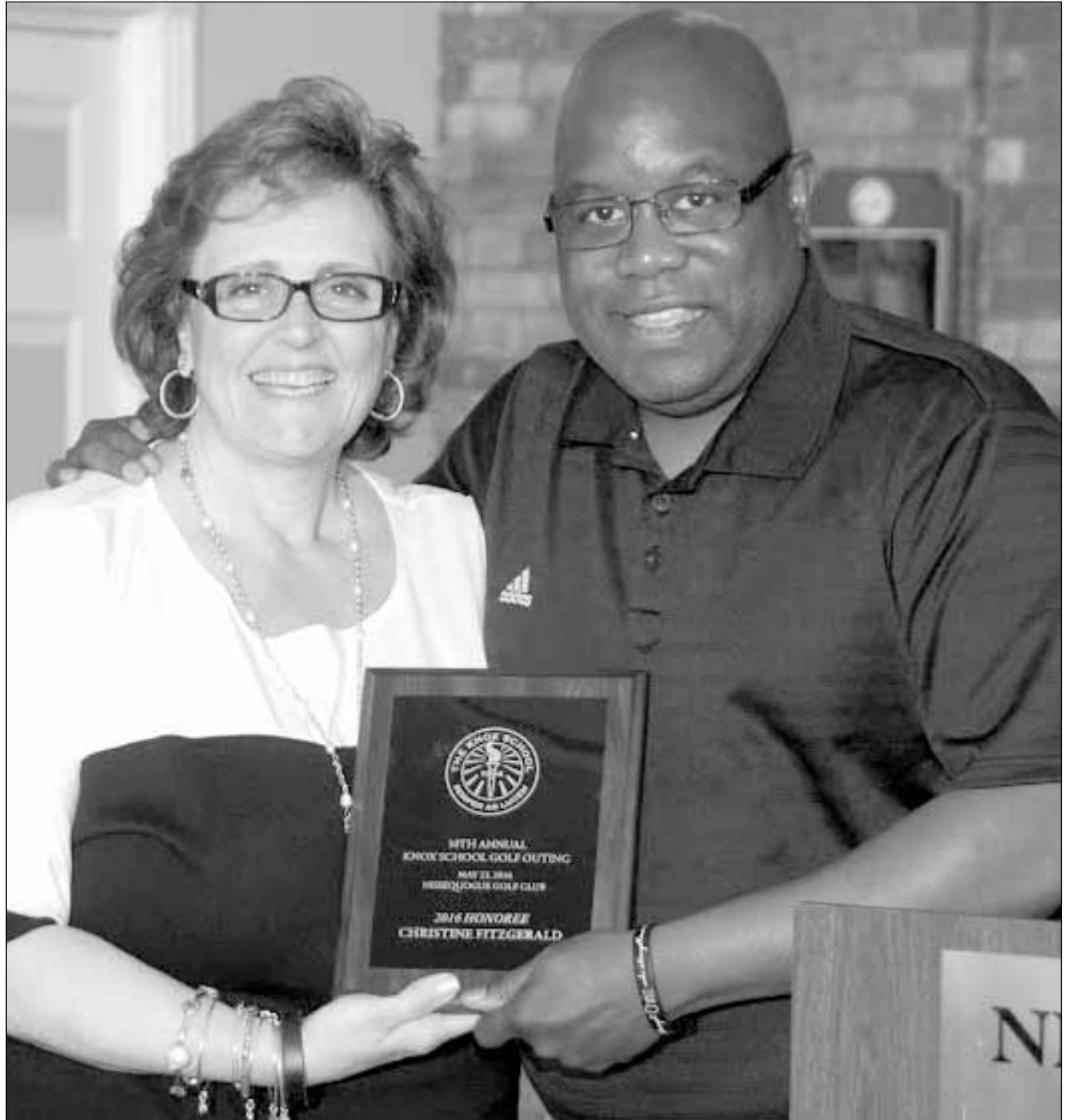
After working together for the Rivers family, the three women realized that if they continued holding the fundraisers every year, maybe adding a few more, they could help improve the lives of other families across Smithtown. That's when they decided to form the 501c3 not-for-profit organization, Smithtown Children's Foundation.

Since it was established almost seven years ago, the foundation has helped a countless number of families overcome hardships.

Ms. Fitzgerald's award from the Knox school Monday was not only recognition of her charitable efforts but the celebration of a continued partnership. The Knox School Scholarship fund has given out summer camp scholarships to Smithtown Children's Foundation beneficiaries over the years, and pledged to continue to do so as often as they can.

About 100 people attended the golf outing. Sponsorships ranged from \$500 to \$25,000. Ms. McCaslin said proceeds from the event are still being tabulated, but that she was proud of the turnout they received once again.

"It went terrific," said Knox School Athletic Director Walter Townes, who originally recommended Ms. Fitzgerald for honoree. "We honored her because part of our vision at Knox School is to embrace the community and give back. We enjoy the fact that people give back and it's very important for us that we teach kids here about giving back to



people, giving back to the community that helped you."

In addition to her philanthropic work, Ms. Fitzgerald is the President and CEO of Colana Sports Group. She and husband Tom have been married for over 30 years and are the proud parents of Alana and Colin.

To learn more about the Smithtown Children's Foundation visit SmithtownChildrensFoundation.com or contact them at fitzyBBCF@optonline.net. To see a full list of Knox School Programs go to KnoxSchool.org.

TEED UP: Smithtown Children's Foundation Executive Director Christine Fitzgerald (left) receives an award from Knox School Athletic Director Walter Townes at the 10th annual Knox School golf outing at Nissequogue Club in St. James Monday, May 23. One on the many foursomes (right) to participate in the outing, which was held to benefit the Knox School.

