

Life's WORC Returns to the Hamptons with Geraldo Rivera & Victoria Schneps to Celebrate a Mission 50 Years in the Making

Bill O'Reilly joins as special guest while ABC News anchor Bill Ritter and Carmelite System President and CEO Trish Gathers are honored

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, August 12, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ --

Following the recent success of the 38th Annual Geraldo Rivera Golf Classic, Life's WORC continues its summer fundraising season with its Annual Hamptons Summer Soirée, hosted by award-winning journalist Geraldo Rivera and Life's WORC Founder Victoria Schneps. The afternoon benefit brought together leaders from media, business and philanthropy in support of Life's WORC's mission to empower individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities through residential services, education, employment opportunities and family support programs.



Held at Victoria Schneps' Hamptons home, the Summer Soirée has become one of the organization's signature annual fundraising events, celebrating both the remarkable progress achieved over more than five decades and the work that continues every day throughout New York. Guests enjoyed an afternoon dedicated to philanthropy while helping ensure Life's WORC can expand programs that foster independence, opportunity and dignity for the individuals and families it serves.

This year's celebration featured Bill O'Reilly as special guest while honoring ABC News anchor Bill

Ritter with the Life's WORC Courage Award in recognition of his longstanding commitment to journalism and community leadership, coupled with his recent disclosure of early-onset Alzheimer's disease. Trish Gathers, President and CEO of Carmelite System Inc., received the Community Service Award for her outstanding leadership and dedication to strengthening communities through service and compassion.

The Summer Soirée follows another successful Geraldo Rivera Golf Classic, continuing a fundraising tradition that reflects Geraldo Rivera's decades-long commitment to the organization. That relationship began in 1972 when his groundbreaking television investigation into conditions at the Willowbrook State School helped expose widespread abuse and neglect, prompting national reforms in the care of people with developmental disabilities. More than half a century later, Geraldo remains one of Life's WORC's most dedicated advocates, helping raise awareness and millions of dollars to support the organization's mission.

Together, the Golf Classic and Summer Soirée represent the cornerstone of Life's WORC's annual fundraising calendar, bringing together longtime supporters, corporate partners, civic leaders and philanthropists who share a common commitment to creating more inclusive communities and expanding opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Notable Attendees included: Geraldo Rivera, Victoria Schneps-Yunis, Bill O'Reilly, Bill Ritter, and Trish Gathers.

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About Geraldo Rivera:

One of media's most enduring broadcasters, Emmy and Peabody Award-winning journalist Geraldo Rivera began his 51-year career as a television reporter at WABC-TV in New York where he presented the historic



Geraldo Rivera, Victoria Schneps
(Photo Credit: Kelly Codrington / KCollections)



Bill Ritter, Bill O'Reilly (Photo Credit:
Kelly Codrington / KCollections)

series exposing the deplorable conditions at the Willowbrook State School for People with Developmental Disabilities for the population then described as mentally challenged.

These powerful reports are credited with ending America's policy of institutionalizing the developmentally disabled, leading to government investigations, institutions across the nation being eventually shut down and the civilized world adopting small, community-based housing as the alternative. The subsequent sea change in the treatment of the mentally disabled is considered by Geraldo to be his most important life's work.

The winner of the 2000 Robert F. Kennedy journalism award for his NBC News documentary on "Women in Prison," his third, and the Scripps Howard Foundation national journalism award for "Back to Bedlam," Rivera has received several hundred awards for journalism, and community service including the prestigious George Foster Peabody Award, three national and seven local Emmys, two Columbia-DuPont and two additional Scripps Howard Journalism Awards.

Prior to joining Fox News, Rivera, an attorney, covered the globe for ABC News; hosted a widely viewed series of syndicated specials, including the highest rated in history, "The Mystery of Al Capone's Vault." His eponymous talk show ran for eleven successful seasons. He later hosted CNBC's number-one rated show, "Rivera Live," where his critically acclaimed coverage of the O.J. Simpson trial verdicts and the Clinton Impeachment set all-time CNBC ratings records. Geraldo was the Fox News Correspondent-at-Large. A rotating co-host on "The Five," Geraldo provided regular reports and commentary on FNC's "Fox and Friends," "Hannity," and various programs on Fox News and Fox Nation. Geraldo joined the network in 2001 as a war correspondent following the 9/11 attacks on his New York hometown. From 2001 until 2012 Geraldo reported from every hot spot on earth, including eleven assignments in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Follow Geraldo @GeraldoRivera

About Life's WORC:

In 1971, Victoria Schneps-Yunis founded Life's WORC, originally the Women's Organization For Retarded Children, with women in her Bayside neighborhood. They volunteered and helped raise money for the people at the Willowbrook State School. Victoria's activism was inspired by her daughter Lara who was brain damaged after her birth.

In 1972, after severe budget cuts by Governor Rockefeller, reporter Geraldo Rivera revealed the atrocious living conditions at the Staten Island-based Willowbrook State School, which was the country's largest institution serving people with developmental disabilities and autism. The story helped gain national media attention, which led to the school's ultimate closing, forced on the state by parents winning a Federal Class Action lawsuit.

Life's WORC went on to purchase the first group home for children in New York State in Little Neck, Queens. The first residents were young people who previously lived at Willowbrook and some who came from their homes.

The organization has continued to grow in New York City, as well as Nassau and Suffolk Counties on Long Island.

Life's WORC also runs Day Habilitation Programs, the Family Center For Autism (FCA), and the newly created Job Training Center for People with Special Needs.

Life's WORC is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. lifesworc.org

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