

Newsday Everyday Hero Long Island

Syosset Businessman Takes Pride in Giving Back to the Community

Throughout his childhood, Steve Schwimmer was inspired to help others by the example set by his father, a successful businessman who always made time

to participate in charitable activities. Following in his father's footsteps,

Schwimmer also pursued a

career in the business world, and despite a hectic schedule, has always managed to find time to volunteer on behalf of many worthy causes. Over the years, he has served on various committees with organizations such as the United Way of Long Island, March of Dimes Woodbury, E.A.C., Long Island's Fight for Charity and Queens Speech and Hearing Service Center.



In 1999, Schwimmer became involved with the Foundation Fighting Blindness after attending the Blind Wine Tasting Gala, the organization's popular annual fundraiser. "When I saw Mitch Shapiro speak at the event, I didn't realize that he was going blind and deaf from Usher Syndrome," Schwimmer says. "I found that he regarded his dual disabilities as abilities. I was inspired and intrigued with his work for the Foundation Fighting Blindness, and I asked how, as an individual, I can help. Once again, I was impressed: Mr. Shapiro asked me to contribute my time, not money."

In particular, Schwimmer liked the "grass-roots feel" of the organization as well as the warm welcome he received when he began volunteering. First, he worked on the Auction Committee, and later became its chairman. He then assumed the post of co-chair for the Blind Wine Tasting Gala, and with the formation of the new Foundation for Sight and Sound, became chairman of the board of directors. "Having the ability to support the vision and hearing-impaired community of Long Island while being involved with the production of two major fundraising events and working with a wonderful group of volunteers are what I find most rewarding."

Schwimmer, currently a senior account executive at Renaissance Associates-Merchant Services, has been a resident of Long Island for over six decades. He and his wife Marilyn have three sons. "Steve Schwimmer is not happy unless he's helping someone," says business associate Ron Gold. "He's very sincere and straightforward, and he always comes through for people. If he's on your team, you know you're going to win."

- Claire Curry