

To Broadway for Free / Barbash treats Bay Shore High Newsday (New York) November 17, 1995, Friday, NASSAU AND SUFFOLK EDITION

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Newsday

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To Broadway for Free / Barbash treats Bay Shore High

BYLINE: By Elizabeth Moore. STAFF WRITER

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New York - If anybody thought Brightwaters' developer **Maurice Barbash** and his wife, Lillian, were wasting their money sending the entire junior and senior classes of Bay Shore High School to a Broadway play, they should have heard the sniffing yesterday around the otherwise silent Booth Theater at the end of the third act.

That is when the 102-year-old African-American dentist Dr. Bessie Delany tells her 104-year-old sister Sadie, "I wouldn't be here without you."

The play, "Having Our Say," which charts a century of race relations through the lives of the two sisters, is really "a metaphor about America, about how love and staying together and unity helps," actress Novella Nelson, who plays Bessie, told the students after the play.

And that was the message the **Barbashes** believed they got across to at least a few of the students, black and white, through his \$ 18,000 contribution to the school.

"I'm ecstatic!" **Maurice Barbash** said. "Did you see how the kids listened? This is one of the greatest American plays I've ever seen."

The **Barbashes** said they bankrolled this particular play because of its humane and humorous charting of racial travails and progress through the lives of two daughters of America's first black Episcopal bishop, a man born into slavery.

Raised to the credo that "if you think it would help someone, it's worth doing," Sadie, now 106 years old, and Bessie Delany became a schoolteacher and a dentist. Bessie died in September at the age of 104.

They endured their country's descent into "that Jim Crow mess" of segregation, hatred and lynchings, came to know jazz and civil rights greats living in Harlem during its golden age, and later became well known fixtures in their Westchester County community of Mount Vernon. They always loved their country, they said, "even if it didn't always love us."

Barbash said he believed that the play and its message would help to reinforce Bay Shore's ongoing efforts to nurture a sense of community among white and black students. These longtime supporters of the Long Island arts scene also believe, as Bishop Delany did, that it's important to put your money where your heart is.

"With these neolithic politicians going around cutting everything out of the budget these days, if people like us don't support this there's no future," **Barbash** said.

The magnitude of their gesture did not escape the students' notice.

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"I think it's awesome - so cool - that this guy did this for us," said eleventh grader Karen Kelly, one of the many students yesterday who said they had never before been to a Broadway play. "My parents are amazed, like, shocked. It's really nice for a change."

Still, even some of the students said they were a little unnerved by the challenge posed by the task of safely transporting 18 bus loads of teenagers to a single midtown Manhattan location to sit quietly and watch two old ladies talk for two hours.

Early in the day, some students predicted that they wouldn't like the play.

"It's a stupid waste of money," announced 16-year-old Sienna Delgado as she boarded the bus in Bay Shore for a play she said she saw mainly as "a chance to get out of classes."

But afterward, Delgado was standing along with the rest of her classmates to give ovations to the actresses and then to Barbash himself, whom she pronounced "a nice guy."

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GRAPHIC: Newsday Photos by Don Jacobsen- 1) Barbash outside Bay Shore High School as students board buses on way to Broadway show. 2) Bay Shore student leaves for New York

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October 1, 2000, Sunday NASSAU EDITION

SCHOOLS / CLOSE UP / FUND HELPS ENRICH STUDENTS THROUGH ART

BYLINE: By Bill Kaufman. STAFF WRITER**SECTION:** LI LIFE; Page G18**LENGTH:** 615 words

NOW IN ITS fifth year, the Bay Shore Schools Arts Endowment Fund has enriched the lives of thousands of students, and to mark the organization's success, its founders and key benefactors will be honored at a gala this month.

It all began in 1995 when Brightwaters real estate developer **Murray Barbash** and his wife, Lillian, executive director of the Islip Arts Council, saw "Having Our Say," a play in Manhattan that focused on the views and recollections of African-American sisters, both more than 100 years old. Its message in part dealt with a century of American race relations, love and unity.

The **Barbashes**, long known for their community activities and financial largesse, thought that Bay Shore schoolchildren would benefit from the play, so they took 700 of them in 18 buses to see it. The mega-treat cost the **Barbashes** \$ 18,000. About 40 percent of the district's enrollment consists of minority pupils.

A brochure from the nonprofit Bay Shore Schools Arts Endowment Fund announcing an Oct. 20 gala at Captain Bill's Restaurant in Bay Shore honoring the **Barbashes**, contains a comment from **Murray Barbash** about the birth of the organization. He notes that reactions at the time of the youngsters' theater trip included hundreds of thank-you letters, among them one that said, "Congratulations, you are now the proud parents of 700 high school students." **Barbash's** comment goes on to say, "We decided that we couldn't stop there and so the Bay Shore Schools Arts Endowment Fund was born."

Murray Barbash, 76, board chairman of the fund whose president is John Frazier, recently said that all three of his children graduated from the Bay Shore school district.

"My philosophy of philanthropy is to help put your presence where your money is," said **Barbash**, adding that he and his wife have always felt that exposure to a broad spectrum of cultural arts is essential for children. He said it was a pivotal reason the endowment fund was established. "It's strictly to bring art to the kids and to bring the kids to art."

The endowment fund has accomplished a myriad of things. Just a few include: helping set up an electronic keyboard laboratory in the middle school as well as contributing toward other district-wide teaching tools; supporting programs for artists-in-residence, and assisting sponsor city theater and concert trips for all grade levels. So far the fund has provided grants of more than \$ 55, 000.

School superintendent Evelyn Blose Holman called the **Barbashes** "stalwarts of the Bay Shore community. They found a new way to bring a lifelong love and appreciation of the arts to all our children."

As might be expected, parents are delighted their children have enjoyed the educational bonuses.

"My daughter still talks about her trip to Carnegie Hall, especially since she had the opportunity to do something that I have never done," said Colleen Valdini. She was referring to a trip last spring when her daughter, Marykate, was among

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fourth-graders from Gardiner Manor and South Country Elementary Schools who saw an orchestra performance of "Romeo and Juliet." (Marykate is now a sixth-grader at Bay Shore Middle School.)

The children recalled they were impressed with the concert and at least in one case, the size and scope of the famous music venue. "It was amazing, especially since I found out how they changed the light bulbs in the ceiling of Carnegie Hall," said Stephen Cohen, now also a sixth-grader at the middle school. (Special elevating equipment is used.)

For information on the dinner-dance honoring **Murray** and **Lillian Barbash**, call 631-968-1251.

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