



LONG ISLAND LI LIFE

## A Hamptons firefighter is also a philanthropist — and he saved a friend's life



Raymond Harden, a principal at East Hampton-based general contracting firm Ben Krupinski Builder, has donated the construction of two affordable homes through Habitat for Humanity of Long Island. Credit: Suzee Foster

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Raymond Harden's love of his community can be seen all around East Hampton Village.

Harden, a principal at East Hampton-based general contracting firm Ben Krupinski Builder, has tackled philanthropic tasks ranging from contributing his firm's personnel to supervise the recent construction of two affordable homes for Habitat for Humanity of Long Island, to overseeing the pending construction of a 5,700-square-foot climate-controlled art storage center for the East Hampton Historical Society.

The Habitat for Humanity project involved scores of subcontractors who donated more than 1,000 hours, Harden said, while the one for the historical society is being completed for about 20% less than initially anticipated, according to the society's executive director, Steve Long.

"If you can afford to help somebody, you do it," said Harden, 62, who became a principal of the firm after its namesake founder died in a 2018 plane crash. "Ben, my boss who passed away, was very giving to his community, and that just stuck with me."

Harden has also been the department's Firefighter of the Year three times, getting his most recent designation in 2024. The second time he received the award was in recognition of his lifesaving use of CPR on a friend who went into cardiac arrest while they were building a deck in 2020, he said.

Harden, who joined the fire department in 1999, has held many roles over the years, including stints as second assistant chief, first assistant chief and fire chief between 2006 and 2012. His positions include serving as company secretary and president of the benevolent association.

He was also responsible for coordinating the fire department's 125th anniversary parade last summer, which included representatives from 15 fire departments on Long Island.

"Growing up, I never thought anything about joining the fire department, but once I got involved I was hooked," said Harden, who is also fire coordinator for Suffolk County's Ninth Fire Division, which oversees South Fork fire departments when responding to a large fire.

Harden is also a member of the Town of East Hampton's Licensing Review Board and Community Housing Advisory Board, as well as a past cochair of the village's Zoning Board of Appeals. He is on the East Hampton Historical Society's board of trustees and leads its building and grounds committee.

"Ray has such a deep commitment to East Hampton and its history," Long said. "He has devoted vast resources to help preserve and steward the East Hampton Historical Society's properties, as well as countless other historic sites in our community. You can always count on Ray."