

HUMANITARIAN / PATRICIA SHEA

Patricia Shea of Massapequa was honored by the Town of Oyster Bay on March 23 at a town board meeting with its Woman of Distinction Humanitarian Award. Shea is the founder of Momma's House Inc., a nonprofit organization created to help teenaged mothers. The organization helps these young women to complete their educations, trains them for jobs and teaches them parenting skills and independent living. Started in 1986, Momma's House currently has sites in Malverne, Brookville and Glen Cove. Young mothers in their late teens and early 20s, most of whom have not graduated from high school, live at a site for up to two years. Shea worked as a volunteer in the emergency room of Mary Immaculate Hospital in 1960, then with the Birthright organization helping young mothers get pre- and postnatal medical care, continuing their education and finding suitable apartments. Shea received a bachelor's degree in secondary education from St. John's University in Queens but changed her career direction after joining a Maryknoll Mission nutritional and health care program in Mexico for four months after she graduated. The project set up a health care clinic. Afterward, she decided to go into social work and took graduate classes at Fordham University. Shea has four daughters and a son who is mentally disabled.

