

Pumped up



NEWSDAY / J. CONRAD WILLIAMS JR.

STONY BROOK. Stony Brook medical student Sien Rivera, left, gets a hug yesterday after being hooded by his brother Takeo Rivera, PhD, during Stony Brook Medical School's 42nd convocation at the campus' Staller Center.

LINDENHURST

Vigil for Mother's Day crash victims

BY JOIE TYRRELL

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The day before a candlelight vigil in Lindenhurst for Diane Aluska's relatives, the family of the driver whose car struck and killed Aluska on Mother's Day issued a statement sending prayers and condolences.

"Our family sends its heartfelt prayers to the grieving Aluska family for their devastating loss in this tragic accident," read the statement from Ann Riolo, 80, and her family, also of Lindenhurst, released yesterday by their attorney and friend, Todd Greenberg. "There are no words to describe the sadness in our heart and the deep sympathy we feel."

Greenberg said Riolo is "extremely distraught about what had occurred."

Diane Aluska's husband, Kenny Aluska, could not be reached for comment.

The vigil will be held tonight at 7 at the village gazebo, ac-



FACEBOOK / DIANE ALUSKA

Diane Aluska of Lindenhurst was killed and daughter Jenna, right, was injured when they were struck by a car on Sunday.

ording to a notice on the Lindenhurst school district's website. Aluska's daughter, Jenna, 16, is a sophomore at Lindenhurst High School.

The mother and daughter were walking on a sidewalk on South Wellwood Avenue when a 2005 Toyota Corolla, driven by Riolo and going in reverse,

hit Diane Aluska and clipped Jenna, Suffolk police said. Diane Aluska had pushed her daughter out of the way of the car, authorities said.

Diane Aluska, 55, was pronounced dead later Sunday at Good Samaritan Hospital Medical Center in West Islip.

Riolo, the driver, had just

backed the Corolla out of a parking spot when it went onto the sidewalk where the mother and daughter were walking and then crashed into the Lindenhurst Fire Department, police said.

The Corolla was impounded for a safety check and the investigation is continuing.

At tonight's vigil, a collection will be taken for the family, according to the school district's notice. Food and drinks have been donated and will be for sale, with the proceeds going to the Aluskas, it said.

Rocco Patto and his wife, Lisa, who are members of a local neighborhood watch group and maintain a Facebook page called "Eyes on Lindy," organized the vigil though they do not know the Aluska family personally.

In Lindenhurst, everyone is a neighbor, said Rocco Patto, 48, adding that he has received a large number of responses from people who want to help.

RIVERHEAD TOWN

Seeking sewer funding

BY JEAN-PAUL SALAMANCA

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Several months after threatening to sue Suffolk County over \$2 million in funding aimed at preventing tax hikes for sewer district users, the Riverhead Town Board is moving forward with the lawsuit.

The board voted 4-0 Wednesday at its regular meeting to allow the town attorney to start legal proceedings against Suffolk County seeking payment of more than \$2 million in sewer stabilization money aimed at preventing tax hikes for sewer district users.

The funds, which were tied to the costs of upgrading the town's advanced wastewater treatment facility to protect the Peconic River from increased nitrogen pollution, total \$2,003,852 — \$537,140 for 2016 and \$1,466,712 for 2017.

The town asked the county to pay \$681,828 in 2016 and \$1,466,712 this year from the stabilization fund to help with the plant upgrade costs.

To date, Suffolk has paid the Riverhead Sewer District \$144,688 of that funding, according to town officials.

"The county has always made a strong effort to support every town in our region," said Jason Elan, a spokesman for Suffolk County Executive Steve Belone, on Wednesday. "We have provided Riverhead Town with over \$8 million in grant funding for sewage treatment plant upgrades, and the town continues to receive \$146,000 annually, which the county gives to all towns with sewer districts. We need to review the complaint, and we'll address the concerns accordingly."

Town officials filed a notice of claim on Dec. 22 asking for the funds, which they said are necessary to keep taxes in the sewer district from going up.

"We're entitled to it, as are all the sewer districts that are municipally owned in Suffolk County, and the county refuses to acknowledge that," Walter said.