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07/03/2008

Community House holds annual meeting

Staff report

WEST HAVEN - At its June 26 Annual Meeting, the West Haven Community House honored numerous community partners for their assistance to the agency, and the children and youth, and adults with disabilities, it assists.

Beacon on the Hill, the social ministry of Our Lady of Victory and St. John Vianny Parishes, was recognized for the vital role it plays in helping meet the physical needs of financially-disadvantaged families through diaper, clothing and food distributions at its Jones Hill Road facility and through the Community House. Honored were: Director Valerie Cosenza, Food Pantry Chair Bob DeFonce, Diaper Bank Chair Kathy Gilbert, and Clothes Closet Chair Anita Pagogna.

The West Haven Family Resource Center was praised for its support of the Community House's School Age Child Care and PARENTEEN programs. Coordinator Jean Vitale and staff members Bonnie Hudson and Margaret Taylor were present to accept the award.

The University of New Haven, represented by Special Assistant to the President Bill Leete, received recognition for its commitment to West Haven and the Community House, as evidenced through student internships, Presidential Fellowships, volunteers and United Way fundraising.

Principal Gina Prisco was commended for the assistance she provided to the WHCH School Age Child Care program during the first year of operations of its after-school site at Pagels School. Principal Pat Libero and Assistant Principal Sean Morrissey were lauded for their support during the inaugural session of the Carrigan After-School Program.

Also honored was Manager Ralph Paolillo and Assistant Manager Paul Bauer of the West Haven Community Development Administration, for their agency's financial support for capital improvements to Community House residential and vocational facilities for adults with mental retardation.

Individuals receiving recognition for volunteer service on committees of the WHCH Board of Directors were: Nick DeGennaro, Paul Dorsi, Dorice Farrell, Rick Fontana, Bill Heffernan, Sue Kelly, Ed O'Brien, Stan Pliszka, Frank Rasile, John Jarvie and Connie Sacco.

The annual meeting also served as occasion to formally elect a new slate of officers and five new members to its Board of Directors.

Leading the agency during Fiscal Year 2008-2009 will be: Sharon Martin, president (retired deputy commissioner, Connecticut DCF); Richard Bruno, vice president (engineering consultant for Plastics Assembly); Stacie Phan, second vice president (deputy director of public policy, Bayer HealthCare); Tom Sayers, treasurer (accountant, Novaro, Cappella & Johnstone); and Carole Porto, secretary (retired regional director, Connecticut DCF).

Joining the West Haven Community House Board are:

- * William Burns, a retired firefighter, whose Community House involvement spans five decades;
- * Richard Fontana Jr., Public Health Emergency Preparedness coordinator for Milford and West Haven Departments of Public Health, who previously served 6-years on the Board of Directors;
- * Catherine Heffernan, a social worker in the Connecticut Office of the Public Defender (New Haven Judicial District), who has been a member of the WHCH Program Committee and advisor to social work interns at WHCH;
- * Grace Hendricks, police commissioner and former paraprofessional in West Haven Public Schools;
- * Stan Pliszka, a sergeant in the West Haven Police Department, who has assisted the WHCH Fund Development Committee.



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