

United Way honors those who 'live united'

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BRISTOL - United Way of West Central Connecticut's 17th annual awards dinner "Let's Talk United - Lights, Camera, Action" honored individuals who go "above and beyond" and exemplify what it means to "Live United" Thursday night at the DoubleTree by Hilton.

"We always have a great crop of award winners but they're especially great this year," said Donna Osuch, United Way president.

"This our opportunity to honor all of you who are truly Living United, making our communities better places to live and work, especially our honorees tonight for giving back to our communities every day," she said.

"United Way fights for the health education and financial stability of every person in West Central Connecticut, and that includes Bristol, Burlington, Plainville, Plymouth, and Terryville," Osuch added. "You are helping us win that fight by supporting our annual campaign and our events like this tonight."

This year's Spirit of Caring Award, which honors an outstanding volunteer, went to Susan Sadecki, president and CEO of the Main Street Community Foundation.

"No one defines the 'Spirit of Caring' more than Susan Sadecki. Susan combines her passion for philanthropy and community collaboration with her business experience in both the for-profit and non-profit sectors. She has been an executive, program director, and consultant in the philanthropic, health care, and human services field for over 30 years," according to the event program.

The Change Maker Award went to For Goodness Sake, a local nonprofit that provides furniture and household goods to people transitioning from homelessness to independent living. Kendra Morales and her team of volunteers accept about 250 furniture donations quarterly and keep about 67,000 pounds of "waste" out of landfills, in addition to helping families.

The Rising Star Award recognizes an individual, company, or community collaboration that demonstrates accelerating impact in the community. This year is went to the Productions for Change Initiative, spearheaded by brothers Tom and Tony Mazzarella. Their company MazzMedia produces educational videos, and also helps dozens of local nonprofits create and market video marketing strategies.

The Collaborative Excellence Award recognizes the collective impact of a special collaboration in the community. The Award went to the City of Bristol for its community-wide "Stock Our Shelters" Election Day collection.

Last fall one of Bristol's three food kitchens closed, just as the cold weather season arrived. St. Vincent DePaul Mission, the city's homeless shelter, likewise reported that it was short of funds and unable to



4/11/2019 Mike Orazzi | Staff Tom Mazzarella during Thursday evening's United Way of West Central Connecticut's 17th Annual Community Builders' Reception held at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Bristol.

commit to opening its winter overflow shelter.

Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu asked people to bring a canned good item to the polls last Election Day, or to donate their pocket change, to benefit the St. Vincent DePaul Mission of Bristol. Volunteers from the United Way as well as other local organizations pitched in to help collect thousands of canned goods along with cash donations of more than \$5,000.

Four outstanding high school and middle school students were honored for their leadership as well. They are:

Kaidyn Sigmund, an eighth grader who is active in the Kids in the Middle program at Chippens Hill Middle School, where he helps with food drives and volunteering at the Imagine Nation Museum, among other activities.

Dale Neyra, an eighth grader at the Middle School of Plainville, who also participates in Kids in the Middle, volunteering at Jerome Home.

Isabella Christiana, a senior at Terryville High School, and a member of the United Way Youth Board, who is active in Leo Club events such as hosting Walk for Diabetes, Day of Caring, and an Easter egg hunt in town.

Sam Dorman, a senior at Lewis S. Mills High School in Burlington, who is also a member of the United Way Youth Board.

For more information about the United Way of West Central Connecticut, visit <https://www.uwestcentralct.org/> or call 860-582-9559.

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