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COMMUNITY NEWS, LOCAL NEWS

## Leading Ladies celebrate Valentine the Clown

by [jgoralski](#) • October 20, 2017 • [0 Comments](#)



Diana Sheard, better known in Southington as Valentine the Clown, addressed the crowd of Leading Ladies at the Aqua Turf.

By SHERIDAN CYR

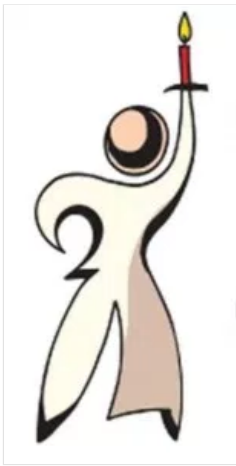
STAFF WRITER

"This luncheon is a way to celebrate the women in our town," Pattie Dunn, one of the organizers of the annual Leading Ladies luncheon, said the crowd of women at the Aqua Turf in Plantsville.

On Friday, Oct. 13, the annual event showcased 2017 Leading Lady Diana Sheard by fundraising and collecting donations for Leading Ladies Immediate Response Fund at the Main Street Community Foundation.

Dunn explained that the grants from the Immediate Response Fund are requested by a church, school, or social service agency, and distributed through them to the women in need.

The Leading Ladies Immediate Response Fund assists women and girls in the community when times get tough by providing grants to organizations and programs that benefit women. It may help someone get an education, or food for their home, or even dress a young girl for prom.



This year's Leading Lady, Diana Sheard, is better known to locals as "Valentine the Clown." Sheard has been using her persona as Valentine to bring joy through community service for over 30 years. She visits patients at the Connecticut Children's Medical Center and the Hospital of Special Care on a weekly basis. She also volunteers her time for fundraisers like Southington Education Foundation, S. T. E. P. S., St. Dominic Church, and Southington Community Cultural Arts.

THU   29 MAR Red Sox at Rays TBD	FRI   30 MAR Red Sox at Rays TBD	SUN   1 APR Red Sox at Rays TBD
NEXT EVENT	SAT   31 MAR Red Sox at Rays TBD	MON   2 APR Red Sox at Marlins TBD

Sheard thanked the many members of the community who have helped her along the way.

"Everybody tells me I'm a giver, but the truth should be revealed that I am a taker," said Sheard. "All day long, I take from friends, from family, from everybody. I take inspiration, ideas, creative sparks, and I drag them through my life."

The luncheon also featured chef and speaker Silvia Baldini, who was the Food Network's Chopped Champion. She is the author of a blog, "Silvia's Trays," for women about fresh, modern, and power-loaded recipes, a cooking instructor, and a wife and mother of two.

"This is so exciting to be here," said Baldini. "I will always support anything that lifts up women."

Baldini grew up in Italy, where cooking was always important to her family. She since has traveled all over the world to get inspirations for her cooking and experience different cultures.

The event showcased a musical performance by a teen church group from Plantsville Congregational Church, and a small army of local celebrity waiters. Each year, the luncheon features men from town—from government officials and police to community leaders and businesses—serving as volunteer wait staff for Southington's Leading Ladies.

For more information about the Leading Ladies, visit the organization's Facebook page.

To comment on this story or to contact staff writer Sheridan Cyr, email her at [SCyr@SouthingtonObserver.com](mailto:SCyr@SouthingtonObserver.com).

Tags: [Aqua Turf](#) [Diana Sheard](#) [Leading Ladies](#) [Southington](#) [Valentine the clown](#)