



COMMUNITY NEWS, LOCAL NEWS

United Way of Southington: From the bottom of our hearts

by [jgoralski](#) • April 26, 2018 • [0 Comments](#)



The Southington United Way presents an all-star award to the Main Street Community Foundation. From left, Southington United Way executive director Jack Eisenmann, Cheryl Lounsbury, Main Street Community Foundation president and CEO Susan Sadecki, and Rob Flood. (Photo by Janelle Morelli)

BY SHERIDAN CYR

STAFF WRITER

The United Way of Southington had a message for the town: “Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.” At their annual dinner at the Aqua Turf on April 18, members of the United Way recognized organizations and individuals in Southington who lead the way in community service and enrichment of the town.

Through fundraising efforts and volunteerism, the United Way provides support to a number of agencies in town that are invested in helping Southington residents by providing financial assistance for basic needs.

“We wanted to honor these individuals and groups for their impact in the community,” said executive director Jack Eisenmann. “That’s what it’s all about—providing services for those who need that helping hand.”

The nonprofit organization honored retiring executive director of the YMCA, John Myers, community activist and volunteer Jodi Derwin, The Main Street Community Foundation, and the Southington Middle School Athletic Association. They also recognized the entire Board of Directors including several new members.

“We had a really great event with over 200 guests,” said Eisenmann. “We are so grateful that our word is getting out and we are making progress. Our town is moving in a positive direction, despite some very difficult financial times.”

Myers was appointed director in 1998 and led two capital campaign improvement projects that resulted in an expanded downtown campus and improvements at Sloper Camp. Under his leadership, the YMCA membership has doubled. He has been active in many organizations in town.

“John has done so much in town for everyone from our youth to our elderly,” said Eisenmann.

Derwin was involved in raising \$15,000 for the family of high school student Ryan Catlin who suffered a severe spinal injury in June of 2017. The family started a fundraiser to aid in medical fees and extensive modifications to the home to give Catlin accessibility and freedom of movement around the house.

Eisenmann said Derwin “has done tremendous work in our town” and is an avid volunteer for many town organizations such as the Southington Community Services.

The Main Street Community Foundation, a public charity that provides grants to nonprofit organizations, was instrumental in the United Way’s senior transportation program that began in the winter. The organization funds

capital projects and programs that will improve the quality of life in Southington, Bristol, Burlington, Plainville and Wolcott.

Additionally, the SMSAA, a booster club made up of parents and community members, has successfully provided middle school students with a sports program after the Board of Education made the difficult decision to cut the program from the budget when facing cuts from state funding.

“Those parents and concerned citizens have enabled students to continue their activities through fundraising efforts,” said Eisenmann.

The annual dinner serves as a fundraiser for the United Way of Southington as well in order for the program to continue providing services for those in need.

“We live in a great community,” said Eisenmann. “Without all of the support we have from residents and businesses, we would not be able to do what we have been able to do for our town.”

To learn more about the United Way of Southington, contact them at (860) 628-4565 or visit them online at www.unitedwayofsouthington.org.

Photos by JANELLE MORELLI