

United Way To Host Annual Hometown Heroes Benefit Dinner

DANBURY — On February 27, United Way of Western Connecticut (UWWC) will host its third annual Hometown Heroes Benefit Dinner at The Amber Room Colonnade in Danbury. UWWC is honoring local businesses and community members from Northern Fairfield and Southern Litchfield Counties who distinguish themselves through philanthropy and volunteerism.

Nine Hometown Hero Awards will be presented in appreciation and recognition for giving back to towns from within UWWC's service area. Among the individuals to be recognized is Newtown resident, Peter D'Amico.

In its write-up for honorees, UWWC notes, "Peter D'Amico, a distinguished businessman and entrepreneur, founded the Newtown Youth Academy (now known as NYA Sports & Fitness Center) in November 2008 as a nonprofit sports facility dedicated to the health and well-being of youth and families in Newtown and surrounding areas. NYA is a private 90,000-square-foot complex that hosts and facilitates affordable and sponsored programs such as community events, fitness, training, and sport competitions. After the school tragedy in Sandy Hook, he opened the doors of NYA as a gathering spot for young students and their families, and made sure that no media cameras were permitted. For many months following, Mr D'Amico brought in professional service and sports organizations to bring special programs to Newtown. He also demonstrated his generosity during power outages after major storms by welcoming community members into his facility for showers and warmth.

"A Newtown resident since 1980, who also owns an international building company, Mr D'Amico has coached soccer teams in town for over 30 years. His soccer teams have won several state titles and have traveled to Europe to compete on an international



NYA founder Peter D'Amico is among nine recipients of the United Way of Western Connecticut's Hometown Hero Award.

level. Mr D'Amico and his wife Marie raised four sons in Newtown, and have ten grandchildren."

Proceeds from the February 27 event will benefit UWWC's work in support of ALICE families throughout Northern Fairfield and Southern Litchfield Counties. A United Way acronym, ALICE stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. These individuals and families are employed — often with more than one job — yet struggle to make ends meet. They live paycheck to paycheck and are forced to make hard choices

regarding their health care, child care, transportation, and housing needs. ALICE families often earn too much to qualify for social services. UWWC provides support through financial coaching, access to food banks, and availability of early childhood literacy programs, among others.

For further information and to purchase tickets and sponsorships, visit uwwesternct.org/events/hometown-heroes-benefit-dinner or contact Stacy Schulman at stacy.schulman@uwwesternct.org or 203-792-5330, extension 247.

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FirstLight Hydro Generation Company, the owner and operator of the Housatonic River hydroelectric power system, is accepting applications for the Housatonic River Project Fund, a grant program designed to support activities and projects that promote environmental protection, energy efficiency, and public safety in the 23-town Housatonic River region.

The Housatonic River Project (HRP) Fund was established in 2015 to provide opportunities to a broad group of organizations according to a statement from the New Milford-based FirstLight.

In its first year, the HRP Fund awarded more than \$140,000 in grants to several organizations, including the Candlewood Lake Authority, the Housatonic Valley Association, the Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition, the Lake Lillinonah Authority, the Lake Zoar Authority, the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, and the state's envi-



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