



## United Way announces annual awardees

United Way of Southington has announced its recipients of the organization's annual All-Star honors. The recipients will be honored at the United Way's annual dinner on Wed., March 21 at the Aqua Turf. The dinner's theme this year is, "Thank You from the Bottom of Our Hearts," a tribute to previous and current donors and sponsors. The annual dinner is the kickoff to its 2018 Campaign to raise funding for the programs it supports in town.

The 2018 All Star awards will go to John Myers, retiring executive director of the YMCA; community activist and volunteer Jodi Derwin and will include two organizations, The Main Street Community Foundation and the Middle School Athletic Booster Club.

The dinner will again feature a silent auction and exclusive raffle drawing for jewelry. The event is the premier function of United Way, the state's only independent UW organization. Throughout the year, United Way volunteers sponsor numerous events raising funds that are then allocated to 11 groups who serve Southington residents. Since 1926, United Way has operated with local volunteers and has donated thousands of dollars to assist local families and needy individuals.

Myers was appointed director in 1998 leading two capital campaign improvement projects that resulted in an expanded downtown campus and improvements at Sloper Camp grounds. Myers has been active in many organizations in town and will be retiring this year. An avid marathon runner he has compiled over 2,000 miles of daily running. Membership has doubled at the YMCA under Myer's leadership which employs 700 persons.

Jodi Derwin was selected based on her volunteerism and being a community advocate. After moving to town 10 years ago, Jodi became involved as chairperson of the Apple Harvest Hostesses and helped to start a donation drive for the Catlin family whose son was injured badly in a skiing accident. The drive raised over \$15,000. Jodi has also been a frequent donator at Southington Community Services and been involved with Relay for Life, United Way, Make A Wish Foundation, Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Taste of Southington, Business Manager for Jr. Miss Southington Scholarship, Breast Cancer Awareness and also sending out Soldiers Care packages.

The Main Street Community Foundation is a public charity committed to partnering with individuals, families and businesses who wish to build charitable connections. The organization supports the communities of Southington, Bristol, Burlington, Plainville and Wolcott. In 1973, a trust was established at the former Southington Bank & Trust upon the deaths of Bradley Barnes and his wife Leila with funds transferred to the Main Street group. Grants are then awarded to non-profit organizations serving Southington for capital projects, programs that will improve the quality of life.

The Southington Middle School Athletic Booster Club is an interactive non-profit organization consisting of parents, alumni and others in the community who support middle school sports and student athletes. The club works throughout the year by sponsoring activities and fundraisers to supplement the budget of the Board of Education and to assist raising funds for middle school teams and programs. Due to state budget cuts, the booster club has raised \$90,000 to allow sports to continue for six sports programs in the 2017-18 school years. The club will continue to raise funds until the school budget can support middle school athletics.

The dinner starts at 6 p.m. and tickets are \$65 per person. Beer and wine are included in the ticket price. Tables of 10 are \$650 and sponsors are welcomed. Raffle donations are needed for the silent auction. Special raffle prizes include jewelry pieces donated by Andy Bawa of B&V Jewelers. Tickets, sponsorship and raffle tickets can be purchased by going to <https://unitedwayofsouthingtonannualdinner18.eventbrite.com>.

For more information call United Way at 860-628-4565 or visit [www.southingtonunitedway.org](http://www.southingtonunitedway.org)

“We cannot emphasize enough the importance of community support. We do this for Southington people and our volunteers are committed to United Way annually,” said Jack Eisenmann, United Way executive director.