

Seymour man wins taco-eating contest at Hot Tamale 5th annual event benefits TEAM's Meals on Wheels program



By Patricia Villers
 SEYMOUR - Tacos.

A delicious meal for most, but for the past five years they have come to represent an eating competition for a worthy cause.

On Friday Hot Tamale Mexican Grill and Bar hosted its fifth annual Taco Eating Contest to benefit [TEAM Inc.'s Meals on Wheels](#) program.

Seven sombrero-wearing men - including two elected officials - choked down soft tacos in five minutes and five seconds. The event is always held around May 5, to mark Cinco de Mayo.

Emcee was First Selectman Kurt Miller, who urged contestants to consume the folded tortilla treats.

Hot Tamale's owner Bert Volpacchio was in charge of the countdown clock.

Two-time winner Alex Danka, president of Seymour Land Trust, tried but failed to earn another plastic taco-topped trophy. But he was able to consume 8-1/2 tacos.

And the winner and new champion was resident Hector Ortiz, who downed 10-1/2 tacos. "I ate breakfast and just had fluids during the day," Ortiz said as he proudly held his trophy and posed for photos. He said he stayed busy during the day to "keep up his energy and stamina."

Other contestants were Ansonia Mayor David S. Cassetti, Derby Mayor Richard Dziekan, TEAM President and CEO David Morgan, Miller's administrative assistant Rory Burke, and Ron Hessles, representing Oakbridge Management.



BHcare recognizes Salvation Army, Ansonia resident at Employment Salute

By Patricia Villers

ANSONIA - Everyone can use help when looking for a job.

And BHCare’s employment division works hard to place clients in the right positions.

BHcare staff and volunteers Thursday celebrated their clients’ successes at the organization’s 24th annual Employment Salute.

The luncheon event at Holy Rosary Church hall was sponsored by BHcare Business Advisory Council and the Greater Valley Chamber of Commerce.

Stephanie Tice, Business Advisory Council chairwoman, said, “Everyone needs a little assistance to get a job.”

She told business owners at the event BHcare’s clients “have a lot to prove and they tend to be very committed” to their jobs. “They’re fantastic employees.”

She presented Major Wilder Garcia from The Salvation Army Greater Valley Corps in Ansonia with the Employer of the Year Award. Tice said Garcia has been “very supportive” of BHcare. “Many of our clientele use the Salvation Army’s services,” she said.



Ansonia resident Nicole Croteau, a Navy veteran whose goal is to become a police officer, received the Employee of the Year Award. She currently works in security.

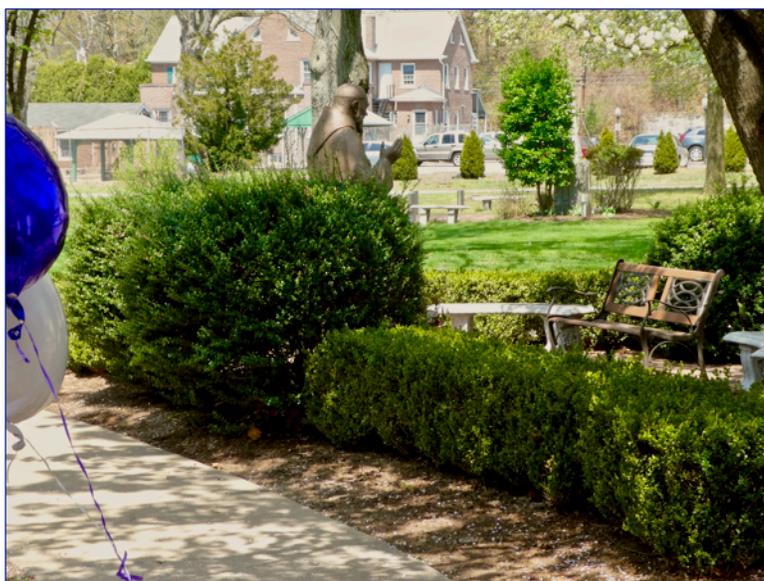
Croteau has been a client for five years, said Linda Cline, a BHcare employment specialist who works with her.

Cline commended Croteau on her great work ethic and punctuality. “She is a determined young woman.”

Keynote speaker Carly Duffy, employment consultant, state Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, discussed ways in which employers can save on hiring costs.

“We got through a lot of pre-screening,” she said. In her position Duffy networks with employers to find jobs for clients.

She said the vocational rehabilitation program offers wage reimbursement to employers who train clients from one to eight weeks. “The trainer’s time is reimbursed,” Duffy said. She called it a “working interview” in which employers can assess the match for themselves.”



About the Salvation Army Greater Valley

Not only does the Salvation Army Greater Valley preach the gospel, but they meet human needs without discrimination in Ansonia, Derby, Oxford, Seymour, and Shelton. The message of the Salvation Army is Doing the Most Good. See them at their [Facebook Page](#).

