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More of the Best of the Valley

February 13, 2018

Valley food banks see value of collaboration in serving community

By Patricia Villers

SHELTON - Difficulties of distributing food to the needy and the stigma many feel about being food insecure are two of the issues being addressed by a Valley task force.

Representatives of five food pantries met Monday at Valley United Way offices to map out plans to eliminate hunger in the Valley.

Food Security Task Force co-chairs David Morgan and Patricia Tarasovic held a press conference to increase awareness of food insecurity. The task force is part of the Valley Health and Human Services Council.

Morgan is President and CEO of TEAM, Inc., and Tarasovic serves as vice president, community engagement, for Valley United Way.

The Food Security Task Force recently received a three-year, \$42,000 grant from the Valley Community Foundation. The funds have allowed hiring of a consultant, Maria Markham, to assist the task force in several strategic areas.



L-R: David Morgan, TEAM Inc., Patricia Tarasovic, Valley United Way



Remy Kocurek, St. Vincent de Paul Society

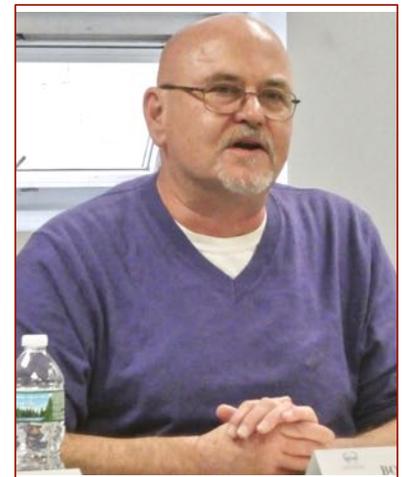
Markham has more than 25 years of executive leadership experience in nonprofit and philanthropic organizations.

She will work with food bank representatives to standardize procedures for reporting food distribution data and implement “best practices,” Tarasovic said.

Markham will assist in presentations focused on increasing awareness of the need, including possible development of a community symposium.

“Part of our charge as a food security task force is to increase awareness that there is acute need in the Valley,” Morgan said.

He also said a portion of the grant will be used to stock the pantries’ shelves.



Bob VanEgghen, Salvation Army Greater Valley

Continued on P.2

Valley food banks see value of collaboration in serving community

Continued from P.1

Bob Van Egghen, advisory board chairman, Salvation Army - Greater Valley in Ansonia, said the task force helps “improve communication” among the food banks.

“Everyone has the same issues to overcome,” he said. “We have food distribution issues [and the] task force will amplify our voices.”

He said, “Hunger is a disaster, as devastating to a family as a fire or a flood.”

Remy Kocurek, director, St. Vincent De Paul Thrift Shop and Food Bank in Derby, said the nonprofit

distributes food to clients once a month, and will distribute food on an emergency basis.

Kocurek said often their clients must choose between buying food or needed medicine. “It’s interesting to see how each food bank operates,” she said.

Susan Agamy, executive director, Spooner House homeless shelter and Valley Food Bank in Shelton, said “an immediate benefit” to collaborating is “networking opportunities.

Our relationship is critical to assist families.”Valley United Way President Sharon Gibson discussed the “Grow Your Own” program that started community gardens in Ansonia and Derby neighborhoods last year and will create four more, including one in Seymour.



L-R: Susan Agamy, Spooner House, Meme Yocher, Kathleen Samela Food Pantry, Bob VanEgghen



Toni Cassidy, Seymour-Oxford Food Bank



L-R: Morgan, Ansonia Mayor David S. Casseti, Tarasovic, Derby Mayor Richard Dziekan

Kathleen Samela Food Pantry

The five food pantries are:

Kathleen Samela Food Pantry at Christ Episcopal Church, Ansonia, [203-734-2715](tel:203-734-2715)

The Salvation Army - Greater Valley, Ansonia, [203-736-0707](tel:203-736-0707)

St. Vincent De Paul, Derby, [203-734-7577](tel:203-734-7577)

Seymour-Oxford Food Bank, Seymour, [203-888-7826](tel:203-888-7826)

Area Congregations Together’s Spooner House and Valley Food Bank, Shelton, [203-225-0453](tel:203-225-0453)



Here's one of our five regular blue jay visitors.

His takeoff from the roof makes me think he's saying:

"I'm outta here!"

*Photo by
Patricia Villers*



Information that every family **NEEDS** to know

INTERNET SAFETY

Workshop led by Scott Driscoll of Internet Safety Concepts



- **Apps and programs children are using**
- **Cyberbullying, Sexting and Social Networking**
- **Creating a "digital footprint" (positives and negatives)**
- **Current on-line trends and potential dangers**
- **Tips on how to use technology in the safest way**
- **Strategies on keeping families safe**

Where: Perry Hill School

When: March 22, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

This presentation is for parents only

To register, please contact

Dee Kopec

at

203-924-7614

or

dkopec@cityofshelton.org

Sponsored by:

The Shelton Youth Services Bureau

Ansonia to celebrate St. Patrick's Day with Irish flag-raising ceremony

St. Patrick's Day Irish Flag Raising Ceremony! Saturday, March 17th

The Fun Starts at 11am • Ansonia City Hall 253 Main Street



*May the sun always shine on your windowpane
May a rainbow be certain to follow each rain
May the hand of a friend always be near you
May God fill your heart with gladness to cheer you!*

