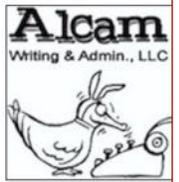


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More of the Best of the Valley

January 3, 2018

Faith Club, Santa surprise Seymour girl who collects toys for others

By Patricia Villers

SEYMOUR - Santa surprised Bungay School fourth grader Alyssa Vergati and her school mates recently as they enjoyed a sing-along in the gym.

Santa, aka Seymour Middle School Assistant Principal Ernie DiStasi, was accompanied by members of the Seymour High School Faith Club and Seymour Police Department.

They walked into the gym with more than 200 wrapped toys to add to Alyssa's annual holiday toy drive they collected at the high school and at Seymour Middle School. Alyssa has collected toys for children battling cancer since she was a kindergartner.

Alyssa said she got the idea when she was in kindergarten and saw someone collecting funds for toys to be given to sick children. She told her mom she wanted to collect toys for other kids, and the initiative has continued to grow over the years.

Alyssa's goal this year was to collect 350 toys.



Alyssa's proud mother, Staci Vergati, said her daughter asks for nothing for Christmas. Instead, the 10-year old simply wants to offer holiday cheer to children with cancer. The toys she collects are donated to [Colin's Crew](#), a nonprofit based in Wallingford.

The toys will be given to children at Yale New Haven Children's Hospital, Hartford Children's Hospital, and to area children battling cancer.

Seymour High School senior David Brezina, 18, who founded the Faith Club in the fall, said, "The whole purpose of our club is to bring love to the community, and that's exactly what happened today." Art teacher Darlene Keeffe, club advisor, escorted the students.

Seymour Schools' Director of Security Richard Kearns coordinated the event. He commended Alyssa and the Faith Club members for doing what they can to brighten the holidays for young people facing serious illness.

MSP Winter Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday,
Thursday, Friday & Saturday:
9:00 am to 5:00 pm
&
Sunday:
12:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

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My Sister's Place

supporting

The Umbrella
Center for Domestic Violence Services
a program of BHcare



State Sen. George Logan visits Ansonia sculptor and Valley Arts Council member Vasil Rakaj's studio in Ansonia.
 Rakaj is working on a MLK bust which will be presented to the City of Ansonia in 2018.
 - Taken from Sen. Logan's Facebook page.



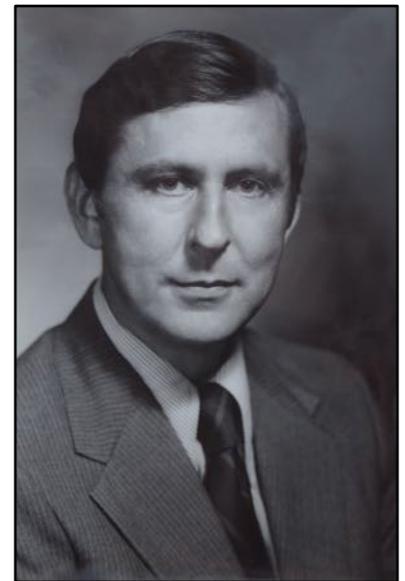
Valley Community Foundation Receives \$1.4 Million Bequest

DERBY – The Valley Community Foundation (VCF) was the named beneficiary for the estate of Raymond P. Mackowski and received a bequest totaling more than \$1.4 million of unrestricted funds that will be used to address the changing needs and opportunities of the Valley.

“The VCF Board of Directors collectively placed this fund on the Foundation’s spending policy and treat it like an endowed fund at the Foundation,” said Alan Tyma, VCF Board Chair.

“Investment goals are to generate enough income to respond to the community’s current charitable needs and to provide for the long-term development and well-being of the Foundation’s endowment.”

“We are honored and sincerely grateful to receive such a substantial bequest from Mr. Mackowski,” said Sharon Closius, VCF President & CEO. “As stewards for the Valley’s philanthropic endowments, we look forward to honoring his intent throughout our community.”



Raymond Mackowski passed away in March of 2016 and left behind decades of service and good works to his hometown of Ansonia and the larger Valley region. It came as no surprise to his family when he included VCF as a beneficiary to his estate in memory of his parents, John and Amelia Mackowski.

“He was a private man, but he enjoyed life to the fullest,” said nephew, Richard Mackowski.

“He was ready to help anyone in the community. He gave much of his time and talent to helping others. He was just a good man. That’s really the best way to put it.”

Raymond Mackowski was a man of many talents, from swimming to painting to metalworking. He was a dedicated volunteer at Yale-New Haven Hospital for more than 30 years, was a member of the American Legion and the Knights of Columbus, a lifelong communicant of St. Joseph Church in Ansonia, and was a devoted history buff.

Attorney Christine Curtiss of Cohen and Thomas, Attorneys at Law said that when Raymond came to work on his will, he had already given a great deal of thought to making a gift to the Valley through the Valley Community Foundation.



This has been taken from a press release by John Ready, VCF Donor Services & Communications Officer.

Contact him at jready@valleyfoundation.org

About the Valley Community Foundation

Established in 2004, the Valley Community Foundation distributes hundreds of thousands of grant dollars each year to support the local nonprofit sector and the people it serves in Ansonia, Derby, Oxford, Seymour and Shelton. VCF works in strong partnership with The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven (CFGNH), in promoting philanthropy. Contact VCF at their website www.valleyfoundation.org or contact President Sharon Closius, at sclosius@valleyfoundation.org or 203-751-9162.