

Neighbors



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Our Friends

– Faces in the Crowd –

Teen collects blankets for hospital



Tammi Knapik

Jonathan Gray Don't stop believing

Each week we interview a 'regular person' like you for our Faces in the Crowd. This week we meet DePaolo student Jonathan Gray.

How long have you been connected to Southington?

My grandparents have been here for about 35 years now.

What do you like about the town?

I like the sports. I get involved in here in town. I play baseball and basketball.

What is your favorite movie?

"The Bench Warmers." I like it because it is funny and it is a baseball movie.

What is the best piece of advice you have ever received?

My Dad and I really like the song "Don't Stop Believing" so I would have to say that.

If you could meet anyone in the world, who would you like to meet?

Red Sox player Dustin Pedroia. I think if I met him I would want to have a game of Wiffle ball with him and have him show me some pointers.



SUBMITTED

Postal worker retires

Gerald Boyle, a rural carrier, is shown going out on his route for delivery for the last time before retiring on Friday, Dec. 30, after working more than 30 years at the Southington Post Office.

By MIKE CHAIKEN
Editions Editor

Krystiana Bouchard, of Southington, Miss Hartford County's Outstanding Teen, knows about multiple sclerosis up close. Her grandmother has MS.

So when it came time for her to pick her issue of concern, Krystiana said gravitated toward the problems experienced by MS patients.

As part of her issue of concern, Krystiana collected blankets to donate to the Mount Sinai Rehabilitation Hospital's Mandell Center for Comprehensive Multiple Sclerosis Care and Neuroscience Research in the Blue Hills section of Hartford.

Krystiana explained, "At Mount Sinai, they have a section called the Infusion Center. While the patients are there for a few hours, they get very cold." To help the patients stay warm during their treatment, Krystiana donated 115 blankets to the center on Jan. 13.

Krystiana said the blankets were donated by some of the local titleholders within the Miss America pageant system. In addition, she said, her grandfather donated 75 blankets.

Explaining her inspiration for her chosen issue of concern, Krystiana, a



MIKE CHAIKEN

Krystiana Bouchard, Miss Hartford County's Outstanding Teen, poses with some of the 115 blankets she collected for donation to the the Mount Sinai Rehabilitation Hospital's Mandell Center for Comprehensive Multiple Sclerosis Care and Neuroscience Research in Hartford.

Southington resident, said, "My grandmother has multiple sclerosis and she's had it all of my life and because I live with her I see day to day what she goes through so that's why I chose multiple sclerosis as my issue of concern so that's why I decided, why not start here.... I figured this would be the best thing to do during the winter months."

When she arrived to make her donation, the hospital provided Krystiana a tour of the facility. They

showed her the Infusion Center where her blankets will be used. They also showed her some of the state of the art rehabilitation equipment used to keep the MS patients healthy and mobile.

"It's amazing," said Krystiana when asked if the tour affected her perspective on the treatment of MS. "I can't believe how much has gone in since this foundation did start in 2007. Now in just four years, it's expanded so much. I would want my

grandmother to come here because from the looks of it, it's an amazing place.

The hospital officials showed great appreciation for the donation of blankets. As her year as Miss Hartford County's Outstanding Teen continues, Krystiana said she intends to do more fund raisers to help the Mount Sinai Rehabilitation Center. "They have so many different parts of it," said Krystiana. "I'm going to continue to do whatever I can to help individual sections."

Eye on Business

By ED HARRIS
Editor

Every other week The Observer talks to local business owners about their establishments. This week we talked with Michelle Keeley of Bliss Dance and Wellness.

What is the history of your business?

Bliss Dance and Wellness presents a fresh new approach to the invigorating exercise and workout dance routines based upon the styles and technique of Zumba Fitness.

Zumba Fitness is the only Latin-inspired dance-fitness program that blends red-hot international music, and contagious steps to form a "fitness-party" that is downright addictive.

Since its inception in 2001, the Zumba program has grown to become the world's largest – and most successful – dance-fitness program with more than 12 million people of all shapes, sizes and ages. People are taking weekly Zumba classes in over 220,000 locations across more than 125 countries.



What drew you to this particular business?

Our objective is to provide you with a upbeat program to improve your wellbeing, your energy level, your stamina, and burn some calories as you enjoy the excitement of dancing in a night club atmosphere. Our goal is to inspire people through music and dance as well as introduce to the community the newest craze Zumba Fitness with Michelle Keeley...Having fun, losing weight and gaining confidence. It doesn't get better then that.

What makes you unique as a business?

The Owner and Founder, Michelle Keeley, has had a long career with dancing and instruction. She received a dance education certificate where she was introduced to many styles of dance from all over the world. Michelle is a fully trained and licensed ZUMBA instructor / ZIN member. Michelle brings her enthusiasm, years of choreography skills and experience into the International rhythms of ZUMBA fitness making it exciting, upbeat, and geared to all skills, genders, and abilities. Michelle will also provide expanded class times and sessions with other instructors whom she

has handpicked for their skills and certification training.

Michelle also wants to offer her students the opportunity to experience the energy and excitement of that popular Latin style of dance. Salsa.

Wish you can go but can't find a babysitter? Bliss Dance and Wellness offers a small waiting room for children to keep busy while hard working parents can enjoy some stress relieving exercise.

Public contact information-991 South Main St. Plantsville CT 06479, Unit 7. We can be found on the web at www.blissdanceandwellness.com where we have our schedule of classes and prices. We can also be found on Facebook @ Bliss-BDWC for daily update or call 860-628-3145. Email me any questions @ Blissdanceandwellness@yahoo.com.

To have your business highlighted in the Eye on Business, email editor Ed Harris at eharris@southingtonobserver.com.