

Pardon Team thanks its supporters

BY BRENDA SULLIVAN ReminderNews

It took many helping hands and lots of support, both in terms of funds and encouragement, for the Connecticut Pardon Team to blossom into an organization that helps people reclaim their lives through the pardon process.



Click the thumbnails above to see the full size pictures.

On July 19, many of those supporters were publicly acknowledged at the Second Annual Pig Roast Fundraiser, held at the Lakeside Pavilion in Mohegan Park.

Despite the event's name, no roasting of pigs actually took place at the pavilion. The meal was prepared and delivered by Pete the Butcher, accompanied by watermelon, potato salad and coleslaw.

Among those receiving plaques for their contributions to the Connecticut Pardon Team's work was the entire Anderson family, whose members have pitched in with everything from installing wiring for a refrigerator to organizing the avalanche of paperwork that accompanies

the team's work.

Also honored by the Pardon Team's founder, Jackie Caron, was the Rev. Barbara J. White. Caron recalled that when she approached White to ask for the support of her congregation, "Without hesitation or the blink of an eye, she said, 'You're showing up at the next meeting,' and the next thing you know, we had a couple of hundred dollars in our pocket... our church family has been really wonderful. They helped us to move forward, by the grace of God."

White said it was the Pardon Team that should be praised. "Because of them, people's lives have been changed... What a blessing to get a second chance... we are so proud. Continue the good work, and know how much we love you," White said.

The awards ceremony was followed by door prizes and a raffle, during which thousands of dollars worth of gift baskets, tickets, trips, services and gift certificates donated by local businesses and civic groups were distributed.

Among the winners was Loretta Wilson from the VFW Auxiliary Post 594. "What they do is wonderful," she said of the Pardon Team's work. "I think there are people who have been so good for so many years, they should be given another chance... and just look at all the good she's done," Wilson said, referring to the fact that Caron herself had received a pardon.

Caron received a pardon before being elected to the Norwich City Council three years ago. After her own experience with a confusing and disheartening process, she formed an organization to help others who might be eligible for a pardon for past criminal offenses. Criteria for a pardon includes being violation-free for at least five years after the completion of any parole, probation or sentencing.

Wilson said she knew someone who "made a mistake at 16" and later was turned away when he applied for a job at one of the

casinos after a background check. "He never even went to jail," Wilson said. "But he went to her [Caron], and she helped him."

More information about the team's work is available online at the Web site www.connecticutpardonteam.com or by calling (860) 823-1571 or toll free at 1-866-251-3810 .

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