

Campership Fund enjoys a bountiful Thanksgiving Week

BY TOMMY VALUCKAS
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

WATERBURY — An anonymous donor, a lawyer, and the owner of a bowling alley shared the same concern last week: How to cover the Greater Waterbury Campership Fund's 2018 tuition costs, while establishing a strong head start for 2019?

All three, as well as six other donors, came through.

Thanks to all of them, the Campership Fund is able to celebrate a Thanksgiving Week with all 2018 tuition accounted for, and enough money for about 20 children to attend camp next summer already on hand, based on last year's camp prices.

"Campership Treasurer Michael Mucciacciaro and I were opening the mail from these friends of Campership, and it felt like Christmas, not Thanksgiving," said Campership Fund President Anne Karolyi. "Mike, I and all the Campership directors are ever thankful and humbled by the people who come forward to make sure we can send as many children to camp as possible."

The donations are a start to rebuilding the reserves wiped out to cover last summer's tuition for 491 children. The week's donations totaled \$7,951.40, bringing the total raised in 2018 to \$176,643.91.

The average cost per camper this year was \$340, or \$15 more per child than in 2017. Average per camper costs have been increasing year by year, as have the number of Campership applicants.

The largest donation last week, \$5,000 offered in memory of Ann McClelland Smith, was made anonymously and was intended to cover 2018 costs but also lay the groundwork for 2019, its donor said.

Waterbury attorney Martin J. Minnella, of Middlebury, wanted to be sure that tuition gap was closed with his \$911.40 donation: the exact amount still needed to cover



Campership 2018

2018 Camperships. He did so with help from some friends at Victoria Congregational Church in Briarwood, N.Y., in the northwest part of Jamaica in the borough of Queens. The church's Briarwood Community Meals program honored Minnella with a "Fundraiser II" Sept. 22 at the church.

"For the past five years, twice a month, we've been having these dinners that provide companionship, entertainment and peace of mind for individuals who otherwise would have no place to go," said Minnella, a partner in the city law firm of Minnella, Tramuta & Edwards LLC.

"Marty's generosity and support shown toward the Free Briarwood Community Meal continuously blesses the attendees," wrote the Rev. Mark E. Marsh, pastor, in the dinner's program booklet. "He has supplied monetary funds for food and supplies on several occasions over the past five years when the coffers dwindle to ensure this much-needed outreach on Sunday evenings thrives."

Minnella said enough money was raised to support a program booklet the next two years, and the organizers wanted to give him a \$500 gift certificate in appreciation. Minnella, a longtime Campership Fund supporter, asked them instead to pay it forward to the Campership Fund, and he chipped in an additional \$411.40 to make sure last summer's camp tuition was entirely paid for by the 2018 campaign.

"A lot of the people who came to the dinner are from Waterbury," he said of the September event. Among them were the Frank and Vera Davino familv. John



Charlie Lanza, right, sells a 'Life in the Gutter' T-shirt to Dave Baltasky at the debut party of Lakewood Lanes' 'Life in the Gutter' beer, made by Brass Works Brewing Company in Waterbury.

Lombard and Margret Warner, and Mike and Denise Garasino. Minnella noted former Sacred Heart High School basketball star Mustapha Heron, now at St. John's University, is assisting the church's outreach programming.

Another donation, which was matched anonymously, came from Charlie Lanza, longtime owner of the iconic Lakewood Lanes bowling alley off Lakewood Road. Combined, the total donation was \$1,000.

Lanza threw a party Nov. 10 debut Life in the Gutter, a beer made for the bowling alley by Brass Works Brewing Co. He decided to sell commemorative T-shirts at \$5 a piece to the occasion and ben-

efit the Campership Fund. He rounded out the final total to \$500.

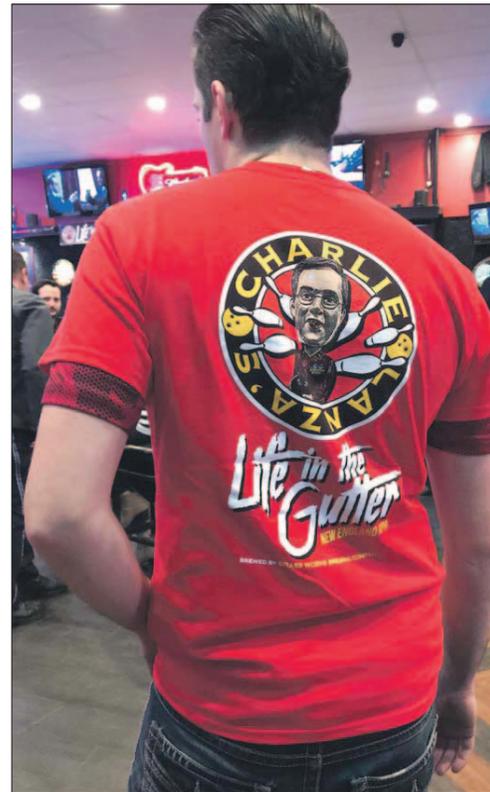
"Then a family friend asked what charity I had in mind, and when I told him, he said 'I love the Campership Fund and whatever you do I'll match it.'" Lanza said a matching donation of \$500 was "taped to my door" the next day.

He conceded he had a "soft spot" in his heart for kids and programs that help them, like the Campership Fund.

"I really do," he said. "I cry when I see commercials about the homeless on TV."

The Campership Fund can be followed on the Greater Waterbury Campership Fund page on Facebook or at rep-am.com/campership.

Donations may be sent to



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

A friend models a 'Life in the Gutter' T-shirt at Lakewood Lanes bowling alley in Waterbury. Owner Charlie Lanza sold the T-shirts to debut his new specialty beer and raise money for the Greater Waterbury Campership Fund.

Greater Waterbury Campership Fund, 389 Meadow St., Waterbury, CT 06722. Contributions are tax deductible and are acknowledged in The Sunday Republican.

This week's donations:

■ Anonymous, in memory of Ann McClelland Smith, \$5,000

■ Martin J. Minnella of Middlebury, \$911.40

■ William Crowe and Susan Strobel of Collinsville, in memory of Goerge Strobel Jr., \$500

■ Charles W. Lanza, Lakewood Lanes in Waterbury, \$500

■ Anonymous matching grant to Lakewood Lanes' donation, \$500

■ Catholic Financial Life Chapter N-149 of Waterbury, to send one child to camp, \$340

■ Edwin Undercuffler of Watertown, \$100

■ Anonymous, in memory of Christian A. Jones, \$50

■ Raymond and Claudia Lapaine. of Prospect. \$50