



Derby Mayor Anthony Staffieri, right, takes lunch to Stanley Lisewski at Lisewski's home.

Valley mayors help feed elderly

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By Patricia Villers, Register Staff

Several Valley Meals on Wheels clients recently received more than a nutritious meal when their mayors stopped by and served them a hot lunch.

Derby-based Training, Education, and Manpower Inc. runs the Meals on Wheels program, and last week participated in Mayors for Meals Day.

Diane Stroman, vice president of development for TEAM, said Ansonia Mayor James Della Volpe, Derby Mayor Anthony Staffieri and Shelton Mayor Mark Lauretti rode with the Meals on Wheels drivers and delivered lunches to the homebound.

Ansonia resident Sam Porcu was one of the recipients. He said Della Volpe "is a longtime friend. I've known him and his family for years."

He said it was "a big surprise" that the mayor delivered his lunch. "I felt like a big shot," Porcu said.

Eleonora Drechsel of Ansonia called it "a great honor" to have Della Volpe serve her lunch.

Retired Derby police officer Stanley Lisewski also received a mayoral visit. "I was surprised to see (Staffieri) standing there," he said. "I've known him from way, way back." Lisewski said he remembered Staffieri from when he was a child.

Mayors for Meals is a nationwide effort aimed at increasing public awareness of hunger among the elderly, Stroman said. This was the first time TEAM took part in the initiative.

Stroman said TEAM was pleased the elected officials agreed to participate.

Seymour First Selectman Robert J. Koskelowski had a scheduling conflict, but Stroman said he plans to participate at a later date.

Oxford First Selectman Mary Ann Drayton-Rogers also had a conflict, but said Tuesday she was looking forward to serving meals another day.

Drayton-Rogers said the Meals on Wheels program helped her late mother.

"It was an event for her to look forward to every day," Drayton-Rogers said. The food deliveries and brief visits offer a comfort level to family members concerned about an elderly relative living alone, she said. "It's an excellent service," Drayton-Rogers said.

Staffieri said, "I have a great deal of respect for TEAM and the care and dedication they show to our elderly and others."

Della Volpe called the event heartwarming.

"For many of the elderly, the Meals on Wheels driver is the only contact they have during that day," he said. "It was my honor to join in with my colleagues to support the Valley Meals on Wheels program."

Lauretti said, "It is rewarding knowing that programs like TEAM's Valley Meals on Wheels program are taking care of the frail, homebound seniors in our community. You can see from the smile on the faces of those served they appreciate what they are doing."

TEAM President/CEO Richard Knoll commented, "Our mayors have been consistently supportive of our senior meals program, and Mayors for Meals is an excellent opportunity for us to continue that partnership on behalf of vulnerable seniors in our community."

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