

Norwich volunteers, business owners honored with awards

Norwich — The Norwich Events Organization announced the recipients of the 2023 Ron Aliano Service Award and the Jason Vincent Memorial Service Award this week.

Chris Jewell, partner-owner of Collins & Jewell industrial fabrication plant, and McKennas Flower Shop will receive the 2023 Ron Aliano Service Award for their distinguished service in the development of the City of Norwich. The award is given to one individual and one business each year.

The Norwich Event's Organization's newest award, the Jason Vincent Memorial Service Award, given to a community member that embodies the late Vincent's spirit of giving and commitment to community, will be awarded to Celia Siefert.

Their achievements will be celebrated at a ceremony on Thursday, June 1, as part of the annual fireworks silent auction fundraiser from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Holiday Inn in Nor-

wich. Tickets are \$40 per person and can be purchased online at GoNorwichCT.com or in the Facebook event. The event will have food, a cash bar and a silent auction.

Jewell is the vice chairman of the Norwich Free Academy's Board of Trustees, treasurer of the board for the Norwich Community Development Corp., chairman of the the Eastern Workforce Investment Board, president of the Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance, and a board of directors member of the Greater Norwich Area Chamber of Commerce.

McKenna's Flower Shop, owned by Michael Rankowitz, turns donated mugs into Christmas decorations for seniors in nursing homes for the past 10 years. The Mug Making Magic Project provides senior citizens in nursing homes, who don't get any visitors during the holiday season, with a floral arrangement in a mug. McKenna's also posts first names on sidewalk boards

and on Facebook offering free roses to anyone with the name picked for that day.

Siefert was the first female patrol officer with the Norwich Police Department, where she served for eight years before working in the state Judicial Branch for 31 years. She volunteers with local organizations and partners with Billy Wilson's Ageing still to cook breakfasts for fundraising events, volunteers at St. Vincent de Paul Place, where she helps organize the volunteer program for the food pantry and the Thanksgiving and Christmas meal deliveries, and participates in children's programs.

Siefert is a committee member of the NAACP, and was "Head Elf" of the Norwich Human Services Christmas gift program for 20 years. She helped support Senior Center Meals on Wheels for Christmas and made meals for the homeless at St. Vincent for the past five winters.

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