

Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET ~ SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Maria E. Capriola - Town Manager

Hometown Hero Ceremony *September 14, 2020*

On Monday, September 14th at 5:00 PM Simsbury will honor our 2020 Hometown Hero recipients. Due to COVID-19, the Hometown Hero Ceremony was postponed from its original date in May. Because the Hometown Hero Ceremony is always a well-attended event, we currently cannot accommodate an in-person ceremony due to COVID-19 restrictions. Please join us to celebrate our 2020 Hometown Heroes virtually by tuning into the broadcast on SCTV on Comcast channels 96/1090, Frontier channel 6071 or on the SCTV YouTube page www.youtube.com/simsburytv.

This year's recipients are: Jean Miles; Katie Costolnick; Margaret Diachenko; Ann Long; Rob Cushman; Jim Fleming; Gail Ryan. The program for the ceremony is included below.

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An Equal Opportunity Employer
8:30 - 7:00 Monday
8:30 - 4:30 Tuesday through Thursday
8:30 - 1:00 Friday

HISTORY OF THE AWARD

Initiated in 1986 by Governor William O'Neill as part of the 350th Anniversary of the founding of Connecticut, towns were invited to designate residents as "Hometown Heroes" for any deed or service that made the community a better place in which to live. Since that time, the Town of Simsbury has recognized its own Hometown Heroes at a special ceremony.

SELECTION PROCESS

A Selection Committee, consisting of the First Selectperson, representatives of the Board of Selectmen, the Historical Society, the business community, a previous Hometown Hero, and a member of a service or Veteran's organization reviews nominations and selects individuals who have demonstrated selfless and altruistic behavior which contributes significantly to the betterment of the Town.

2020 HOMETOWN HERO SELECTION COMMITTEE

Eric Wellman, First Selectman

Michael Paine, Selectman

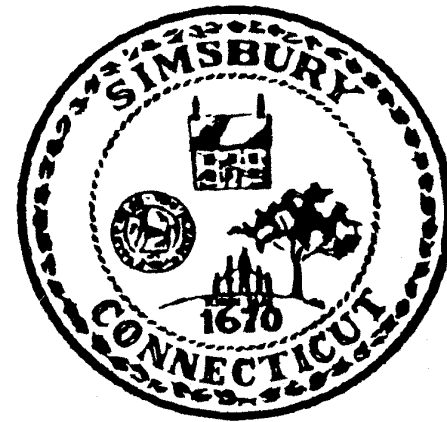
Melissa Brett, Business Leader

Elaine Lang, Simsbury Historical Society

T. J. Donohue, Former Hometown Hero

Len Lanza, Veteran

TOWN OF SIMSBURY



2020

Hometown Hero Ceremony

September 14, 2020

5:00 p.m.

2020 HOMETOWN HERO AWARD RECIPIENTS

Katie Costolnick

Ms. Costolnick founded and is overlooking a Facebook page called "Sewing Face Mask - Farmington Valley CT." The web page is designated to coordinate people willing to sew masks for healthcare workers, their families, and communities in need. Under Mr. Costolnick, group membership grew to 1,425 members. The operation shifted from just her front porch to several different locations as its size increased. As of September 8th, the group was responsible for the delivery of over 45,000 masks. Ms. Costolnick is a Simsbury Hometown Hero because she did not hesitate to act when she saw a need for action in her community.

Rob Cushman

Mr. Cushman is the founder of the Community Compassionate Response Team (CCRT). Under his guidance, CCRT established a website where community members can request assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the fundamental functions of CCRT is that they make regular "check-ins" on those who might need assistance. CCRT is partnering with Fitzgerald's Foods to help with processing and distributing food delivery orders. Mr. Cushman not only oversees CCRT functions but also makes deliveries himself. He is a Simsbury Hometown Hero because, in these challenging times he is inspiring others to focus on compassion.

Margaret Diachenko

Ms. Diachenko served as the Simsbury Civitan Club President. For several decades under her guidance, Simsbury Civitan Club focused their work on individuals with developmental challenges. Ms. Diachenko has coordinated a number of fundraisers that assisted those in need in the community. She was Matron of the Order of the Eastern Star, President of the Simsbury Woman's Club, Chairperson, and board member for the McLean Auxiliary. More than anything, Ms. Diachenko is known as a person who dedicated her life to helping others; that is why she is a Simsbury Hometown Hero.

Jim Fleming

Mr. Fleming is a lifelong resident who represented Simsbury's interests at the legislature, both as a Simsbury State Representative and State Senator. He was on the Simsbury Police Commission from 2012 to 2020 and also served as Chairperson. This is the 2nd time Mr. Fleming has received a Hometown Hero award, having been previously nominated in 1991. Mr. Fleming is a Simsbury Hometown Hero because of his continued work and dedication to his hometown.

Ann Long

Ms. Long was Director of the Continuum of Care at St. Francis, past member of the Simsbury Aging and Disability commission, board member of the Professional Advisory Boards in Community Health for McLean, and Farmington Valley Nurse Association. Ms. Long was also known to be the first person to welcome a new neighbor, offer a hand in help, and some of her famous Irish soda bread. Ms. Long is a Simsbury Hometown Hero because she was a member of this community for over 50 years, and her kindness had touched many.

Jean Miles

Ms. Miles did not hesitate to become the first volunteer of the Simsbury Medical Equipment Loan Locker. The Loan Locker provides medical equipment to those in need at no charge. By profession, Ms. Miles is a Physical Therapist, and as a volunteer, she makes herself available to community members for advice on equipment use and handling. She had recruited 25 new volunteers and is continuing to be an advocate for the clients. Ms. Miles is a Simsbury Hometown Hero because her motivation and endless energy improves many lives and encourages others to act.

Gail Ryan

Ms. Ryan acted as Trustee on the Simsbury Library Board of Trustees for twenty-eight years; ten of those years she served as Chairman. As a board member, she was instrumental in designing and expanding the library and its completion in 2006. She worked to secure a HUD grant for the funding of self-checkout equipment. Ms. Ryan has been instrumental in making the book sales a success every year. From May until August Ms. Ryan volunteers her time sorting out the books for the sales. Ms. Ryan is a Simsbury Hometown Hero because of her dedication to the library and community.

**Due to COVID-19, the 2020 Hometown Hero Ceremony was postponed.
It is normally held in May annually.**