

DeLauro visits TEAM offices in Derby, discusses proposed heating assistance cuts

By Patricia Villers

DERBY - More than 3,300 Valley households relied on the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program administered by TEAM, Inc. this year.

On Monday, the agency hosted a visit by U.S. Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro, D-New Haven, to highlight how proposed cuts to the federal heating assistance program would affect local families.

President Trump has proposed eliminating LIHEAP as part of the 2018 federal budget.

In 2016, Connecticut received more than \$80 million for LIHEAP, which helped nearly 110,000 households across the state.

TEAM President/CEO David Morgan said financial help for eligible clients is paid directly to heating-fuel vendors.



DeLauro told clients she wanted to learn “how LIHEAP makes a difference in your lives.”

Single mother of two Amanda Diaz received heating assistance from TEAM.

She works full time and wants her children to learn how to be independent. She said one of her daughters suffers from asthma and her mother has Lupus, and heating her home is a necessity.

DeLauro commended Diaz. “It takes courage to speak out on your own set of circumstances,” she said.

Resident Criss Ann Keeney said she has a disability and is a raising a child with special needs. “This program has saved my life,” she said.



TEAM staffers never made her feel bad about herself, Keeney said, but instead just asked how they could help her.

Roger Martin, also of Derby, said he suffers from end-stage glaucoma and other health issues and is unemployed. “TEAM has given me hope again,” he said. “Without TEAM’s heat assistance I wouldn’t have survived the winter.”

DeLauro said LIHEAP was started in 1981 by President Reagan because he “determined it was a necessary program.”

She said, “No family should have to choose between heating their home and putting food on the table.”

DeLauro said her job is to “fight like hell” for her constituents and she vowed to do just that.



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Griffin's Heart wellness committee recognizes volunteer, nonprofit

Beacon Falls resident Claudia Csuka, right, receives a Caring Heart Award from Diane Betkoski, director, Planetree Programs and Services at Griffin Hospital, Derby for her volunteer work at the hospital.

The presentation was made Saturday at the 12th annual Women's Heart Wellness and Caring Heart Award Brunch. A Caring Heart community award was presented to Marrakech, Inc., a nonprofit in Woodbridge.

According to its website, Marrakech is a private, nonprofit corporation serving over 1,300 men, women, and children who face mental, economic, physical, and psychiatric barriers, through a range of programs designed to meet housing, employment, training, and community participation needs.

- Photo by Patricia Villers

TEAM's Men Who Cook Rescheduled to May 20

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The ValleyVoice CT Newsletter Is published by Alcam Writing & Admin LLC, Derby, CT

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