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Media Contact:

Nancy Newman

(860) 573-7935

Nannynew1@aol.com

WEST HARTFORD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TO HONOR THE CAROL AUTORINO CENTER FOR THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES, THE HOME DESIGN DISTRICT OF WEST HARTFORD, AND MORLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER DAWN O'CONNOR WITH NOAH WEBSTER AWARD AT ANNUAL LUNCHEON

West Hartford, CT – The West Hartford Chamber of Commerce 2011 Annual Meeting and Award Luncheon will be held at 11.30 AM on Wednesday, June 8th at 1877 Club Restaurant on the campus of the University of Hartford. This year, there will be three winners of the Chamber's Noah Webster Award, given to selected individuals and institutions for exceptional community involvement and advancement. The event is being sponsored by Simons Real Estate Group, Liberty Bank, and the Carol Autorino Center.

The Carol Autorino Center for the Arts and Humanities at St. Joseph's College is home to many organizations, including the Connecticut Concert Opera, Connecticut Classical Guitar Society, Capital Classics Theater Company, and Ballet Theater Company. The Center provides a desirable and flexible venue to enable many cultural and educational organizations to flourish in town and makes West Hartford a destination and a prized place to live. The Center presents over 150 events annually, ranging from college and community presentations to performing arts series and films.

The Home Design District of West Hartford is a collection of 20 local home improvement businesses within a one square mile range on New Park Avenue. Formed five years ago with the mission of branding the area and bringing more consumers and vital commercial activity to the area, member businesses have organized street clean-ups, banners hung to designate the area, and television and print advertising to promote the organization. The group has attracted new businesses to the district and successfully draws customers in search of alternatives to corporate, generic "big box" home improvement stores. Over \$15,000 in targeted promotional advertising has been spent in the greater Hartford area.

Morley Elementary School second grade teacher Dawn O'Connor is to be recognized as an educator who goes well beyond her job description to give children an enhanced and interconnected sense of community. She organizes the Red Wagon Food Drive, now a familiar annual event, to benefit the West Hartford Food Bank. This past Thanksgiving season, some sixty wagons filled with food items were presented to the Bank. She was also a driving force behind "A Fleece for a Friend," a program where Morley School provided 201 fleece jackets for students in need at Morley's sister school, W. B. Goodwin Elementary, in North Charleston, South Carolina. O'Connor dealt with the devastating Japanese tsunami by supplementing the normal Japan curriculum unit with a fundraiser to send 1,000 dollar bills, made into origami hearts, to affected families.

The Chamber will also be presenting its awards to recognize the Ambassador and Volunteer of the Year.

Tickets are \$25 for Chamber members, and \$30 for guests; information about registration is available at the Chamber's website www.ExploreWestHartford.com.

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