

**RON ALIANO SERVICE AWARD RECOGNIZES CHRIS JEWELL AND MCKENNAS FLOWER SHOP  
JASON VINCENT MEMORIAL SERVICE AWARD TO GO TO CELIA SIEFERT**

NORWICH, CT— Chris Jewell and McKennas Flower Shop, were recently nominated and selected to receive the 2023 Ron Aliano Service Award for their distinguished service in the development of the City of Norwich. Their achievements will be celebrated at a ceremony on Thursday, June 1, 2023, as part of the annual fireworks silent auction fundraiser at the Marina at the Holiday Inn. The Service Award recognizes and celebrates both a citizen and a business who are dedicated to public service and professionalism at the local level.

Additionally, Norwich Event's Organization's newest award the Jason Vincent Memorial Service Award, given to a community member that embodies Jason's spirit of giving, commitment to community through volunteerism and willingness to always step in if help is needed is being awarded to Celia Siefert.

Chris Jewell owner of Collins and Jewell in the Norwich Business Park tirelessly devotes his time and energy into helping Norwich become a more vibrant place to live, work and do business. In addition to owning and running his own business, Chris is the Vice Chairman of the Norwich Free Academy's Board, Treasurer of the Board for Norwich Community Development Corporation, Chairman of the Board for the Eastern Workforce Investment Board (EWIB), President of the Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance (EAMA), and on the Board of Directors for the Greater Norwich Area Chamber of Commerce. Chris's drive, vision and enthusiasm for Norwich are inspiring and embody the spirit that Ron Aliano evoked.

McKenna's Flower Shop owned by Michael Rankowitz has been quietly turning donated mugs into Christmastime decorations to give to seniors in nursing homes for the last 10 years. This program, called 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. Additionally, they daily post a sidewalk name and a Facebook name and give a rose to anyone that stops in who bears that name. It is just one of the many things that McKenna's does to spread joy throughout the community. In review after review their customers expound on how the staff goes above and beyond to help them on last minute items, and make the best of times and the worst of times just a little bit better.

Celia Siefert, who is receiving the Jason Vincent Memorial Service Award was the first female patrol officer with the Norwich Police Department where she served for 8 years before she accepted a position with the State of CT Judicial Branch where she spent 31 years before retiring. Currently, she spends much of her down time volunteering with local organizations. She partners with Billy Wilsons Ageing still to cook the breakfasts for their fundraising events, volunteers at Saint Vincent de Paul where she helps organize the volunteer program for the food pantry, helps organize the delivery program of meals on Thanksgiving and Christmas, participates in special programming for kids, helps with fundraising and fills in wherever is necessary. Celia is a current committee member of the NAACP, and has formally served on the Saint Patrick's School Board, was the "Head Elf" of the Norwich Human Services Christmas Gift Program for 20 years, helped support Senior Center Meals on Wheels for Christmas, and made meals for the homeless in the winter for Saint Vincent de Paul for 5 years in partnership with Norwich Human Services.

Please join us in honoring Chris, McKenna's and Celia on June 1, 2023 at the Holiday Inn in Norwich from 5:30-8:30 PM. Tickets the event benefit the Norwich Harbor 4<sup>th</sup> of July Fireworks and can be purchased for \$40 per person online at GoNorwichCT.com or in the Facebook event. In addition to the Service Award, music, food, cash bar and silent auction will be provided. Thanks to the Holiday Inn for the sponsorship of this year's event.

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Norwich Events Organization is a nonprofit, 501c3 all volunteer committee that organizes community events for the citizens of Norwich and our surrounding region. These events are funded 100% by tax-deductible donations. Each year we organize the Norwich Saint Patrick's Parade and Festival, Norwich Harbor Fireworks, and Winterfest Parade. This year we are also organizing Downtown After Dark and helping to organize First Fridays. Thanks to our Sponsors: Foxwoods Resort Casino, Holiday Inn Norwich, Norwich Public Utilities, Chelsea Groton Bank, Eastern CT Savings Bank, Dime Savings Bank, Prokop Signs, Hall Communications, and Hartford Healthcare.