



Dr. Richard Guarasci, president of Wagner College; Kevin Mannix, owner and operator of two Island ShopRites; Walt Hameline, Wagner athletic director and football coach; Claire Regan, associate managing editor Staten Island Advance; Joseph Tornello, president of Meals On Wheels; and Sara Cohen, from the Jewish Community Center announce a joint partnership with Wagner College, ShopRite and the Staten Island Advance for the 50-ton Food Challenge.



STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE PHOTOS/IRVING SILVERSTEIN

Food drive opts to raise the bar

ShopRite, Wagner College Athletics and the Advance are hoping to collect 50 tons by the end of the year

By MICHAEL SEDON
STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE

With the lofty aim met for donating 25 tons of food for Staten Island's needy, the team responsible-- ShopRite, Wagner College Athletics and the Advance-- has set a higher goal of 50 tons by the end of this year.

Last August, the commitment was made to gather the food for Project Hospitality in Stapleton by Dec. 31, 2012.

The ambitious goal of 50 tons was announced Wednesday afternoon at Wagner College's Spiro Sports Center to be met by Dec. 31, 2013, and the focus has expanded to include the JCC Food Bank, Stapleton UAME Church, the Christian Pentecostal Church in Concord and Meals on Wheels.

"Really, the thanks goes to all our ShopRite customers," said Kevin Mannix, owner and operator of the two Staten Island ShopRites in Graniteville and New Dorp. "Unfortunately, fighting the battle of hunger did not go away December 31. It's still right here on Staten Island."

Mannix said the grocery store got into a "rhythm" delivering food to Project Hospitality every two weeks, and he noted that's what these food pantries need, a steady supply.

Project Hospitality will still receive 25 tons, and the rest will be spread around the other four charities, Mannix announced.

"We don't usually think of a supermarket as a moral force in the community," said Rabbi Gerald Sussman, representing Project Hospitality. "I think in a way a supermarket gives spiritual food as well, and that's by giving people the opportunity to reach out and help someone else."

Many of the Wagner College athletes have collected food at sporting events or by donating, and each different sport engages in friendly competition to see who can raise the most food, said Dr.

Richard Guarasci, president of Wagner.

"Really it's a testament to our students and our student athletes, who have really committed themselves to this," Guarasci said. "I think

Also on hand for the announcement were members of the Wagner College women's soccer team.

the students are learning what it means to be part of a good community and how to contribute to make a good community."

Walt Hameline, athletic director and head football coach also touted the out-of-class education students receive when they commit to

charitable projects.

"When you talk about learning experiences for our students here at Wagner, that's probably one of the greatest learning experiences you can have," Hameline said. "Let's keep it going, and let's finish."

The Advance has covered

exceptional generosity and community support in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, which Claire Regan, associate managing editor at the Advance noted as a good sign for accomplishing the new goal.

"Staten Islanders respond, they step up when asked to

help," Ms. Regan said. "So we know that they will respond in this way as well."

Donation boxes will be at Wagner College's Spiro Sports Center and throughout the campus in Grymes Hill, both ShopRite locations and the Advance's Grasmere office.