

WHEAT Community Connections receives \$200K for new Clinton building

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Photo | Sara Bedigian Nypro Foundation presenting United Way with a check of \$200,000
By Sara Bedigian

Framingham-based social service organization United Way of Tri-County received a \$200,000 donation on Tuesday from the Clinton-based Nypro Foundation to expand its food pantry and hot meals program in Clinton.

WHEAT Community Connections, a direct service program of United Way, received the donation during a news conference at their current location on High Street in Clinton. The donation will go toward building a new four-story building located close by at 224-230 High St.

There is a strong need for expanding the food pantry and hot meals program in Clinton, Paul Mina, president of United Way, said at the conference. Mina explained people need help for various reasons, adding that a lot of people utilizing their resources are working full time jobs

but can't afford basic necessities.

"The need is large and that should be a concern for all of us," Mina said.

The building will include the food pantry, meals program, Hidden Treasures discount thrift store, conference room, and eight short-term transition housing units. Mina said affordable housing is in high demand in the Greater Clinton community, and will be a great addition to WHEAT.

Mina announced they are hoping to break ground on the building in August, with a goal of completing it in 18 months.

WHEAT is overseen by director Liz Leonard, who took over the position in April. Leonard said she is excited to lead the organization at a pivotal time of growth.

"We are immensely grateful to the Nypro Foundation for their very generous donation for our new building project. Their deep-rooted commitment to WHEAT makes it possible for us to better serve our community and we are so thankful for their partnership." Leonard said.

The Nypro Foundation, remembering the legacy of its founder Gordon Lankton, who passed away in 2021, has worked with United Way of Tri-County for years. Ted Lapres, president of Nypro Foundation, said the foundation is happy to serve more people and contribute to the work WHEAT is doing for the Greater Clinton community.

"We are proud to support WHEAT Community Connections in the past and in the future," Lapres said at the conference.

To recognize the late Gordon Lankton and the Nypro Foundation, United Way of Tri-County announced Tuesday the new building will include a community conference center that will be dedicated in Lankton's name.

"My dad loved Clinton. Clinton was his home, he developed his company here and put all of his love into this community, so this is very meaningful," Lauren Weisshaar, daughter of Lankton, said.

Lankton was a local philanthropist and founder of Nypro Inc., a Clinton-based medical equipment manufacturer, and the Nypro Foundation.

Nypro Inc. was bought by Florida-based manufacturing company Jabil Circuit in 2013.

Town officials, members of Nypro Foundation and United Way, representatives from Hopkinton-based Gorman Richardson Lewis Architects and Worcester Business Development Corp, and community members were in attendance at the conference on Tuesday to show their support.

WHEAT has served residents of Greater Clinton since 1982, and became a direct service program of United Way in 2012. WHEAT food pantry provides monthly groceries Monday through Thursday. Homemade lunches and dinners are provided Monday through Friday.

The Hidden Treasures thrift store provides discounted furniture, household items, and clothing, with all proceeds going toward subsidizing the food programs. Seasonal programs and an outdoor marketplace occur throughout the year.