

The Photo News

Community holds drug addiction forum focusing on heroin

Spotlight shown on rising heroin problem in Monroe

BY ERIKA NORTON

MONROE — For Peter Lazier, the pain from losing his son to heroin addiction will always be there. He and others shared their stories at a Monroe-Woodbury Community Drug Addiction Forum Tuesday night in the high school auditorium, an effort by the school and police department to engage in conversation with parents and the community about drugs.

“

Kids, please listen. Parents, talk to your kids, get information. When we used tough love, that's when it go toughest and that's when we lost him. So parents, tell your kids you love them everyday, you don't know when it could be the last.”

Peter Lazier

“This kind of pain doesn't go away,” Lazier said. “It is with me when I wake, in the afternoon, when I go to bed, when I wake up at 2 a.m.”

Lazier's son Ryan began experimenting with marijuana and alcohol at age

13, eventually progressing to prescription pain medication and onto heroin. He and his wife spent the last four years of Ryan's life trying to help him get well, but after countless rehab centers and halfway houses, he ended up living on the streets in Florida state.

Just before Ryan was to return to another rehab facility, he decided to get high one more time. He had no money and tried to grab a bag from his dealer, but while trying to get away the drug dealer shot him in the back of the head. He died four days later.

Lazier, who now works with an organization called Shatterproof to share his story, left the audience members, ranging from middle schoolers to elderly couples, with this message:

“Kids, please listen. Parents, talk to your kids, get information. When we used tough love, that's when it go toughest and that's when we lost him. So parents, tell your kids you love them everyday, you don't know when it could be the last.”

Major increase in Monroe area

According to Monroe Detective Patrick Tenaglia, the department has been seeing a lot of overdoses in the community. People are dying from using heroin and fentanyl, a synthetic and much more potent form of heroin where even a little bit can be a deadly dose.

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PHOTO PROVIDED BY ALEX CARVER

U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Sergeant G. Matthew and Lance Corporal Hannah VanSlyke arrived at Monroe Free Library to pick of the first donations made by library patrons to the Toys for Tots program. The library will continue to accept donations of new, unwrapped toys until Monday, Dec. 19.

Monroe Free Library patrons deliver for Christmas

MONROE — Mere days after the red and white Toys for Tots box was dropped off in the lobby of the Monroe Free Library, the donations began spilling over the edges.

Patrons of the library brought boxes and bags of new, unwrapped toys in such numbers that library staff had trouble finding places to put them.

“I could hardly move behind the circulation desk with all the toys,” said Carol

Bezkorowajny, Head of Circulation at the library, “which is a good problem to have.”

Luckily, the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, which runs the Toys for Tots program, was quick on the uptake. Sergeant G. Matthew and Lance Corporal Hannah VanSlyke arrived on the scene and took away the happy haul.

The library will continue to accept donations of new, unwrapped toys until Monday, Dec. 19.

Orange County receives more than \$8.9 million in economic development grants

Legoland, Warwick factory, Tuxedo Revitalization Project biggest winners

BY ERIKA NORTON

GOSHEN — The state announced the winners of \$83.3 million in grants last week, which will go to support 105 projects in the seven counties that make up the Mid-Hudson region.

Orange County raked in a total of \$8.9 million, with the biggest winners being the Legoland theme park proposed for Goshen, a syrup factory coming to Warwick and a project aimed at revitalizing the Tuxedo Sloatsburg Corridor.

The grants are part of Gov. Andrew Cuomo's Regional Economic Development Council Initiative, which focuses on long-term strategic plans for regional economic growth.

The big winners

■The largest award in the county of \$3 million went to Merlin Entertainments, the developer of the proposed Legoland New York theme park in Goshen, a project which already received \$4.1 million

in state grants when the park was originally planned for Rockland County. According to Focus Media Vice President JP McGuirk, the public relations firm representing Merlin, the funds are earmarked for new construction, furniture, fixtures and equipment for the park.

■In Warwick, Star Kay White, Inc., a company that mainly manufactures flavorings and extracts, was awarded a combined \$2.6 million in grant funds for a new \$20 million state-of-the-art facil-

ity planned for the Warwick Valley Office and Technology Park, formerly the Mid-Orange Correctional Facility property. The facility would house the company's primary syrup manufacturing line.

■The Tuxedo Hudson Company also received a \$750,000 grant to help fund the company's Revitalization Project of the Tuxedo Sloatsburg Corridor, the underdeveloped stretch of Route 17 that runs

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Grants

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through those two towns. Spearheaded by entrepreneur Michael Bruno, the goal of the project is to re-energize the area's commercial economy by transforming the properties along the corridor, many of them with historical buildings, into places for antiquing, world-class cuisine and lodging.

These places include the renovation of the Tuxedo Market, the Tuxedo Tavern, and the Sloatsburg Garden Hotel, the Sloatsburg Antiques/Art Center and the Sloatsburg Farm.

"We are thrilled that the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council recognizes the benefit of our project and we are honored to be included," Bruno said. "The funds awarded will help us to realize our goal to get the market and hotel open in 2017"

■Nearby, the Village of Woodbury also received \$135,075 of funding for comprehensive system/program mapping of the municipal storm water sewer system (MS4), which will help the village identify discharges into local waterways.

According to Mayor Michael Queenan, the Village of Woodbury has approximately 1,090 inlets and about 270,000 feet of storm sewer. The mapping will help the village comply with state MS4 general permit requirements and also assists the village in enforcement of illicit discharges and municipal management of the capital resources.

"It helps us really to protect the natural resources, especially the Moodna Creek," Queenan said. "You're required to do this for your permits. It's a costly endeavor, and we're going to have to put up some of the money ourselves, but getting this grant is a big benefit and it mitigates the impact to the taxpayers."

County grants

Orange County received a number of grants for environmental projects. The county Department of Public Works received a grant of \$510,985 to expand the Yard Waste Composting Facility located at the New Hampton transfer off Route 17M.

"They had done some small scale piloting with dealing with organic waste, like yard waste and other things," said County Planning Commissioner David Church,

"so this would greatly expand that. We're trying to take that waste out of getting just dumped or carted."

According to Church, the money will go to help pay for some site improvements and some equipment to scale the program up, plus some monitoring of how the program goes to hopefully figure out a way to implement the program at all of the county transfer stations.

The county Planning Department also received funding to continue with the Climate Smart Communities Certification process.

"Certification is that the county through the legislature, made a pledge to act to pursue and advance certain actions that are smart for the climate and address climate change," Church said. "The certification, we met the minimum necessary of those steps, so we're trying to do more than that now."

Orange County was the first county in the state of New York to be certified as a Climate Smart Community, and because the county was certified, it was eligible for this grant money.

"We're on the podium, but we're not the winner," Church said, and so this funding will go to the county's next steps in the certification rating system.

These next steps include developing a county-wide Natural Resource Inventory (NRI), conducting a vulnerability assessment and developing Climate Adaptation Strategies. Church said the project is specifically structured around the different large watersheds in the county.

For the project, the county is partnering with the Wallkill River Watershed Alliance, the Orange County Water Authority and the SUNY New Paltz, specifically with faculty members who do specialized research through the Benjamin Center.

"We're going to do some research on what climate change is impacting those watershed areas and then come up with some proposed actions on how to address them," Church said.

Gov. Cuomo is also beginning to make this initiative of making climate smart communities an element of a larger program called Clean Energy Communities. Church said the county wants to get to the level where we can qualify for that, which would not only show that the county is progressive about these issues, but make the county eligible for additional, new funding.

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