



NORWICH WOMEN'S CLUB

A Letter from NWC Board President Annette Brown—August 2024

Dear NWC Members,

We've now reached the end of our membership year, and it's time to renew for 2024-2025! Please feel free to send a check made out to the Norwich Women's Club to PO Box 191, Norwich VT 05055, or pay with a credit card through our website (click [here](#)).

Here is a review of all we've done this year!

During the 2024-2025 cycle, the Community Project Grants committee, chaired by Debbie Carter, received requests for \$24,201 from 22 different Upper Valley organizations and individuals. The Board voted to fund \$21,691 of that amount. Our focus is, as always, on giving grants to nonprofit groups whose work directly benefits Norwich residents and the Norwich community, and we often had to deny requests based on those criteria.

Kathy Welling, chair of the Scholarship committee, received 25 applications for scholarships this year through the Vermont Student Assistance Committee (VSAC); 12 applicants qualified for aid and received awards totaling \$28,000. As you may be aware, this was a particularly difficult year for the committee, as the federal government changed the FAFSA application, which delayed student applications by several weeks. We are very grateful to VSAC for providing their initial

financial review of each applicant, and for the perseverance of Kathy and her committee in following through with their review and decisions. This remains the most important charitable activity for the NWC, and the reason we work so hard to raise money every year.

In terms of fundraising, it has been a challenging year for us as well. Our fundraising around the Celebrate Norwich! event was not as successful as the last two years; we raised about half as much as last year, which will impact the amount we can commit to scholarship awards next year. I'm sure there were many reasons for this, not least that there are many other worthy nonprofits out there who are also asking for donations regularly, whether for affordable housing, food assistance, or health care for low-income families. Brainstorming and strategic planning will be needed.

But we did have a very active, interesting year:

- The Nearly New Sale last October was very successful, raising about \$12,000.
- Switching our holiday party to January seemed to be well received, as we had a nice group at the Norwich Historical Society (NHS) building for our pizza party.
- In February, we sold all tickets available for the Book & Author event at the Norwich Inn, where Joni B. Cole talked about being a writer and her most recent book.
- Later in the month, we sponsored the annual Selectboard Candidates Forum, which was held in the community room in Tracy Hall this year. It was again covered by JAM, who provided Zoom coverage in real-time and a recorded version on their website. For the first time, we had an all-NWC panel running the event—Heidi Webster served as moderator, Megan Tompkins moderated the online audience questions, and I served as time keeper. I feel strongly that this is a valuable contribution that we make to the town, providing an opportunity for the public to ask questions of the candidates directly.
- In April, the Citizen of the Year committee, led by Lisa Christie, got organized and started accepting nominations. In May, the award winner—Emily Myers—was announced, and later honored at the Celebrate Norwich! event on June 2. (If you haven't seen it already, the plaque we had

created last year listing all of our past Citizens of the Year is at the top of the first-floor stairs in Tracy Hall, next to the elevator.)

- The Celebrate Norwich! event itself was wonderful—we had great weather this year, and were pleased with the public turnout. The Lions Club almost sold out of the hot dogs and hamburgers they cooked, and Norwich Creamery was also very happy with their ice cream sales. The music from Tuck's Rock Dojo bands was delightful as usual, and the face painting was as popular as ever. We had a bubbles table manned by Carole Bibeau, some games set up by Melanie Farwell, the Marion Cross PE teacher, and we all got to see Lizzie Gray on stilts! The NHS also lent us three pairs of kid-sized stilts for anyone interested in giving them a try. The winning ticket was pulled for the raffle prize of a 1-year membership at the Upper Valley Aquatic Center and a package of personal training sessions; we paid \$650 (at a discount from UVAC, much appreciated) for this prize, and sold 63 tickets for the raffle, so overall we made about \$1,870 from the raffle alone.
- And later in June, we held a pleasant Annual Meeting in Jaci Allen's lovely backyard garden.

So we have had another busy year! We won't be having a July summer concert, as the school has warned us that they will be digging up the green at some point to work on their septic system; however, there will be a concert on August 25, from 5-7 pm, featuring The Flames. Hope to see you there!

Annette Brown