

# CHS raises cash for injured vets

## Student group presents \$600 check to Fisher House Boston

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COVENTRY — A group of students in Coventry felt compelled to help wounded soldiers and their families—so much that they raised \$600 for Fisher House Boston, an organization that serves as a “home away from home” for the wounded during recovery.

For one week in January, the Conservative Student Association at Coventry

High School asked friends, family and the rest of the student body to purchase \$1 wristbands to support the Fisher House Boston.

As a result, Elizabeth St. Pierre, the house manager of Fisher House and also an alumna of Coventry High School, came to Coventry last Friday to hand out awards and to thank each of the students involved.

“The community support is really

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Lauren Knight/Daily Times

Brian Golas, advisor, and Elizabeth St. Pierre, the house manager at Fisher House Boston, stand with the Conservative Student Association as they present a \$600 check to Fisher House.

# Vets get gift from Coventry HS conservatives

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important because I work for the federal government so we cannot do any fundraising or soliciting of our own donations," said St. Pierre. "So community groups that reach

out to us help support the families while they are in-house." The Fisher House in Boston was initially built two years ago with private donations, according to St. Pierre. It was then donated to the government as a gift to the veterans

and active military. It is one of nearly 60 nation-wide.

The other Fisher Houses across the country were built in the same fashion, she explained. As a result, they can provide free lodging for wounded military and their families during their recovery.

"We have had people stay up to 12 months already, so it can be very long-term or just a few days — whatever their needs are," she said.

When the Conservative Student Association at Coventry High School heard about what Fisher House does, the students thought it was the perfect organization to focus on for their annual fundraising efforts.

"We thought it was important because as the wars keep going on, a lot of wounded soldiers are coming back and a lot of them may need medical attention back at home. Not many people can afford to go and fly out to see their dad, husband, wife or whoever," said Joseph Erickson, senior and student president of the association. "So we thought the Fisher House was a good organization because they actually build houses next to the hospital for family members of those wounded soldiers to stay in."

Ezra Sheridan, freshman, agreed.

"I think it was the family thing—it was not just about the [medical attention for] soldiers, it was something that would cheer them up on a daily basis," she said. "It's a great cause."

Each year, the Conservative Student Association finds and fundraises for a cause they deem important. Brian Golas, the advisor for the club, ex-



Lauren Knight/Daily Times

Elizabeth St. Pierre, a former Coventry High student, and CHS Conservative Student Association advisor Brian Golas hand out awards to members of the group on behalf of Fisher House Boston, a facility that helps injured veterans recuperate and spend time with their families.

plained that often this cause is patriotic.

"This is a group of like-minded students that have conservative values," he said. "We kind of preach personal responsibility, hard work and other old-fashioned American values."

"The group tends to draw really patriotic kids and just good kids in general," Golas added, explaining that many of them are musicians, athletes and in honor societies. "So they're really hard workers."

Last year's project was to raise funds to send care packages to Coventry High School alumni serving in the marines in Afghanistan. And when it came time to fundraise this year, the idea was sparked when Golas heard Fisher House mentioned on TV, and then further confirmed when

he spoke with an Iraq veteran who now works at the school as a guidance counselor.

The guidance counselor said to him, "Last year, you helped out active duty soldiers and the wars have been going on so there are lot of wounded, why don't you target those guys?" remembered Golas. So he presented the idea to the student association and they "took it and ran with it."

Together, the students researched and organized the entire fundraiser.

"We got the idea to sell wristbands, which we did last year, and it was a pretty big success," said Erickson.

Last year they raised a total of \$350, and this year, they nearly doubled that figure.

"People were just giving money and not taking the wristbands back with them. It

was pretty exciting to see the entire school body donating towards this common cause," he said.

According to Jen DeLuca, the board assistant of Fisher House Boston, any veteran or active military personnel is eligible to stay at a Fisher House, whether in wartime or peace. There is no charge for any family who resides there.

The location in Boston was the 46th house built in the United States and two more are scheduled to open by the end of February. According to St. Pierre, they are also building a location in Germany and one in England.

"We are on board to continue building as long as they need them," she said.

Fisher House Boston is a 501(c)(3) organization. It is located in West Roxbury, Mass.

## R.I. TIDES — WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15

**High: 1:41 AM 2:06 PM**

**Low: 7:56 AM 7:22 PM**

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