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Wireless Zone Announces \$40,000 in Grant Recipients, Backpack Giveaway, and More!

While schools, restaurants and shops closed their doors these past few months, the Wireless Zone- Verizon Premium Wireless Retailers in Groton, New London, Glastonbury, North Windham, Killingly, Putnam and Westerly were not only fortunate enough to remain open to serve their customers as an essential business, but were able to generously give back to their community as well. With over \$40,000 being donated to local nonprofit organizations and anticipating the 4th Annual Backpack Giveaway on July 26th, the locally owned and family operated Wireless Zone teams have been philanthropically busier than ever in their community.

From the onset of the pandemic, co-owners Neil Ryan and Scott Gladstone tried to stay current with the changing landscapes around the world, observing the trends and the grave effect the virus was having on businesses, families, and nonprofit organizations alike. Strategic foresight into how the small states of Connecticut and Rhode Island would be affected helped the Wireless Zone teams collaborate with other local companies to devise game plans that would assist in lending a hand, both personally and professionally.

With increasing restrictions to visiting loved ones in hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, etc., the team at Wireless Zone harnessed the beauty of technology and their love of family to take initiative on a technology donation drive called "Tablets for Seniors." In collaboration with Maria Miranda of Miranda Creative, the goal of the project was to connect the elderly community, many of whom were isolated, with their families through gently used tablets. After sterilizing and refurbishing the donated tablets, Wireless Zone connected them with local nursing homes and eldercare housing. Thanks to the generosity of the community, the "Tablets for Seniors" project was able to collect and distribute over 150 tablets to those in need of staying connected to family during the pandemic.

Another major sector gravely affected by the pandemic was the hospitality industry. In searching for a way to thank local health heroes, the team at Wireless Zone quickly questioned whether there a way to thank frontline health care heroes and support small business at the same time. 'Meals for Heroes' quickly came to fruition and blossomed.

The Wireless Zone locations collected donations from their customers, vendors, co-workers, friends & family and used the collective total to purchase gift cards from many local restaurants. In supporting local restaurants, the gift cards were then used to provide many free meals to healthcare workers and first responders on the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis. With no set amount in mind, Wireless Zone is proud to announce that over \$9,000 was raised to purchase gift cards that supported both local restaurants and our community health heroes with free meals.

In addition, Wireless Zone also nominated multiple nonprofit organizations in the Eastern Connecticut and Southern Rhode Island communities to receive grants from the Wireless Zone Foundation in 2020. A grand total of \$40,000 will be donated to these neighboring organizations.

The charities receiving grants in Rhode Island are: Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rhode Island, Inc., Boys Town New England, Inc., East Bay Food Pantry & Thrift Shop, Frank Olean Center, Jonnycake Center of Westerly, Operation Stand Down Rhode Island, Peace Dale Neighborhood Revitalization, Inc., Ronald McDonald House Charities of New England and South County Community Action.

The charities receiving grants in Connecticut are: Camp Horizons, End Hunger Connecticut, Girls on the Run International (Greater Hartford), Hartford HealthCare at Home Center for Hospice Care, Hartford Marathon Foundation, High Hopes Therapeutic Riding Inc., Jewish Federation of Eastern CT, Lawrence & Memorial Hospital, Northeast Opportunities for Wellness, TEEG and Waterford Country School.

Each year Scott Gladstone and Neil Ryan elect several charities in their community that display extraordinary dedication to serve their respective organizations and fulfill their unique mission statements. This year, twenty of these grant requests were honored. "We're lucky. Why not pass some of that good fortune onto those who need it most?" says Ryan.



Lawrence & Memorial Hospital, Waterford Country School and High Hopes Therapeutic Riding were among the organizations receiving grants from The Wireless Zone Foundation for Giving® Inc., established in 2003. The Foundation supports both local and national nonprofit organizations, providing a basic structure for the company's collaborative giving program and enhancing the individual stores' ability to give back to their local community. The grant funds will assist awarded organizations with initiatives to both expand upon current programs and implement new ones.

The teams at each Wireless Zone location are currently gearing up for the 4th Annual Backpack Giveaway on Sunday, July 26th. Now through the actual giveaway, Wireless Zone locations will be collecting donations that will be used to purchase school supplies for families in need. Not only will each backpack be filled with school supplies, each child can enter to win one of five \$10,000 scholarships. Last year, over two thousand backpacks were distributed, and Wireless Zone intends to exceed that goal this summer.

The giveaway is on Sunday, July 26th and will begin at 1pm and lasts until 4pm, or when all the packs are given away. Stores will have a select number of backpacks, and customers cannot reserve the packs in advance. They are available on a first-come, first-served basis. To learn more about this initiative, please visit www.wirelesszone.com/backpack-giveaway to see participating locations. Groton and New London, Connecticut as well as Westerly, Rhode Island are participating.

“The looks on kid's face when they open this backpack filled to the brim with school supplies, replaying that look, well that inspires you through even the most challenging times... even a worldwide pandemic.”

Wireless Zone is the nation's leading independent Verizon Wireless franchise, offering the latest and greatest in products, services, and accessories, as well as repair services. Wireless Zone is open seven days a week, from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sundays. Wireless Zone encourages all nonprofit organizations to reach out if we can be of any assistance in the future.