

Donation drive gives USCG, FAA and TSA needed support

Coast Guard spouses group key to accepting donations

By David Creed
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As the federal government's partial shutdown continued into its second month this week, community concern for members of the Coast Guard, employees of the Federal Aviation Administration and Transportation Security Administration and their families on the island continues to grow.

More than 200 people contributed money, gift cards, non-perishable food and toiletries at a donation drive at the Unitarian Meeting House Friday evening hosted by the Station Brant Point Spouses Organization, president Lindsay Lawellin said.

"The Brant Point Spouses raised money to help our members with specific needs, gift cards to alleviate food costs, and items to stock our food pantry which was extended to all government employees affected by the shutdown. We will continue to include all agencies as long as we can," she said.

Everyone affected by the shutdown is thankful for the community contributions and their willingness to help out,

Spouses Organization vice president Karmen Caylor said.

"The generosity of this small island community has been such a blessing. We are very thankful for those who took their time out to come and donate. It was a pleasure getting to meet members of the community," she said.

Lawellin and Caylor declined to detail the amount of money and gift cards donated, but said at this time, monetary donations are most helpful.

"We all have different needs and different situations, so it's been such a blessing to be able to make sure all of our families are being taken care of during this time of uncertainty. We still have no idea when we will see our next paychecks," Lawellin said of the 18 single service members and nine families of Station Brant Point.

Checks can be made payable to Station Brant Point Spouses Organization. They can be mailed to or dropped off at 20 Vesper Lane, Unit H2, Nantucket, MA 02544.

Non-perishable food, mon-



Photo by Nicole Hamishfeger

Rev. Linda Simmons greets a guest at the entrance of the Unitarian Meeting House last Friday where the Station Brant Point Spouses Association held a donation drive.

etary donations, gift cards and toiletries can also be dropped off at the following locations: The Inquirer and Mirror, 1 Old South Road; Island Haircutting, 115 Pleas-

ant St.; Offshore Animal Hospital, 11 Crooked Lane; and Great Point Properties, 1 North Beach Street.

If the government shutdown continues, the Spouses

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Station Brant Point Spouses Organization

Organization may need to consider hosting a second donation drive, Lawellin said.

The organization was formed well before the shutdown with the intent of supporting Station Brant Point families and connecting them with the greater community, she added.

"As far as events for our members throughout the year, we are continually advocating for our families so we will be brainstorming fundraising opportunities as well as ways to give back to our community for what they have done for us the past month," Lawellin said. "We also will be seeking volunteer opportunities with local organizations, events and businesses."

Lawellin also encouraged islanders to reach out to the organization with any advice, ideas or suggestions that can help all the families currently being affected by the shut-

down. "I want to thank all the local businesses that have stepped in and offered federal employees meals and discounts," she said.

"Even little acts of kindness, such as Nantucket Ice offering a free skate day, is so good for morale. I think I can speak for all agencies when I say that we are very grateful for this community. Nantucket's pretty special."

She said the impact the support continues to have on the members of the Coast Guard has been enormous.

"I think it's been really encouraging for our Coast Guardsmen to see the community stand in their corner," Lawellin said. "I think the support has done more for them than anyone realizes."

The Spouses Organization can be reached at (850) 598-2833 or stationbrantpointspousesorg@gmail.com.