

BUSINESS *The Hour*

Levinson, Pepperidge Farm honored by VAC

NORWALK
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Hour Staff Writer

Pepperidge Farm and David Levinson, president of Norwalk Community College, got a little in return for all that they give out.

The Voluntary Action Center honored Pepperidge Farm and Levinson on Wednesday at the 2009 Volunteer Leadership Breakfast held at Dolce Norwalk Center. Pepperidge Farm received the Corporate Leadership Award and Levinson received the Distinguished Leader Award.

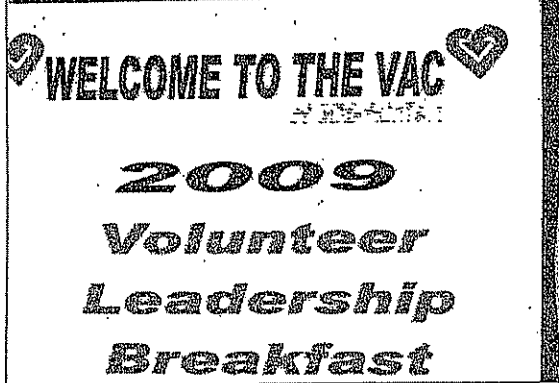
"There's not a community college in the state that has a better leader (than Levinson)," Norwalk Mayor Richard Moccia said. "Pepperidge Farm is a true corporate citizen in every sense of the word. Volunteers: Stay with it, we need you more than ever."

The Voluntary Action Center, a program of the Human Services Council, promotes and coordinates volunteerism in the communities it serves. It recruits, trains and manages volunteers for more than 150 nonprofit agencies.

State Sen. Bob Duff, D-25, presented the award to Levinson, who came to NCC in 2004. Duff described Levinson as a "thinker and a doer" and a "quiet, yet forceful" leader.

"He's truly a distinguished leader in this community," Duff said. "And, if I might add, a really nice guy."

Levinson is a member of the American Council of Education's Commission on Lifelong Learning. He also sits on the board of several local organizations, including: Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk; Greater Norwalk Chamber of Commerce; United Way of Coastal Fairfield County; Norwalk Children's Foundation; and Norwalk



Hour photos/ERIK TRAUTMANN

State Sen. Bob Duff, D-25, presents the Distinguished Leader Award to Dr. David Levinson, president of Norwalk Community College, during Wednesday's Voluntary Action Center of Mid-Fairfield's 2009 Volunteer Leadership Breakfast held at the Dolce Norwalk Center.



Ruthann Walsh, director of corporate citizenship at Pepperidge Farm, accepts the Corporate Leadership Award on behalf of her company.

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"This is really an award for the college and what the faculty and staff do day in and day out," Levinson said. "I'm proud of the work we're doing preparing a work force for Fairfield County."

Duff, in a previous address to the crowd of about 150 people on Wednesday, called for a moment of silence in honor of Carla Gisolfi, the director of the school-based health centers. Gisolfi passed away on March 25.

Duff wanted the moment of silence to honor "all Carla's contributions to VAC and the community at large."

Duff also read a proclamation from Gov. M. Jodi Reil, who proclaimed April 8 as "Voluntary Action Center of Mid-Fairfield Day." The proclamation read in part: "volunteerism builds a grassroots movement that uses services as an opportunity to positively impact our communities."

Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal also read a citation from his office.

"I'm particularly delighted to be here for these two honorees. Not only are they exemplars in leading by example, but they have great products," Blumenthal said. "There have

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VAC honors Levinson,

Pepperidge Farm

From D2

been times I've survived on Pepperidge Farms products."

Kimberly Bankston of GE Commercial Finance presented the Corporate Leadership Award to Pepperidge Farm. In light of all the bad news in today's economic world, Bankston said it was "special when we can talk about what

companies do in the community." Bankston pointed out that Pepperidge Farm was honored earlier this year by NEON.

Ruthann Walsh, director of corporate citizenship for Pepperidge Farm, accepted the award for the Norwalk-based baking company. Walsh said the company was founded more than 70 years ago by Margaret Rudkin, who developed a "little company with values such as caring and teamwork."

Walsh added: "Now we're a big company, but we still carry those values."

Pepperidge Farm has supported in various ways organizations such as: Stepping Stones Museum for Children; Maritime

Aquarium at Norwalk; Courage to Speak; Open Door Shelter; STAR; Special Olympics; and Family & Children's Agency.

Northrop Grumman Norden Systems received the Corporate Leadership Award last year. Tony Izzo, site director at Northrop Grumman in Norwalk, delivered the keynote address.

"Being a good corporate citizen is looking at the community as a whole and then trying to make as much difference as possible without expecting anything in return," Izzo said. "By strengthening our community, we strengthen ourselves."

Benefit Planning Services, GE Commercial Finance, HSBC, Northrop Grumman Norden Systems and Patriot National Bank were the sponsors of the breakfast. The Hour Newspapers was the media sponsor and Purdue Pharma was the printing sponsor.