

Meet the SoNo Stars

BY DAVID SHOCKLEY



Pictured above are the SoNo STARS receiving their monogrammed sweatshirts from Mayor Richard Moccia in January 2008. From left to right is STAR Inc. staff Jamie Bartone, SoNo STAR members John Darden, Lisa Taccone, Tracy Raab, John Gibson, Dana Conley, Mayor Richard Moccia, and Mark Layne.

[contributed photo]

The SoNo STARS Program has proven to be a very successful joint effort between the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency and TEC, the training and employment cooperative office of STAR, Inc., located at 90 Washington Street in South Norwalk. The SoNo STARS, as they are known, consists of seven STAR, Inc. participants who venture into the SoNo business center pedestrian areas, armed with gloves, litter grabbers, and buckets to collect unsightly papers, bottles, and other carelessly discarded items. They work hard to help maintain the respect this cherished historic district deserves. The shop owners and patrons frequently acknowledge their contribution to the community with a friendly comment and a smile.

The SoNo STARS receive far more than their minimum wage compensation for their services. Through this community experience they build

self esteem, have the opportunity to practice their team building skills, and gain satisfaction by helping to restore neighborhood pride.

The SoNo STARS treasure their experience of being a part of this vibrant community and look forward to their outings, which are generally on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings. They are easy to spot in the Washington Street and North and South Main Street areas by their bright lime green tee shirts worn in the warmer months, and by their recently acquired insignia enhanced grey thermal sweatshirts worn in the colder months. ■

About the author: David L. Shockley is the Neighborhood Improvement Coordinator for the Norwalk Redevelopment Agency.

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