

Sheehan senior's polished shoe speech wins Rotary competition

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Kyssandra Perkowski, a Mark T. Sheehan High School senior smiles after placing first with her speech about shoes during the Wallingford Rotary Club's Four-Way Speech Contest at Il Monticello Restaurant in Meriden Wednesday, Dec. 7, 2011. The contest included four students from Sheehan High School and Lyman Hall High School.

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By Melissa Chicker, Record-Journal staff | Posted: Wednesday, December 7, 2011 8:23 pm

MERIDEN - Shoes are the most important article of clothing. From sparkly Converse to casual Old Navy flip-flops, they reflect the wearer's personality.

Those are among the observations Kyssandra Perkowski, a senior at Wallingford's Sheehan High School, shared in her winning speech Wednesday during the Wallingford Rotary Club's Four-Way Speech Contest.

The contest matched four students from Sheehan and Lyman Hall High School competing at the Il Monticello restaurant, in Meriden.

"It is not that serious of a topic," she said. "But it does fit the four-way test because everyone can relate to shoes in some way."

Jordan Brint, a Sheehan senior, spoke on cyber bullying and placed second. In third was Lexie Tarkash, a junior at Lyman Hall, who talked about her mother's second-grade class caroling at a retirement home. Completing the field was Breana Tolla, another Lyman Hall junior, whose speech focused on the role of technology in today's society.

Each student wrote speeches to meet the requirements of the Rotary's Four-Way Test: "Of the things we think, say or do, (1) Is it the truth? (2) Is it fair to all concerned? (3) Will it build goodwill and better friendships? (4) Will it be beneficial to all concerned?" The students were judged on content, organization, delivery, and effectiveness.

"It is a way to involve the youth into the Rotary to understand what it is all about," said Rotarian Chip Lewis, who brought the contest to Wallingford 20 years ago.

The Wallingford Rotary Club, and Rotary clubs around the world, are committed to community service and volunteer work within the community, nationally and internationally, according to member Pat Coppola.

"This event gives us the opportunity to tell the students about Rotary, what we offer, and at the same time give back to the students," she said.

As the winner, Perkowski received a \$100 savings bond and will compete in the semifinals at Fairfield University next month.

"I'm excited," Perkowski said. "All the other speeches were great, also; they were powerful but in their own way. I am thankful for the opportunity and the experience."

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