

## SR. ROSEMARIE GRECO MENTORS PHILLIP KOENIG IN BUSINESS TO BENEFIT SHELTERED ANIMALS

When Sr. Rosemarie Greco's name comes up in a conversation it is usually followed by words of praise for her brilliance in a great variety of talents that she shares so freely. She's an accomplished administrator, educator, musician, writer and business woman. Among the Daughters of Wisdom, she is usually a "go to" person, when expertise and brain-storming need to merge.



Having been named one of Litchfield County's 50 most influential people in 2011, she stands tall among her contemporaries in Connecticut. An accomplished administrator of 25 years at Wisdom House Retreat and Conference Center (a ministry of the Daughters of Wisdom, USA, Province) she has seamlessly directed a successful interfaith center that attracts hundreds of seekers a year for a variety of unique programs and conferences hosting some of the foremost thinkers of our times. Set on 70 acres of meadows, woods and brooks this contemplative environment includes indoor and outdoor sanctuary areas, an outdoor pool, and a seven circuit labyrinth to encourage meditation, prayer and creative thinking. And, most recently, a desire to "go green" has been effected by the transition to the use of solar power resulting in significant savings for the center and environment. By all means, Sr. Rosemarie is mindful of every element of the successful operation of Wisdom House and all that it offers the Litchfield community. So one would think overseeing all these responsibilities would be more than enough to fill the average person's day, week, or possibly month, right?

Well, not for Sr. Rosemarie, as when she is called on, she does not fail to answer. Such was the case recently when she was asked by the Chamber of Commerce of Northwest Connecticut to mentor a student in the Young Entrepreneurs Academy (YEA!) of the University of Rochester. That is when she was matched up to mentor, Phillip Koenig, a 13 year old student at Wamogo High School, Litchfield, CT.

YEA! focuses on a broad definition of entrepreneurship – in this sense, it's the transformation of an idea into an enterprise that creates value. YEA! Teaches middle and high school students not only the importance and purpose of social and business entrepreneurship, but also the process by which one establishes a business enterprise or social movement. For Phillip, help was needed to transform his idea of improving the lives of dogs and cats living in shelters or pounds in the USA by providing them with toys, treats, blankets, towels, sheets and shampoo- just like they would have if they were living in a loving home.

Under the expert guidance of Sr. Rosemarie Greco, DW, Phillip's passion was shaped into a business plan, and the business has slowly but surely become a reality. After months of meeting weekly for an hour and a half on the campus of Northwestern Community College in Winsted, CT ideas cultivated into action for Phillip. A website was established and plan was put into place with Phillip as President and

CEO of HELPING USA ANIMALS, whose motto is "Have a heart and donate!" The plan is a collaborative of like-minded people who want to help out and make a sheltered animal's life a little better. It works through the solicitation and collection of donations and sales of T-shirts that cover the costs of shipping boxes of supplies to pounds and shelters. So far, Philp has been able to send donations to Connecticut, Vermont, Massachusetts, Maine, and New Hampshire.

Getting advice from someone who is so accomplished, including help with trouble-shooting and networking is something anyone starting a business would want. When asked about the mentoring partnership, this is what Phillip had to say about Sr. Rosemarie, "She has helped me through the times when I got frustrated. She helped me edit my business plan, my website, the PowerPoint and helped me write my speech cards. She also gave me great ideas for improving my business. Sr. Rosemarie has attended every mentor session and has supported me through the process of completing my business plan. She has been patient, kind, and has even inspired me to create boxes to sell online, kind of like the Heifer project. Even though I can't use it for this class, I thought it was an awesome idea and will follow through with it in the future. The best part of this experience has been getting to know Sr. Rosemarie and hearing her ideas. She has been a huge help to me and my business. I look forward to keeping in contact with her even after this class ends."



For Sr. Rosemarie, keeping Phillip on track with his project meant exposing him to as many experiences as she could imagine he might encounter in the business world. So questions about logistics of the project and donations were considered; as well as various basic aspects of business that concern financial, legal and marketing objectives.

When asked about the time spent mentoring Phillip, this is what Sr. Rosemarie had to say, "I am enjoying working with Phillip and learning about his life, commitments, hopes and his passion for animals. He's a delightful young man, very creative and intelligent, able to do many of the tasks required in business. Like most of us, growing in self-confidence to make public appearances and speeches which are necessary to sell a product, is an aspect of business that he is growing in. He's 13 years old and doing tasks that in the past would have been considered beyond his years. These days, it's not necessarily so. I admire his readiness to take the risk and branch out beyond his comfort zone. If he didn't believe in his project for the animals, he would not have the stamina to move forward as well as he is doing."

A true test of the success of this mentoring partnership came recently when Sr. Rosemarie and Phillip met with a web and brochure designer who gave a lot of positive feedback to Phillip, as it served as an acknowledgement of being on the right track with his business plans and, as Sr. Rosemarie expressed, "that was a good boost for Phillip."

If you HAVE A HEART and would like to help Phillip continue his good work through his company, HELPING USA ANIMALS, donations can be made through his website at [www.helping-usa-animals.weebly.com](http://www.helping-usa-animals.weebly.com)