

## Behind Every Great Town...

Someone once said that good fences make for good neighbors. If you think about it, this really means that keeping a respectful distance from someone is the way to maintain a good relationship. If you think about it a little more, this is pretty much the opposite of the way things operate in the Town of Secaucus when it comes to our “neighbors” – the businesses, industries, and other organizations who have helped us out over the years. In every case, these neighbors have not kept this Town at arm’s length; they have shown great interest and engagement in countless events and activities, and they continue to support us in the development of facilities, programming and Town organizations. Take a look at a handful of examples of the generosity extended to us on a consistent basis, and you will understand what I mean.

In a recent column, I discussed a number of health offerings – including free ambulance service and in-house doctor visits – that would soon become available to residents of Secaucus. These both come courtesy of new management at the Meadowlands Hospital Medical Center and are perfect examples of the intimate involvement of local businesses in our lives. Contributions like these save taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars and make this Town, and our lives, better on a daily basis.

As great as this relationship is, it’s really just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the many helping hands that consistently reach out and support Secaucus. Hartz Mountain Industries, for example, is yet another of our extremely friendly corporate neighbors. In the past year, Hartz has made donations toward the Town clock that brightens our business district and the development of a new dog park at Mill Creek Point. Other gifts from Hartz this year include 5 years of lease-free space for our new food pantry (valued at over \$300,000), food and toys for the Secaucus Animal Shelter, and two free concerts complete with food and drink at no cost to the public.

Two more of our terrific neighbors are Panasonic and Goya Foods. Panasonic gives regularly to our schools and Teen Center, providing equipment and sponsoring events. They have also made donations to the Town library. Similarly, Goya is a consistent contributor to the Teen Center, sponsors annual concerts, and recently donated 10,000 pounds of food to the new Food Pantry.

As I think about all that we have been so fortunate to receive, the list of magnanimous donors keeps growing. One of these – Xchange at Secaucus Junction - has been expanding rapidly over the years, in terms of both the actual space they occupy and their impact on this town. As they have grown, Xchange has given more and more to the Town of Secaucus. This winter, they hosted their first annual tree lighting festivities with rides, games, and music. Not to be outdone by our many other generous neighbors, Xchange has also begun a successful summer concert series. And to show that they also care about our health and safety, they bought us a specialized fire truck for use in fighting fires in confined parking structures. On top of all this, they make regular donations to local civic organizations.

There are too many outstanding services and gifts for me to list in just one column, but I would be doing our great neighbors a disservice if I didn’t at least recognize them here. Kipnis Physical

Therapy & Sports Medicine, Best Buy, Bob's Furniture, Walmart, Sam's Club, Home Depot are all consistent donors of goods and services. Integrity house provides landscaping services in Town parks and shovels snow for Secaucus residents who cannot do it for themselves. Other local small businesses and civic organizations continue to do their part to make this great community what we are. Like the rest, these are neighbors that we greatly appreciate for their regular generous support.

Everywhere you look, you can see something that was donated to us or someone who has benefited from these special relationships. Just take a walk down Paterson Plank Rd. this spring, and you'll see employees of local landscapers – RAC Landscaping, Jarrod Landscaping, Best Landscaping, or Impreveduto Landscaping, Inc. – providing their services free of charge. You can bet that these gentlemen will be getting their hands dirty, working hard to keep Secaucus beautiful. And that's what truly makes a good neighbor.

I want thank all the groups who have worked on these relationships with us and shown such generosity, and I hope all who read this column are now more aware of how much they do for Secaucus. To any I forgot, I sincerely apologize; all contributions, no matter how large or small, are invaluable to this Town.