

Stephanie Kalin



Stephanie Sienczuk Kalin was recognized at Needham High School for her interest in sports and her ability to draw people to her. By her own admission, she was not very interested in academics but she excelled in sports and physical education activities. School was certainly a strong magnet for Mrs. Kalin because she was not absent a day in twelve years. This feat was undertaken while living in East Needham, the Echo Bridge area, and walking to and from Needham High School through all sorts of weather was not for the faint hearted.

In her high school years Mrs. Kalin also worked after school and after sports activities. The Great Depression was on and everyone worked to help support the family. In addition, on Saturdays she would walk to the Boston Turnpike, Route 9, and take the bus to Boston to work at Filene's. When she arrived, she would not know if she had a job for the day. At the company, the jobs were given out based on a first come basis, therefore only the early arrivals were employed for the day. Mrs. Kalin was rarely, if ever, too late to be assigned a job.

Given Mrs. Kalin's lack of interest in academics, the Depression, the role of women in 1938, and possibly other family issues; college and/or additional schooling was never considered following high school. Like many other young women in those years, Mrs. Kalin decided to go to work after high school. Mrs. Kalin had a variety of office jobs but she learned that office work was not for her. She was not interested in paperwork. Her interests had always been directed towards people. The office work stopped when Mrs. Kalin married and started a family but the volunteering for work community activities soon began.

Mrs. Kalin's volunteer activities started with church

activities, the Salvation Army, and Needham Community Council. The Needham Community Council, whose motto is people helping people, has been in existence since 1930. With the advent of governmental public assistance, many local, self-supported community organizations disbanded, but the Needham Community Council has grown and expanded. This organization is a strictly local, self-supported, community help organization and Mrs. Kalin has been its executive director since 1966. When Mrs. Kalin first began with the council in 1963, they operated with a donated desk, rented space and very little resources. Today the Needham Community Council has purchased the building where they began and they have six employees and 154 volunteers. The council's activities include a food pantry, a used clothing exchange, furniture exchange, visits and food baskets to home bound residents, drivers for people who require medical treatments, a source of information for human services, and many other support activities.

The Needham Community Council with Mrs. Kalin at its head has received national, state, and local recognition. President Ronald Regan appointed Mrs. Kalin to his Task Force for Private Sector Initiatives and the Needham Community Council was selected as a role model. President George Bush designated the Needham Community council as one of his 1000 Points of Light. In addition, Mrs. Kalin was awarded a citation from Massachusetts Governor Edward King. Finally, Mrs. Kalin has received awards for humanitarian service from the Needham Board of Selectmen, the Rotary Club, the Newton-Needham Chamber of Commerce, the Norfolk Lodge AF & AM, the March of Dimes, and more.

Stephanie Kalin has worked and volunteered beyond the Needham Community Council. Mrs. Kalin was on the steering committee to establish a "Meals on Wheels" program in Needham, she has worked with the Visiting Nurses Association to establish hospice care and a Needham facility, and she has worked with the American Cancer Society, the Glover Memorial Hospital, and others.