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# Somers Strong

## Town banding together with outpouring of support in aftermath of tragic fire

SOMERS — Area residents and officials were left stunned and saddened in the aftermath of a Jan. 2 fire on Quality Avenue that killed four children, ages 5 to 11. Lukas, Genevieve, Benjamin, and Archer Koropatkin died in the fire.

Three of their siblings survived. Another family was left homeless.

The tragedy led to an overwhelming showing of concern, compassion and support from residents of area towns.

RESPONSE/Page 27

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# Somers

## Response set in motion quickly in wake of tragic fire



Continued from page 1

State Sen. John A. Kissel, who represents Somers, issued this statement in the fire's aftermath: "Absolutely heart-breaking. Our prayers go out to the victims, to their loved ones, to the fire personnel, and to everyone in Somers. This is such a tragedy, and as a state, we grieve collectively."

Fellow Sen. Jeff Gordon released these comments: "I am very saddened by the tragic house fire in Somers. 4 children killed. Other people injured. People now homeless. My thoughts and prayers for the families involved. Thank you to the fire crews, EMS, and police who responded. A very difficult situation. The Town of Somers has estab-

lished an Angel Fund to help. <https://www.somersct.gov/somers-response-to-tragedy/...#somersstrong>."

The response from Somers residents and officials was immediate.

"Thank you all - each and every one of you - who have reached out to me, our staff, Town Hall, etc. to express your care, concern, and support as Somers comes together to best support the family who experienced these devastating losses in (the) house fire," said Matthew Cox, Somers director of the Department of Human Services, the day after the fire. "Our initial reaction is, of course, shock and tremendous sadness, but we are now moving into action mode, actively coordinating with and for the family a variety of supports and services such as crisis counseling/grief



Sage King of Sage King Music talks to Bart Bartholomew of Steel-N-Eazy during a fundraiser Jan. 6 for the Somers fire families at Joanna's. Nearly \$30,000 was collected at the event and related efforts.

Photo courtesy Joanna's

support; immediate needs for clothing, personal care items; and establishing a tax-deductible fund in order to collect funds that are needed by survivors now and in the future."

Several days later Cox issued this statement on the Somers Neighborhood Forum regarding the progress of the Angel Fund, set up to assist the survivors: "The tremendous outpouring of care, concern, love, and support from

the community is heartwarming and so necessary to healing. Please keep the family in your thoughts, prayers, and actions as they move through this difficult period. The Town of Somers has established the Angel Fund to provide for immediate and future needs of the family. Make checks payable to: Town of Somers Angel Fund, 619 Main Street, Somers, CT 06071. All contributions are tax deductible.

## Ways you can provide assistance

Here are some ways you can help:

Town of Somers Angel Fund  
619 Main St., Somers CT 06071

Town Hall has a drop box for gift cards. It is also accepting cash donations in person and debit/credit card donations online: <https://somers.recdesk.com/Community/Program/Detail...>

The families are requesting all donations go through the Angel Fund.

Gift cards are being requested to: Target, Kohl's, Marshalls, TJ Maxx, Old Navy, Walmart, Amazon, movie theaters, anything to give to the children to take their mind off the situation.

"Somers Strong" heart ornaments are being sold for \$5; proceeds go to the Angel Fund: <https://somers-strong.square.site/>

Family Verified GoFundMe sites:

1. Jessica Marie: <https://www.gofundme.com/.../somers-house-fire-of-loss-of..>
2. Brittany Whiteley: <https://www.gofundme.com/.../lukas-genevieve-benjamin-and...>
3. Brittany's Employer: <https://www.gofundme.com/.../whiteley-family-house-fire...>
4. The Tomalonis-Karoliszyn Family: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/tomalonis-family-house-fire>

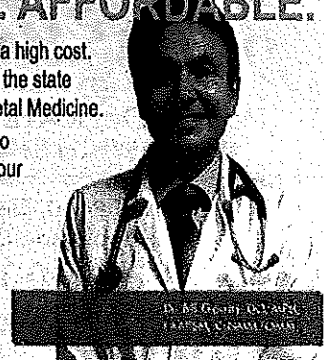
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## Eleanor Lipton, 99, loved family, enjoyed piano playing

SOMERS - Eleanor Lipton (Epstein) age 99 of Somers, died peacefully at home Dec. 30, 2023, surrounded by her loving family.

Born on Dec. 3, 1924, in Hartford, she was the daughter of the late Ida and Max Epstein. Eleanor is survived by her children, William Lipton and his wife Jeanne of Somers, Donald Lipton of Somers, Judith (Lipton) Goldberg and her husband Edward of Waterford, Jeffrey Lipton and his wife Joanne of Somers; 10 grandchildren, Daniel Lipton, Sarah (Jason) Luipold, David Lipton; Mark (Liz) Goldberg, Matthew (Lindsey) Goldberg, and Marissa Goldberg; Louis (Debbie) Lipton, Alicia (Bryan) Lheureux, Joseph Lipton, Jacob

(Katie) Lipton, and 12 great-grandchildren, Eliza, Evelyn, Arianna, Simon, Elliann, Carter, Xander, Aiden, Ruby, Mila, Memphis, and Simon; by her sister-in-law Anita Kaplowitz, and by many nieces and nephews and their families.

She was predeceased by her first husband Aaron Silverman, her second husband, Simon Lipton, by her sister Gladys Lichtenbaum, by her daughter, Beth Lipton, and by her granddaughter, Amy Chase McMahon.

Eleanor attended school in Hartford and graduated from Weaver High School in 1942. She worked at Arrow Hart and Hegeman as an office secretary after high school for many years.

Eleanor loved her family, and they meant the world to her. During her life she was an expert piano player, a talented quilter, a fabulous cook, and a UConn Husky basketball fan. She loved her house overlooking the farm and was the perfect farm wife and mother.

In her later years, Eleanor became very proficient at using her iPad, and around the time of her 95th birthday needed a new one. When asked what color she preferred, it didn't matter. Her only concern was how many gigabytes it had! She followed family and friends on Facebook, thoroughly enjoying the pictures and updates we all posted.

We'd like to thank the staff at Johnson Memorial Hospital and Trinity Hospice

for their wonderful care of our mother. We'd also like to extend our greatest gratitude to Caroline with AMP home services for her extremely compassionate and loving care of our mother/grandmother/great-grandmother.

Eleanor was a lifetime member of Temple Beth Sholom B'nai Israel. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Simon Lipton Scholarship Fund c/o Rockville High School, 70 Loveland Hill Road, Vernon, CT 06066, or to a charity of your choice.



Eleanor Lipton

## Colonial Tire recognized as Economic Development Commission's 'Business of Month'

SOMERS — The Economic Development Commission of Somers has presented its third "Business of the Month" award to Colonial Tire and Brake Center on Main Street. The award was presented by First Selectman Timothy Keeney to owner Rich Plumb in a ceremony at Town Hall. Colonial Tire was nominated

by customers not only for its automotive skill, but also for its financial support of Somers cultural activities.

Patrons from any community can nominate a Somers business for the award based on such criteria as exemplary customer service, innovative product or services, professional staff development, donating

money to a town project, sponsoring a youth project, or longevity in business. Sponsored by the Economic Development Commission, the award is presented monthly. Nominations can be submitted to EDCSomers@gmail.com or EDC, 600 Main St., Somers, CT 06071



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