

LUMINARIES TO LIGHT UP WILTON WITH HOPE

Plans are under way for Wilton's fourth annual Hope Lights Lives luminary project, which helps support the Center for Hope. Anyone interested in becoming a block captain or helping volunteer may contact either Leslie Raemdonck or Elizabeth Harleman who are again co-chairing this event to be held on Sunday, Dec. 16, at 5 p.m.

"Our lighting of the luminaries has become a poignant event for Wilton," Mrs. Raemdonck said. "Our thoughts during the lighting will again be love, sadness, determination and hope. However, this year, it will allow us an additional opportunity to be unified in our feelings for those killed on Sept. 11. It will enable us to express our sadness for those lost, gratitude for the thousands who helped those in need, and also show a deeper appreciation for our country and those in our lives."

"We sold over 1,700 kits last year, a long way from our initial year when we sold 300 kits," Mrs. Harleman said. "We anticipate an overwhelming response this year based on our initial contact with our past block captains and others interested in participating in the event. We have ordered enough supplies for 2,00 kits and anticipate lighting all 24,000 lights among Wilton streets."

Supportive businessman

The kits will be assembled again at Hoffman Landscapes on Saturday, Dec. 1. Owner Mike Hoffman has been a strong supporter of the event since it began, by offering his site for assembly, storage and pick-up. Block captains will pre-sell the kits during early November and then pick up and deliver their orders to their neighbors on Saturday, Dec. 15, in time for the Sunday lighting. The kits contain the materials for 12 festive luminaries including sand, candles, paper bags and instructions. The kits sell for \$20 with proceeds benefiting the



With 'Hope Lights Lives' luminary project kits, Leslie Raemdonck, a coordinator of the annual fund-raising event that benefits the Center for Hope, and Mike Hoffman, owner of Hoffman Landscapes, a strong supporter of the event since its inception.

center. Last year more than 7,000 kits were sold throughout Fairfield County. The Center for Hope is a non-profit organization, located in Darien, that helps adults and children in the death of a loved one by providing professional counseling, education and support in an atmosphere of hope and renewal. In response to the disaster in New York City, crisis counseling is available at the center for Adults and children. Support groups are also being formed. More than 1,00 family members benefited for the center's service this past year including many from Wilton, Westport, Norwalk, New Canaan and Ridgefield. You may reach the center either by phone at 665-4693 or visit its Web site at www.centerforhope.org.

More than 80 block captains are participating in this year's event. If you would like to help light up your street, call Mrs. Raemdonck at 834-2001. Volunteers are also needed on Dec. 1 to help assemble the kits at Hoffman Landscapes. If you would like to help, call the volunteer coordinator, Kathy Murphy, at 762-1139.