

Q&A: PAUL BELSKI,
GENERAL MANAGER, SODEXO

Sodexo boss feeds college students and the hungry

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BEVERLY — Paul Belski, general manager of Sodexo food services at Endicott College, is one of eight people in the country who received the company's "Heroes of Everyday Life" award for his work with Beverly

Bootstraps. Every year, Belski has collected more than 2,000 pounds of canned goods for the food pantry and raised more than \$1,500 to feed local families. According to Sodexo, it's been used for "repacking enough surplus food for 39 meals, every day, for the last five years."

Belski also runs a program that makes sure any extra food at Endicott is served daily at the River House homeless shelter.

"What's unique about Paul is that he's done this for several years," said Steve Brady, president of the Sodexo Foundation. "He's also inspired some of his fellow workers to participate, as well as his fellow students at Endicott College."

Belski was in Washington, D.C., last week to accept the award, which includes a \$5,000 check



Paul Belski

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for Beverly Bootstraps.

But that's just the beginning.

On his 50th birthday on Feb. 28, Belski requested donations instead of presents. He raised \$2,500 and found an organization to match it. With the Sodexo award, he'll donate a total of \$10,000 to Bootstraps.

We caught up with Belski to find out more about his efforts to help feed local families.

What made you decide to raise the money for your birthday?

My wife asked me, "What do you want to do?" I had no desire to have a big party, and it just came to me. It's way beyond what I expected. I certainly didn't do it all by myself.

Who else helped out?

My son raised \$500 in food. He went around to 20 different neighborhoods with a shopping

bag and a note saying he wanted to surprise me. And I actually have two student employees that, on their own, baked a bunch of cookies and went around to the dorms on Saturday night. They raised \$200.

Why Bootstraps?

We've had a long-standing relationship, ever since my son was 5 or 6 years old and he had a lemonade stand, and donated to Bootstraps. It's also an organization to end hunger, so there's that connection.

Sodexo is obviously supportive?

They genuinely make a concerted effort to inspire all the employees who work for the company to give back.

Any more fundraisers planned for the future?

I don't have any at this time, but I'll continue to do what I've done in the past.