

Harding wrestling program saved through donations

By **Linda Conner Lambeck** Updated 3:34 pm, Wednesday, November 22, 2017

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Charles Rivas, Harding High School, left, and Alex Richardson, New Milford High School, wrestle in a 152 pound semi-final match of the New Milford High School wrestling tournament, Saturday, January 21, 2017, ... [more](#)

BRIDGEPORT — For the second consecutive year, the wrestling program at Warren Harding High School has been saved through donations.

Faced with budget cuts, the school district eliminated funding for the program in 2016.

So team coaches turned to fundraising, attracting \$18,829.41 in donations to help keep what many see as a positive outlet for young men in the city.

In collaboration with Adversity to Prosperity, a local non-profit, the team reached out to community leaders and organizations since last summer. The team had a GoFundMe page and a three-day "Save Harding Wrestling Camp" hosted by Bridgeport Police Detective Jeremy Kelly.

"We reached our goal," Team Coach Eddie Santiago said. That will ensure the team will compete for the 2017-18 season.

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The fundraising will continue to make sure the team will be able to continue next year as well. For more information, visit www.AdversityToProsperity.org.

The wrestling effort is not unlike efforts taking place for several other city sports teams. Central High fencers, the soccer team and tennis team have also sought private support to continue.

"We work really, really hard to raise the money for these kids," said Tyrone Elliott, part of the coaching staff at Harding High and president of Adversity to Prosperity. "We understand that the city is in a tough situation, the Board of Education is in a tough situation and we are trying to make it easier for them while looking out for our kids in the best way possible."

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