

Northeast Chamber of Commerce
HOMETOWN HERO 2010

Emcee: Scott Murray -- The SCRIPT from the evening:

And finally ladies and Gentlemen, our last and certainly not last honoree is **Darlene Hollingsworth**, from **The Clubhouse for Special Needs**. Darlene Hollingsworth is an ordinary single mom of a teenager with Down Syndrome, who did an extraordinary thing with her life. Darlene founded The Clubhouse for Special Needs located in Bedford. It is a program for teens and young adults with mild to moderate, mental/physical challenges - an opportunity for Education, Socialization and Independence in a recreational atmosphere. The Clubhouse is primarily an after-school program. But you would never know it by seeing it for yourself. Prior to 2006 there were programs for kids 12 and under and programs for adults called dayhabs. But nothing for 13-22 age group. **These special young people were still in the school system and totally forgotten.** – Darlene got a hold of the whole situation back in 2006! That’s when she went to work. Comedian Lillie Tomlin once said, I always wondered why somebody didn’t do something about that...then I realized, I was somebody.” So, Darlene tells us that when she first decided to do something about it that her son told her “Mom, I want friends.” Three weeks after starting up the Clubhouse for Special Friends, her son said to her, “Mom, I have friends.” Providing encouragement and vision for a brighter future, is the mission of The Clubhouse. Darlene was recently recognized by Good Morning America as “one of the ten best caregivers in America.” She’s with us tonight as one of our distinguished Hometown Heroes.

Ladies and gentlemen, Darlene Hollingsworth.