

# Meeting develops partnership between Harlan, New York

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A chance meeting involving Bristol race tickets has led to a partnership between a non-profit charity in Yorktown Heights, N.Y., and the Harlan County High School web design class.

“It was truly one of those meetings that was meant to be — my connection with Scott Pace and the Harlan County High School,” said Paula Miritello, founder and director of My Brother Vinny, a non-profit organization dedicated to community based charity work in memory of her youngest brother, Vincent Miritello, who passed away in 2000.

“We met through an online charity auction service where I was selling items to benefit animal rescues and Scott won the auction,” said Miritello, speaking of the sale of the tickets to Pace for a NASCAR race. “In the conversations back and forth, we began to speak about charity and the reasons we mutually were selling and purchasing the items. The biggest reason was to give back and have our purchase go towards helping one another. Scott knew from conversations that I was doing charity work for years since my brother’s passing, but wanted to make it more official... I wanted to take ‘My Brother Vinny’ to the next level.

“He mentioned his program and connected me with the most amazing student in the world, Alex Rigney. Alex and I easily connected and he just knew how to design a perfect site that relayed my charity message with an upbeat layout. Everyone who has been to the site could not believe it was developed through a high school class and the level of expertise it took in the design. I have had so much positive feedback regarding

the site and I would have never been able to get to this level without Scott's program and Alex's vision."

She explained that during their talks, she was "deep into" the My Brother Vinny Holiday Food/Coat/Clothing/Drive, distributing hundreds of bags of clothing to shelters, adult homes, assisted living facilities, low income families, hurricane Sandy Victims and others.

"Alex would take bits and pieces of information I would email to him and, in not meeting me, he captured the essence beautifully," she said.

An excerpt from the website notes, *"If you have any questions about who we are, what we do, and when we do it, just use the contact information to the left to get answers! My Brother Vinny loves nothing more than to help people, and you're no different! We're happy to answer your questions!"*

"I thought this was fantastic because it was true," she said. "Our motto is 'Helping mankind one good deed at a time.' Scott, Alex and the Harlan County High School program have made this possible."

"I have never felt so much joy as I do now helping others and keeping Vinny's memory alive," she said. "We're expanding our services. We will truly have a profound reach."

Rigney said they have a "mutual relationship."

"The relationship I have built with her seems to be very important to her," he said. "She is thankful for what I have done for her and My Brother Vinny and I am thankful for what she has done for her community. "

Miritello recently was interviewed by the town's supervisor and a local media group owner on a cable access program called Grace Notes.

"I mentioned how our website was developed by HCHS as part of the web design class and they were very highly impressed... It must be amazing for students to be able to work with Scott... Alex has been an amazing talent and worked alongside me like a true professional and much wiser than his years. ... you should be proud at the level of expertise your school instructor, students and district exhibit by development of a program such as yours."

The website is <http://mybrothervinny.org/>.

Pace said his students have over 40 websites in production at present.

"I want my students and the community to understand that we are not limited, technologically speaking, to our stereotyped rural environment and that a career in web design puts the global market at your fingertips," said Pace.

As a result, Rigney has launched his own website and business. It can be found at <http://galaxywebbuilders.com/>.

“Although several have worked for other businesses, Alex is the first of my students to begin his own business from the skills he has acquired in class.” He began his business in February.

His favorite part of design is “contributing to the small businesses and community.”

“I want to help small businesses grow,” he said.

Rigney, a senior, has recently designed pages for the Harlan Honor Guard, Harlan County Community Scholarship Fund and Mount Pleasant Funeral Home.

While website design is a “fun hobby,” he plans to attend college and obtain a Bachelor’s Degree in chemistry and become a high school teacher.

Read more: [The Harlan Daily Enterprise - Meeting develops partnership between Harlan New York](#)