

## Senior' Prom offers intergenerational fun at Ansonia High School

By Patricia Villers  
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If I had a bucket list, I could cross off go to prom, because last Thursday I finally went.

Since I didn't go to my prom in high school (read: wallflower) I knew I had to attend and write about the "Senior" Prom at Ansonia High School for "senior citizens."

The prom was presented by members of the Human Relations Clubs from Ansonia, Derby, and Shelton high schools, and Eli Whitney Tech in Hamden.

It was held in the cafeteria, and it was a blast. More than 50 senior citizens enjoyed dinner, dancing, and lots of intergenerational fun.



Smiling students politely greeted prom-goers at the door, pinned corsages on them, and escorted them down to the cafeteria.

Students and seniors learned steps from each other as they danced to a variety of tunes that spanned decades - from the 1940s to present day. JMG Music of Monroe provided the entertainment, which included a popular photo booth.

Shelton High School sophomore Jackie Sullivan said, "I love this idea." She was accompanied by her grandparents, Bob and Joan Capron of Stratford.

Ansonia High School sophomore Yao Dong also liked the idea, and said the prom brought "entertainment and excitement" to the older generation. Classmate Ebony Morris, said she enjoyed "greeting the seniors and being respectful."

I was greeted by Derby High School junior Qeshon McDaniel. He also liked the intergenerational concept, and said students "get to experience what (seniors) did, and they can teach us."

Derby High School freshman Brian Liriano said an event like the prom "helps the seniors rejuvenate and they get to experience a good time."

State Rep. Linda M. Gentile, D-Ansonia, stopped by for a visit. She commented, "It doesn't matter if you're young or old, at the prom you always have fun."

Lillian Bartolotta, member of Ansonia High School class of 1948, danced with Liriano. "I taught him to dance," she said. "I pulled him closer to me."

He founded the club at Ansonia School High in 2007. The club seeks to reduce prejudice and discrimination, stop bullying, and host intergenerational events.

The group has grown to almost 250 students in four towns. "We can learn from one another, and make history come alive," Collicelli said.

He commended Ansonia schools' food service director Dominick Golia for serving a delicious dinner. Guests dined on chicken, twice baked potatoes, green beans and an ice cream dessert served in a chocolate shell. "He said tell me what you need and I'll make it work," Collicelli said.

Derby High's Human Relations Club co-president Tiana Figueroa, a junior, said the prom was a good idea because "the younger generation can learn from the seniors' stories." Co-president Akshar Patel added, "We want them to have a prom like us. It's nice for the community."

Milford residents Walter and Dorothy Scott spent a lot of time on the dance floor. They have been married 62 years and they said they have enjoyed dancing through the years.

