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# Retirement is bittersweet for woman who spent 46 years helping children

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WINDHAM — Beatrice Pilar, 88, has been a pillar of Windham social services — Willimantic Child Care Services, in particular — for nearly half a century.

But, after recently retiring with 46 years of social work experience under her belt, she had to part with it.

“Those were an absolutely wonderful and short 46 years,” Pilar said.

Willimantic Child Care Services provides local child care services for pre-K, preschool, kindergarten and school children.

The center encourages children’s development through play and child-centered activities, working to develop their social skills, emotional growth and physical coordination.

Throughout the almost half-a-century of her career, Pilar said, she received lots of love, happiness and a deep understanding of how much people can do when they are faced with challenges in life.

“For me, it was a fantastic experience,” Pilar said.

Pilar said the highlight of her career has been mentoring children of different generations and seeing them grow and succeed in life.

In fact, her mission has

## Special Neighbor



Roxanne Pandolfi | Staff  
Windham Regional Community Council Executive Director Jeff Beadle, left, reads a certificate of appreciation for 46 years of service to Beatrice Pilar, right, during a retirement party and ceremony for her recently at Willimantic Child Care Services.

always been to be available for children because, she believes, they always come first.

“I’m happy with what I did and how I live,” Pilar said.

Pilar said she started her career in 1972, when the child care service was still a pro-

gram at Eastern Connecticut State University.

Back then, the program needed a Spanish-speaking social worker and a mentor — and Pilar was the perfect fit.

Born in Argentina, she moved to the United States

in 1971 and has lived here ever since.

Willimantic Child Care Services expanded and, in 2001, moved to its current location at 478 Valley St.

Pilar stuck with it, despite all the transformations it’s been through.

Her endless dedication inspired her to receive a master’s degree in human relations from Eastern Connecticut State University at the age of 55, proving age doesn’t matter when it comes to education.

And she’s inspired children and even their parents to pursue education and help them realize “you can’t do many, many things if you don’t study.”

Pilar said she hopes to continue to study and travel whenever she can throughout her retirement.

“I love it with my heart and I feel so bad, but in life you have to understand when it’s time to go,” she said, teary-eyed about her retirement.

Her life mission has been helping children and she will continue to do so in one way or another.

“The most important thing is to realize that there are so many people that are working jobs they don’t like and I love it with all my heart, because children are the light of my life,” Pilar said.

## CALENDAR

### Tuesday

Feb. 13

#### ENTREPRENEURS LUNCHEON — WINDHAM

The Windham Chamber of Commerce will host a women’s entrepreneurs luncheon from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Willimantic Brewing Co./Main Street Café, 967 Main St., Willimantic. For more information, call 860-423-6389.

#### MOVIE SCREENING — COVENTRY

The Booth & Dimock Memorial Library, 1134 Main St., will host a pre-Oscars movie screening of “Dunkirk” at 6 p.m. Bring your own snacks. Info: 860-742-7606.

#### GUEST SPEAKER — CHAPLIN

The Willimantic Rotary Club will host guest speaker

#### ‘VALENTINE CARDS’ — FRANKLIN