

Toast of the Town

Sarkis Receives Toastmaster Leadership Award
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Fred W. Sarkis received the Toastmaster's International Communication and Leadership Award at the Hyatt Regency in Rochester on June 2. Toastmasters is a nonprofit organization with more than 200,000 members worldwide.

Sarkis, now 81, is the founder of Bristol Mountain and Bristol Harbour (where he still maintains a home) and is a past recipient of the Mr. Canandaigua Award from the Canandaigua Chamber of Commerce.

Eight years ago, Sarkis came out of retirement to begin a new volunteer mission in his life. He founded and supported the nonprofit Prisoner of the Truck Foundation, now named the Yes Pa Foundation. The book *Yes Pa* is a digest of Sarkis's published book "Prisoner of the Truck." It is a true story of his childhood 100-hour work-week on his immigrant father's fruit and vegetable truck and the three powerful five-minute lessons he learned from his Pa at age 12 — lessons that motivated him to turn his perceived truck-prison into a study and learning center.

Sarkis has given close to 150 talks to 50,000 children and adults in classrooms and auditoriums. The positive impact of his Foundation's work is reflected in hundreds of letters from parents, teachers and children.

The foundation's web site www.YesPa.org provides an easy-to-download free character education program consisting of the *Yes Pa* book and the Teacher Resource Guide. Questions at the end of each chapter of *Yes Pa* link the student, teacher, parent and/or mentor. A free and professional 30-minute DVD of his talk is now provided to international schools upon completion of the *Yes Pa* program.

The *Yes Pa* program is endorsed by regional and national character education teachers, law correction officials, Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Greater Rochester, NY, the Center for the 4th and 5th R's, the nation's leading Institute in Character Education at SUNY in Cortland, and Toastmaster's International.

In 2007, more than 500 schools in the United States, Canada, Singapore, South Africa, Estonia and Lebanon have downloaded the Teacher Resource Guide and *Yes Pa* book on the www.YesPa.org web site.