

CRT's First Annual Golf Classic

More than 100 golfers turned out this October for CRT's first annual Golf Classic. This year's event raised money for Meals on Wheels, which brings hot, nutritious meals to homebound seniors in Hartford and Middlesex Counties. For lunch, golfers received meals similar to those enjoyed by Meals on Wheels recipients.



Help Celebrate the Holidays

With the coming of the holidays, CRT, as always, will be providing toys and gifts to hundreds of families in our communities who are in need. You can help, with donations of cash or new toys, books, clothes, and other items. For information, please contact Development Director Nancy Shapiro at (860) 560-5471. Contributions in any amount are appreciated and will make the holidays brighter for many families.

"I'm forever grateful for this program. It has helped save my life. If TEACH can get through to a person like me then they can get through to others."

Kenneth, a participant in CRT's Project TEACH Supportive Housing Program.

Please see page 5 for this complete testimonial to CRT's Project TEACH.

Supportive Housing: It Works

The following excerpts are from remarks made recently by participants in CRT's Project TEACH to Dr. Arthur Evans, Deputy Commissioner of the state Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. Clark visited the program recently to learn more about the program, in which CRT and several partners provide holistic, comprehensive case management and support to homeless individuals and families for up to two years.

My Incredible Journey

by Robert Moore

Good Day and God Bless all of those that are with us today. My sincere gratitude for allowing me this opportunity to tell my story and share with all of you my thanks to the Project TEACH program, my fellow group members, substance abuse counselors, case manager, and vocational counselor, and also to the many wonderful people who have helped me in my road to recovery.

I could bore you by telling you about the old war stories of my drinking and drugging, but those stories are nightmares and always ended in desperation and disaster. And death was sure to be next. But only by the grace of a loving and caring God, I am here today to tell you all how I changed my life.

I have been an active drug user for about 33 years, and getting accepted into the Project TEACH program helped teach me that I no longer had to live my life like that.

By being connected to a substance abuse counselor whom I truly know that she only wants the best for me in my life. She has helped me to love myself again for who I am today. Also by going to our once a week aftercare group meeting with other members in this program, along with my one-on-one counseling sessions has helped me appreciate living life today clean and sober.

But this isn't the only benefit of being in the TEACH program. And by that I mean also meeting with my case manager who has helped me keep my finances in order. Because you see that was a big trigger in my active addiction – having money on hand.

But today I have learned to be responsible for my actions by living life on life's terms. And last but not least I would also like to thank my vocational counselor who is presently helping me in my active job search.

In all this, the TEACH program has been a new and wonderful experience in my life and I strongly suggest that this program continue so that it may help other people that are in dire need to find some kind of balance and order in their lives. Thank you and God Bless Project TEACH for being there for me!

“She hung in there with me!”

By Kenneth Taylor

My name is Kenneth Taylor and I'm a grateful recovering alcoholic. And when I say grateful, mean I appreciate my life today. I'm grateful for everything and everybody in my life today – my kids, my girl, my sponsor, my substance abuse counselor, my family. And I'm ever so grateful to Project TEACH because without them, my life would be no where near what it is today.

My journey started from jail...for years I was using and in and out of jails and I was comfortable with that life. (Finally) I got the court to agree to give me a program. And you know what that was – a miracle in itself...I went to the Salvation Army on Homestead Ave. in Hartford where I stayed for one year.

The program was good enough to keep me clean. But I had other issues that needed to be addressed. I was homeless, jobless, and really needed one-on-one counseling to address the issues I suppressed for so many years.... So I found out about another program and went and applied for it. The program was truly God sent. He directed me to TEACH where they have a wonderful staff of people who really care, people who wanted to help.

...I started with one-on-ones with my substance abuse counselor, the program's aftercare group, meeting with my case manager and job searching. Everything is really well coordinated at TEACH. The staff is so real it wasn't hard for me to learn to trust them.

These sessions are what really freed me. It took some time and a lot of patience from my substance abuse counselor, but she hung in there with me. She did all the right things to get me to open up, to strip myself down and remove the mask I wore for so many years. Once I was able to reveal Kenneth for who he really was, I was able to get to the core of my problems and deal with me. It was very painful, but in order for me to love myself I had to feel that pain.

The sessions are great. I've shared stuff where I saw my substance abuse counselor smile, nearly in tears, angry and even laugh, but never once did she ever judge me and that meant a lot to me and kept me going.

...My other case manager, she keeps me in check she stays on me about responsibilities, bills, paying my rent, keeping my job, budgeting, etc. She put some structure in my life, something I never had until I came to TEACH.

I'm forever grateful for this program. It has helped save my life. If TEACH can get through to a person like me then they can get through to others.



Kenneth Taylor, left, and Robert Moore testified recently about their experiences in Project TEACH to Connecticut's Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Arthur Evans. Evans visited the program recently to learn about TEACH, a supportive housing program in which CRT and partners provide intensive services to people leaving homeless shelters.



After unloading a truckload of Hallmark goods, staff and clients of the Bristol AIC show off some of the donated goods.

Hallmark & CRT: Helping Clients, Helping Each Other

Scooby Doo cups serve juice to delighted 3- and 4-year-olds. Lunch boxes with maps and stickers go to visitors to a CRT neighborhood center. Meals on Wheels volunteer drivers take home a cookie jar after a recognition luncheon.

These are just a few of the ways CRT is using donations from Hallmark, the world's largest greeting company.

Last year alone, the company donated goods worth \$463,000 – a retail value of \$926,000 - to CRT, which distributes them to needy clients and programs and to other social services programs in the area. This year, the total will probably be higher, said Nancy Shapiro, Director of Corporate and Community Relations.

"CRT is able to accept what we have and get it right out to the people who need it," said Jack Davis of Hallmark's Enfield office, who organizes the donations to CRT. "They have the organizational capacity to be there when we need them and to make it happen."

Donations of surplus goods range from paper cups, plates, and decorations, to lunch boxes and home decorations.

"Every cup we get is one we don't have to buy," said Shapiro. "That's saving program funds for other things, like playgrounds. It means we can serve more people in our programs, and we can improve the quality."

Being able to accept the goods requires having the capacity to unload an 18-wheeler truck on an hour's notice. Shapiro works with CRT's Facilities Department, to coordinate use of warehouse space, and with CRT's Alternative Incarceration Programs, where clients performing community service help unload and distribute the goods.

Then Shapiro makes sure CRT programs – which range from Head Start and day care for infants and pre-schoolers, to neighborhood services for everyone in a community, to Meals on Wheels and Senior Community Cafes for seniors – know about the donations, and can get what they need.

She also makes the donations available to other non-profits in the community, such as Yo! Hartford, Guakia, the Connecticut Historical Society, the Bristol Community Organization, and other Head Start programs.

"We couldn't do this without the facilities department, and without Jay Mellon and his clients at the Bristol AIC," Shapiro said. "People really appreciate these gifts, and they're putting them to excellent use."

CRT's RSVP Awarded Homeland Security Grant

CRT's Retired Senior Volunteer Program, or RSVP, has been awarded more than \$35,000 to help ensure the safety of senior citizens in case of a homeland security emergency.

The grants will develop systems that will also ensure residents' safety in case of fire, earthquake, or other disaster, according to Mary Wilcox, who runs CRT's RSVP program.

The grants will allow RSVP to train residents in each of East Hartford's 12 senior housing complexes as Team Leaders, training other residents and put systems and safeguards in place. For instance, Team Leaders will create Vials of Life, containing key medical information for each senior; these will be stores in refrigerators, Wilcox explained, to protect them in case of fire.

"This is going to be a very valuable resource," Wilcox said.

The grant was awarded by the Corporation for National and Community Service through its Programs of National Significance Fund.

Center to Promote Homeownership, Energy Efficiency

This fall, Hartford will be one of four locations nationwide operating a housing resource center under a challenge grant from the Ford Foundation and Energy Programs Consortium.

While the center will offer home ownership and weatherization assistance and opportunities citywide, it will focus on stabilizing the housing stock and providing assistance to existing homeowners in the Blue Hills neighborhood.

"Owning your own home and building assets are key to ending poverty, and are the focus of many new CRT programs," said President/CEO Paul C. Puzzo. "The housing center is going to offer all of these components in one place.

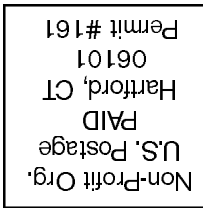
"We also see this as a very effective way to revitalize communities," Puzzo added. "The center is going to make homeownership, and home improvement, accessible."

The center will coordinate housing services to city residents, assisting homebuyers and also providing information and links to renovation, programs and services to increase their homes' energy efficiency, mortgage rate information, and related services. The center will also provide workshops on financial literacy, homeowner education, enrollment into Individual Development Accounts, and other services to promote financial literacy and stability.

In operating the center, CRT will work with Northeast Utilities, Fannie Mae, the Housing Education Resource Center, the City of Hartford, and the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, among others.

"Integrating social services with home and energy improvement opportunities will make the most of the resources available in the city," Puzzo said. "The benefits will be to individuals, to neighborhoods, and to communities."

For more information on the Center, or to make a contribution or offer assistance, please call (860) 560-5454.



Community Renewal Team Inc.
555 Windsor Street
Hartford, CT 06120



National Arts: Everyone Wins

CRT will be accepting submissions in January 2003 for the 17th annual National Arts Program at Hartford and Middletown, an annual juried competition that encourages all state residents to discover and enjoy the arts.

Any Connecticut resident over the age of 6 can participate. All artwork submitted is publicly exhibited, and the show is judged by a panel of experts, with more than \$7,500 in prizes being awarded to dozens of winners.

“The arts have a power to reach people that nothing else can match,” said CRT President/CEO Paul C. Puzzo. “Being able to see their work displayed, and seeing themselves as artists, is an experience we want to make possible for as many people as we can. It’s a great experience for everyone who participates.”

National Arts is made possible by CRT and the National Arts Foundation. Submissions are accepted January 13th through January 18th at CRT’s 555 Windsor Street office in Hartford. Please call (860) 560-5471 or (860) 560-5311 for guidelines and a copy of the submission form.

CRT Times is a publication of the Community Renewal Team, Inc.

Incorporated in 1964, CRT is a non-profit organization dedicated to reducing poverty. Programs in Hartford and Middlesex Counties help low-income and disadvantaged people and families become self-sufficient.

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