

CRT One Stop Client, Happy With Services, Featured on CNN



When Juanita Darling was laid off after an 18-year career at Ames, the 57-year-old Manchester resident wasn't at all sure what her future would hold.

Now she's taking classes towards certification in Microsoft Office and looking forward to a new career.

Much of the credit, she believes, goes to Belinda Price, her case manager at CRT's Hartford One Stop employment center in Hartford.

"You helped so much with your listening, direction, motivation, and your GRAND smile," she wrote Price in a thank-you card. "Thank you so much!"

In fact, Darling's story was so illustrative of recent events in Connecticut's economy that CNN, in town filming a story on the subject, spent an afternoon interviewing her on camera, airing a segment about her in late April.

"It was a very, very difficult time while I was going through it," Darling said, referring to her job search immediately after she was laid off last August. She soon realized that even entry-level office jobs required computer experience, which she lacked.

"But Belinda really helped," Darling added. "She believes in the rules and she makes

you stick to them. She really takes an interest and cares about you."

After a career assessment, Price helped Darling enroll in school, where she now takes classes Tuesdays and Thursdays, and is working part-time at a convenience store.

Looking towards the future, Darling said, she's hopeful that the new skills she's gaining will propel her towards a fulfilling and rewarding career.

The One Stop, operated by CRT, is a collaboration between many agencies, including the Capital Region Workforce Development Board, or CRWBD, the state Department of Labor, and the Connecticut Business and Industry Association.

"When collaboration works, it works really well," said Pamela Nabors, Director of Adult Service for the CRWDB. "In this case, it allows us to give job seekers and employers a customized menu of services to better meet their individual needs."

Price said Darling was a willing and motivated participant, who used the One Stop's resources to her best advantage.

"We have motivational workshops, assessments, tools to help people find what they're good at and where they can find work," Price explained. "We just took it step by step, and the system worked great."



Blues Visits CRT Centers

Gwen Eaddy, a parent from the Middletown ECE program, donned a Blues Clues costume and delighted dozens of Head Start children last month. Her visits were part of the Week of the Young Child, in which CRT centers staged events celebrating literacy and community involvement.

\$700,000 back in your pocket!

CRT's first season of preparing tax returns drew to a close this April, after helping residents prepare returns that put \$700,000 back into the pockets of Connecticut residents.

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INSIDE...

by Justin Marshall, External Affairs Department Intern

Information, Service to the Community

CRT's Fair Connects Parents with Resources

On March 27, 2003, CRT once again offered a vital service to the community, when it held its fourth annual community Resource Fair, in CRT's Windsor Street site.

The family service area of the Early Care and Education organized this fair. The reason that the fair was organized, according to Family Services Coordinator Angelica Branfalt, was "To give our families and members of our communities a place to go to access community resources."

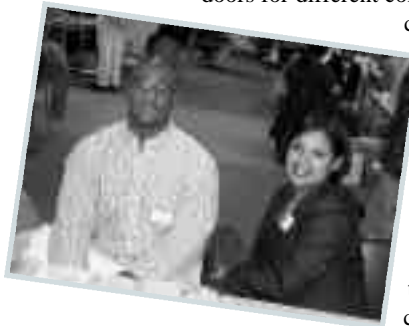
Community agencies have been collaborating to have community needs assessment conferences. These conferences determine what community functions are lacking, and what other resources the community needs. During one of the conferences it was decided that there should be a community resource fair, and once held it was a success. The decision was then made to make the fair an annual event, which takes place every March. The fair on the March 27th was the fourth fair organized by CRT.

There were many organizations represented at the fair. Betzaido Castro and Mary Lue Arzuaga represented Parents Opening Doors, which provides a place for support, training, and information for Latino families with children that have disabilities. Suzette Strickland and Olga Diaz represented Community Partners for Food, which is an organization that assists community residents in obtaining food stamps and utilizing other food assistance programs such as WIC. The American Heart Association was also represented by its Regional Education Director, Hillary Narcia, who was there to distribute information on heart disease, CPR, and other AHApamphlets on different health issues.

The fair was an overall success, attended by more than 100 parents. It was positive for the organizations; it was a rare networking experience for many of them. This event opened many doors for different community organizations to do more collaborative projects that could better serve the community.

It was also very helpful to the members of the community, because many of the community resources that are available were represented.

Milagros Salgado of Hartford and her family were in attendance; she said, "I came here to find information on programs for my children, insurance, and housing and I did, and I am grateful to CRT for providing such services as the community resource fair." Ms. Salgado also said her son just got a job at Pope Park in Hartford, as a result of attending the fair and speaking with the different organizations represented.



Helping Thousands:

2003-2003 Energy Assistance Season Draws to a Close

At the end of April, CRT's 2002-2003 Energy Assistance program will draw to a close. With a presence in more than 40 towns, CRT took applications from more than 22,000 individuals and families this winter. If they qualify based on income guidelines, people get help paying winter heating bills, with payments generally made directly to the fuel vendor. "Without this program, I'd be choosing between food and heat," one client said. "It's a godsend. Thank you CRT!"

Generations of Service



Roland Bridges, center, enjoys the good food served at the Salvation Army Senior Center at one of CRT's Senior Community Cafes. It's an added bonus that his grandson, Hayes Bridges, works for CRT as a sous chef and prepares the food. Roland Bridges, 74, lives in Hartford, and has recently taken up art in addition to his activities as a musician and active grandfather. Assistant Director of Nutrition Glenn Oakes, right, visited the Café recently and visited with both Roland and Hayes Bridges.

Employee of The Month



Betty Brew

Betty Brew, Project READ teacher at the Enfield AIC, has the difficult job of designing lessons and teaching students who have been expelled, dropped out of school, and been in trouble with the law. Her background, education, compassion, and hard work make her an outstanding success.

"She dedicates time to each student, getting to know them and building a relationship," wrote Tammy James, Brew's supervisor, nominating her for the award. "Our program had the largest number of GED graduates in the state in 2002, thanks in large part to her dedication and nurturing of the students.

"This rare individual even paid money out of her own pocket to help a student pay for a lost book, knowing the program could not reimburse her due to budget cuts," James went on. "She makes suggestions for improvement and follows up on them. She travels to sites around the state to make sure staff are properly trained to ensure quality client care. She has fostered relationships with area schools and boards of adult education. And she champions her belief in CRT's mission not only during work hours, but all the time.

"She is an asset not only to CRT, but to the community," James concluded. "I feel it is an honor to work with this extraordinary individual."

Portland senior center workshop



Caregivers and members of the public learned about good nutritional habits and practices at a recent workshop at the Portland Senior Center. Funded by a Yale-Griffin Healthy People 2010 grant, the workshop was sponsored by CRT's Middlesex Services Nutrition Department, and was the first in a series.



CRT Supporters Host National Arts Fundraiser

Students and artists in Washington, Connecticut were so impressed with CRT's National Arts Program that they held a fundraiser last month on its behalf. Organized by Dan Fraley and Pat Keegan, the event, at a Washington Connecticut restaurant featured an art show similar to CRT's National Arts Program, and raised \$440 for the program. "We have many ideas for the next event and look forward to doing it again," said Fraley.

Did You Know

News

Notes

- ▶ Once again, **McKinney Shelter** has gained perfect scores in three audits. The Department of Social Services, the Connecticut AIDS Residence Coalition, and the City of Hartford have all given McKinney scores of 100 percent, reflecting the caliber of staff and services provided to homeless men, and the consistency and quality of the shelters' policies and procedures. Congratulations to the staff of McKinney!
- ▶ **Tammy Joyner** of CRT's Supportive Housing Program was honored recently for her volunteer work at her child's school. The Connecticut Association of Elementary School Principals presented her with a Volunteer Recognition Award, citing her spirit and commitment to make her child's school "a better place for students to learn and grow...The world is a better place thanks to people like you." Congratulations Tammy!
- ▶ CRT employees are invited to participate in the Village for Families and Children's "**Village Walk for Kids.**" The five-K walk will take place Saturday, May 31, with registration beginning at 8:30 a.m. and the walk beginning at 10 a.m., at the Village's main campus at 1680 Albany Ave. The event includes a family fair from noon until 3 p.m., with free steaks for walkers, vendors, food, arts and crafts, and play stations for children. Walkers may collect pledges or simply make a donation the day of the event. For information, please call Christine Moses at (860) 297-0504.
- ▶ The informal **CRT golf league** is organizing and seeking interested people. The league generally meets and golfs weekly, after work, at a nearby course, and is open to anyone regardless of skill level. "Come and enjoy the outdoors and the fellowship," said Middlesex Services Director Todd Francini. For information, contact him at (860) 347-4465, ext. 248.



Reporting Workplace Injuries

by Art Athanson,
Safety Committee

Workplace injuries are a major, agency-wide concern. The costs associated with employee injuries are far more than monetary for CRT. Injured, out of work employees are not performing their invaluable roles, helping us help others in our community.

As valued and valuable employees, it is up to all of us to ensure our workplace is safe for ourselves and our clients.

To this end, the Safety Committee has produced a Health and Safety Handbook outlining policies and procedures. Copies were passed out to all employees; please consult it often, and call the Human Resources Department if you need another copy.

Unsafe conditions and potential safety violations must be promptly reported to a supervisor, manager or safety committee representative to avoid injuries.

All employees must report injuries to a supervisor at once and complete a Work-Related Injury Report form. The supervisor will contact AIG to report the injury and obtain a reference number. The Human Resources department will receive a copy of the claim to be kept on file.

TO REPORT WORKPLACE INJURIES:

Call **AIG's Ear ly Notice Center** at: **1-877-399-6442**. Note our policy number - WC9694853

Employees should be immediately directed to the nearest emergency facility in life threatening situations.

May 13: Teaching Children, Reaching Families Benefit Dinner

Buy your tickets today for CRT's Annual **Teaching Children, Reaching Families** Benefit Dinner. This year's event, May 13 at the Hilton Hartford, will honor Hartford Mayor Eddie Perez and East Hartford Mayor Timothy Larson. The dinner raises money for literacy at CRT's Head Start and Early Care and Education Classrooms. The reception begins at 5:30 and dinner is at 7 p.m.; tickets are \$75 per person, with a choice of a chicken, fish, or vegetable dinner, and tables are \$750. Please call **(860) 560-5471** for more information or to reserve your table today.

\$700,000 back in your pocket!

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At a reception April 14, officials from CRT, the IRS, the UConn Law Clinic, and Treasurer Denise Nappier's office described the program, and how it helped low-income people, especially by promoting the Earned Income Tax Credit, intended to reward work.

From February 1 to April 15, CRT operated six tax preparation sites, in which IRS-trained volunteers and CRT staff provided free tax preparation and filing.

Jodonna Powell of the IRS described the magnitude of the accomplishment in opening six tax preparation sites within months, as CRT did. "When I first came here a year ago, it was to give a workshop on EITC. One participant told me he'd just gone to a tax service and paid \$60.

"EITC is a boon to the taxpayers who need it most," she added. "Nationally, it's lifted 5.2 million people out of poverty. You at CRT are performing a much needed service to the community."

Mary-Beth Jordan of Hartford, who used CRT's tax service, returned the next day to make a donation to CRT. "The people were friendly and courteous, and the service itself was great

"Without CRT, hundreds of families would have paid the cost of having their taxes done, and they may well have been subject to predatory lending also," said Executive Vice President/Chief Operating Officer Lena Rodriguez. "It was a great effort and a huge accomplishment for CRT."



From left are Jodonna Powell of the IRS; CRT Board Chairman John Hussey; Director of Neighborhood Services Elizabeth Horton-Sheff; Senior Vice President/Chief Operating Office Lena Rodriguez; Mary-Beth Jordan, a Hartford resident who used CRT's tax prep service; and Adrienne Baughns-Wallace of State Treasurer Denise Nappier's office.



Thanking Volunteers

Meals on Wheels, delivered daily to more than 500 homebound seniors in Hartford county, are more than just good nutrition. The volunteers who deliver them also provide companionship, assistance with daily tasks, and fun. Hundreds of these volunteers turned out recently for a breakfast at CRT to thank them for their efforts. For information about Meals on Wheels, call **(860) 560-5828**.



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Community Renewal Team, Inc .
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May Birthdays

01	Joyner, Tamelia W	23	Richardson, William
02	Gaston, Carolyn D	24	Criollo, Soledad L.
03	Bell, Thomas X.	24	Vazquez, Mayra L
04	Grant, Rosa Lee	24	Vincelette, Shane
05	Claudio, Evelyn	26	Genua, Genevieve
05	Cordero, Angel	26	Herman, Gabriela N.
06	Williams, Cecile	26	Jones, Adrienne D
08	Lattimore, Brenda T.	26	Torres, Modesta T
09	Freeman, William	27	Coleman, Johnnie H.
09	Rodriguez, Magdalena	27	Foote, Kareen M
10	Bell, Shakeitha L.	28	Cartagena, Christina
10	Houston, V. Lashawn	28	Gonzalez, Benjamin
10	Jones, Annie L	28	Marrero, Yajaira
10	Williams, Monique C.	29	Gonzales, Amariyls
11	Whyte, Nina E	29	Satchidananda, Nanta
12	Walker, Bernice	30	Lopez, Anamelida
13	Brown, Bruce	30	Matias, Norma
17	Atwood, Arthur	31	Belding, Stefanie
18	Carlson, Sharon Y	31	Jefferson, Wilhemina
18	Gonzalez, Elba	31	Velazquez, Delthy
18	Lovett, Thaddeus		
18	Russell, Marcia		
19	Guyton, Eleanor C		
19	Hightower, Mark		
19	James, Tammy		
19	Williams, Ransom		
21	Bell, Julie		
21	Jackson, Delores		
22	Aparo, Michael P.		
22	Davis, Norma J.		
22	El Idrissi, Halima		
23	Fortuna, Lizzette		
23	Lindo, Raquel		

The Community Renewal Team, Inc.

provides a range of anti-poverty programs that help people and families become self-sufficient and to ensure their basic human needs are met. Programs include Head Start and Early Care and Education; Meals on Wheels and meals at senior centers; criminal justice programs; neighborhood-based outreach; positive youth development; energy and weatherization assistance; employment and training; and emergency shelter and supportive housing. CRT was formed in 1963 and is now Connecticut's largest Community Action Agency.

InFocus is the monthly newsletter for CRT employees, trustees, and volunteers.

Please submit information or story ideas to InFocus at 555 Windsor St., Hartford, CT, 06120-2418, or to **Liz Dupont-Diehl** at e-mail lizd, phone (860) 560-5689.

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