

## East Hartford Shelter Residents Receive Message of Hope



Through the efforts of the Young President's Organization, spearheaded by Mark Scheinberg, President of Goodwin College and his wife Debbie, CRT's and East

and remained without a stable home, Murray graduated in only two years. She was awarded a New York Times scholarship for needy students and was

accepted into Harvard for the fall of 2000.

Murray provided a message of hope that captivated the audience of both young professionals and shelter residents.

In addition to Murray, two shelter residents shared their personal stories of hope and inspiration.



Liz Murray pictured with shelter residents and organizers

Hartford Shelter residents were privileged recently to hear the inspirational message of Liz Murray. She is best known as the subject of the 2003 Emmy nominated Lifetime television movie *Homeless to Harvard: The Liz Murray Story*, of which Murray was the co-executive producer. Actress Thora Birch played Murray, and Murray played a cameo role as a social worker. Murray's memoir, *Breaking Night*, was published by Hyperion Books in 2005.



Murray was born in the Bronx, New York, to poor, drug-addicted, HIV-infected parents. She became homeless at age 15, when her mother died, and her father moved to a homeless shelter.



Murray's life turned around when she began attending the Humanities Preparatory School in Greenwich Village. Though she started high school later than most students,

### HSI Tips

**EAST HARTFORD COMMUNITY SHELTER.** PHONE: (860) 568-0323

**Who the Program Serves:** Families with children and single men.

**Eligibility Requirements:** Clients must be homeless, age 18 or older or child accompanied by parent or legal guardian. They must be sober, ambulatory and able to understand and adhere to shelter rules.

**Program Synopsis:** 40-bed shelter that provides a safe haven for families with children and single men. Clients receive overnight shelter, meals, and case management services. The shelter is open during the day for families with children. Staff help residents register their children for school, find work, obtain transportation and move toward stable housing.

**Application Process:** People may refer themselves; clients are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. 385 Main Street, East Hartford

## Asian Family Services Celebrates the Year of the Rat

*Clients and staff look forward to this event because it is a time to unite and celebrate the accomplishments and successes of the past year.*

CRT's Asian Family Services recently celebrated the "Year of the Rat". In Chinese astrology, animal signs are assigned by year and represent what others perceive you as being or how you present yourself. Generally speaking, if you were born in the Year of the Rat, 2008 is supposed to be a good year for you.

On February 20, Asian Family Services held their Annual New Year Celebration with clients and staff of the program. This event is a celebration of the various Asian cultures, including Vietnamese, Chinese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai, and Japanese. Clients and staff look forward to this event because it is a time

to unite and celebrate the accomplishments and successes of the past year. It also gives hope and wishes for a healthy, prosperous, and "lucky" new year. Lunch is provided, and raffle prizes are given to clients.

A number of traditional customs were represented at the event. In the Vietnamese culture, prayers written on paper from a Buddhist temple are hung on a tree and each individual traditionally receives a blessing with hopes of good fortune, good health, and prosperity for the New Year. At AFS, staff created their own tradition. They hung oragami boxes that were made by staff and included Asian candy in the boxes. Each participant took a box from the tree.

In the Chinese culture, money is typically put in red envelopes and given to others, wishing the same good fortune, good health, and prosperity. Staff were able to find chocolate coins that were distributed. This year was successful again as clients were able to share laughter, company, and gratitude for what they have.



AFS staff member Wyns Lee, right, serves as a translator for many clients, including Vo Tan Le.

AFS is the only licensed mental health agency in the state that concentrates on the growing Asian population of the region, providing services in the preferred language of the client. AFS merged with CRT in 2007.



AFS clients gather to share a meal for Asian New Year.



At right, Thi Thi Vo stands beside a tree of Good Fortune, hung with origami boxes. She is wearing a traditional ao dai.

### HSI Tips

**ASIAN FAMILY SERVICES.** 1921 PARK STREET, HARTFORD, (860) 951-8770

**Who the Program Serves:** Southeast Asian refugee and immigrant community.

**Income Guidelines:** No income qualification.

**Program Synopsis:** Addresses the mental, physical, social and emotional needs in a culturally competent, holistic, integrated environment, providing services in the preferred language of the client. Clinicians, health educators and case managers help individuals and families deal with post-traumatic stress disorder and the effects of acculturation, family violence, compulsive gambling, job loss and poverty. Also offering citizenship classes, care coordination, advocacy, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), health education and recreation.

**Application Process:** No formal application process. While some clients are referred through community primary care practices, others are self-referrals. Clients must be diagnosed with psychiatric and/or substance abuse disorders.

# News & Notes

Did You Know

## CRT Night at the Wolf Pack

Everyone is invited to join the Community Renewal Team for a night of hockey as the Hartford Wolf Pack take on the Worcester Sharks at the XL Center on Friday, March 28! You can use the special offer code CRT when purchasing tickets through ticket master and receive a regularly priced \$23 ticket for \$17! If you prefer, you may also contact Nancy Shapiro at x5471 to purchase through the CRT ticket block. \$3 of each ticket purchased will be donated to CRT to assist in our mission to give people the skills and the resources to become self-sufficient and to thrive. The money raised will benefit Early Literacy.

You and your friends can also bring a new or gently used children's book for the Wolf Pack book drive. All books will be used for classroom libraries for the CRT Early Care and Education Program.

## Early Care and Education News



The Douglas St. Early Care and Education Program recently received re-accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. NAEYC Accreditation represents the mark of quality in early childhood education. To achieve NAEYC Accreditation, early childhood education programs volunteer to be measured against the new NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards. Nationally, there are more than 10,000 accredited programs, however, only 645 have been accredited under the new, more rigorous standards. The celebration in late February includes many local dignitaries.

## Mobile Mammography

Hartford Hospital's TAKE the TIME Mobile Mammography Program provides an opportunity for women age 40 or older who have not had a mammogram in the past twelve months or women ages 35-40 who have never had a mammogram to undergo the procedure at CRT.

The program is open to women who have insurance and funds are available to cover the cost of a mammogram for those without insurance. The program has visited CRT twice and will continue to make periodic stops as part of Hartford Hospital's on-going effort to provide this service to residents of Hartford. Please contact Nancy Shapiro at 560-5471 for further information or to schedule an appointment.

## Volunteer Bike-A-Thon???

Several weeks ago, CRT's Early Care and Education Program was thrilled to receive a delivery of 69 tricycles, taxi-trikes and scooters. The not so good news was that everything arrived unassembled. Staff need not have worried. A plea from Lena Rodriguez yielded an impressive group of volunteers who visited twelve centers and assembled the equipment in record time. Special thanks go to the following staff and friends of CRT: Trish Donovan, Michael Melvin, Francis Yankson, Forensic Services Staff and Volunteers, and Mary Wilcox and RSVP Volunteers.

## Allen Kaplan Memorial Dinner

Allen Kaplan was a lifelong friend of low income families who was committed to finding shelter for the homeless. He spent many years as the Director of Case Management for the City of Hartford before becoming Director of Human Services for the Town of Cromwell. He had a particular interest in helping the homeless and would often travel under the bridges in Hartford to try to coax them out of their boxes and into the McKinney Shelter. If they said no, he would have a sandwich and a blanket for each one of them. When he came to Cromwell, his compassion for those who were less fortunate continued. Throughout his career, Mr. Kaplan endeared himself to both the professionals in his office and to members of the community at large as he reached out in particular to Vietnam-era veterans who were homeless.

His daughter, Sara Kaplan married Ken Malley on February 17 and asked her wedding guests to make donations in his memory to the McKinney Shelter instead of sending wedding gifts. She also made a generous donation to the shelter where Allen Kaplan's memory was honored with a memorial dinner that was served at the time of Sara and Ken's marriage.

## Income Tax News

Last week the President signed the economic stimulus package into law. Everyone will need to file a tax return in order to qualify. That includes lower income taxpayers and recipients of Social Security and Veterans' benefits who are not normally required to file.

Please ensure all of our low income clients, veterans, and seniors are aware of this, they must file a tax return this year. Checks will be mailed out in late May or early June.

## INFOCUS WITH:



Congratulations to Julian Stanford, son of **Carmen and Joe Stanford**. Julian will attend Wagner College on a football scholarship and will major in Business. Their daughter Jenesis Conde has also been

accepted at Keene University in New Jersey.



**Andrea and Dan Hardy** are the proud grandparents of Adain (pronounced Ay-din) Jacob Chagnon who was born on February 6th at 9:23pm and weighed in at 7lbs 12.6oz. He was 19 inches long. Both

Andrea's son Chris and his wife Vannesa are proud parents as well.

# Grandfamily Campus Makes a Splash!



The banner, at left, can be seen on buses throughout Greater Hartford for the next two months.

## Award, open house, ad campaign and media attention build excitement

CRT's new complex for seniors and grandparents raising their grandchildren is really in the spotlight! First the campus was named the Best Small Commercial Development of the year by the Connecticut Chapter of Associated Builders & Contractors, Inc.

Then an open house attracted dozens of visitors, including our funders and referral sources. Susan Campbell of The Hartford Courant wrote a glowing column, calling for more programs like ours. Program Manager Carmen Stanford was interviewed on a local radio show, and a new ad campaign – huge posters on the sides of buses – was launched.



Anchoring the campus at Capen and Barbour streets are 24 newly-constructed two-, three and four-bedroom townhouses for grandparents raising grandchildren. Visitors like Lois Ross, Grandparent Advocate at the Salvation Army,

exclaimed over the washers and dryers provided in each unit. The historic St. Michael's School Building on Clark Street has been

converted to spacious apartments for seniors, with huge windows and modern kitchens.

The lower floor of St. Michael's includes offices for case managers, two computer and study rooms, a children's library and more. Activities are being organized for youngsters, teens and adults by CRT staff and partners. The newest members of the team include Marsha Mallis, CRT Grandfamilies Coordinator, and Latoya Blanks, HSI case worker.

For more information, call Program Manager Carmen Stanford at (860)-888-1747.

### HSI Tips

**HARTFORD GRANDFAMILY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT.** (860) 249-0649

**Who the Program Serves:** Applicants in the Grandfamily Section must have legal custody of their grandchildren and seniors must be 62 years of age.

**Income Guidelines:** All applicants have to be income qualified.

**Program Synopsis:** An affordable rental property, located in the City of Hartford's Northeast Neighborhood. It consists of 40 rental apartments with two sections; one for grandparents raising their grandchildren and the other for seniors. Case management, recreation and other programming is offered on-site for grandparents with legal custody of their grandchildren

**Contact:** Those interested in living at Grandfamily Housing at 35 Clark Street, Hartford should contact Broad-Park Development Corporation, the Property Management Organization. Please phone (860) 249-0649 to start the process.

## CRT's Behavioral Health ... "Changing people's lives"

CRT's Behavioral Health Program at 675 Tower Avenue received an unannounced visit from JCAHO (Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations) on February 6 and 7. Thanks to the commitment of the staff, the support of administrators and the willingness of patients to tell their stories, the review went very well. Overall, the Reviewer was very pleased with our patient care, the quality of our clinical program and our client's view of the services they receive as well as the Agency infrastructure that supports the program. He felt the staff is committed to serving the patients and the patients he spoke with were happy with the services provided. "I can clearly see that you are changing people's lives," he remarked. The accreditation has been renewed for three years.

An additional recognition is coming to BHS from the State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). Based on the 2007 Consumer Survey, CRT Behavioral Health Services won in the category, "Most Improved Overall Ratings, Region 4" and Asian Family Services was in the Top Ten category for "Best Performance Three Years in a Row."

More than 24,000 recipients of DMHAS services were surveyed on quality, treatment, respect, recovery and general satisfaction. CRT's

results include surveys at AFS, Tower Avenue, Transitional Case Management, Next Steps and the Substance Abuse Out-Patient Clinic. Our high marks speak to how our customers feel about the work we do. CRT will be recognized February 25th at a special reception being held at the State Capitol.

### HSI Tips

**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICE.** (860) 714-9200

**Who the Program Serves:** Clients diagnosed with psychiatric and/or substance abuse disorders. Clients can reside in Hartford and its surrounding towns and must be 18 years or older.

**Income Guidelines:** No income guidelines

**Program Synopsis:** The CRT Behavioral Health Service offers a medically supervised alternative to inpatient hospitalization and provides a less restrictive form of treatment. It evaluates and treats individuals for a variety of emotional, addictive and behavioral disorders. The program provides an intensive outpatient program (IOP), and outpatient psychiatric clinic, and substance abuse treatment services for adults.

**Contact:** 675 Tower Avenue, Suites 302-303 Hartford (860) 714-9200

## Employee Recognition Program – Wall of Excellence

November 2007



Since **Ben Gonzalez** began his career with CRT in 1995, he has served in a variety of roles: from maintenance worker, to courier – to his current role as carpenter and the morning “face” of CRT, with responsibility for opening the main office, and providing emergency support during the off hours. When given a task, there is no concern that Ben will get the job done right. Whether preparing our child care centers for NAEYC accreditation or making repairs mandated by state and local entities, he steps up to the plate and gets the job done. Ben is thought of as the “go to” guy who assists without complaint, and assures that Facilities responsibilities are completed.

## New Employee Orientation

New Employee Orientation moved to its one-day format on December 10, 2007, including an overview of the Agency’s departments, programs, services and CRT Fundamentals training.

## Training and Development

**English as a Second Language** - Faculty of Goodwin College completed facilitation of the first semester of basic ESL classes on December 15, 2007 and began the second semester on February 9, 2008. Classes will continue through April 26th and are *open to all CRT employees*. They are held on Saturday mornings from 9am to 1 pm in the Lumsden Center at 555 Windsor Street. Registration required, prior to attending class.

**NEW FOR 2008 – Leadership Development Training Series!!!** – 2008 marked the beginning of Leadership Development Training for supervisors and managers. On every third Wednesday of a month, Leadership Development workshops are facilitated in either the Lumsden or Johnson Conference Centers. The January 23, 2008 sessions focused on “Effective Communication Skills”. The February 20, 2008 sessions focused on “Performance Coaching and Counseling”. Subsequent workshops will cover effective customer service, teambuilding, facilitating meetings, and a variety of other topics! Registration required, prior to attending class.

**Human Resources/Training Library** – Human Resources hosts a library of books, audio and video tapes covering a variety of personal and professional development topics. Employees are welcome to borrow them at any time.

**For more information, to register for Training and Development activities or borrow materials from the HR/Training Library, contact Valerie Taylor at 560-5801.**

On December 10 and 12, 2007 **Defensive Driver Train and Trainer** and basic training sessions were conducted for in-house trainers and other staff. On January 24 and 29, 2008 in-house trainers facilitated their first Defensive Driver basic training sessions for staff.

## ▼ New Employees

### Facilities

Colbert, Samuel  
Howard, William Harold

### Administration

Andujar, Omar

### Energy

Baker, Tanaysha  
Adger, Chaz  
Rivera, Daisy

### Neighborhood Services

Maybin, Roger  
Shepard, Robert

### Information Technology

Mora Jr., Saul

### CRT H.O.M.E. Program

Sanderson, Bethany

### Planning

San Souci, James

### Finance

Waite, Clayton  
Supportive Housing  
Davis, Marisha

### Behavioral Health

Krouse, Elizabeth

### A.I.C.

Richard, Sherina  
Torres, Latice

### EPP / HSI

Ferreira, Diane

### Fresh Start

Davis, Jamura  
Hall, Erica

### ECE

Jemison, Venica  
Cox, Shelley  
Piotrkowicz, Kathy  
Ryan, Anna Clelie Karen  
Williams, Sabrina  
Hotard, Mariela  
Martinez, Leticia  
Quintana, Julia  
Howard, Sarah  
Samuels, Barbara  
Carrasquillo, Marian  
Nelson, Stephanie

Arroyo, Isabel

Earvin, J'Mica  
Aviles, Carmen  
Nelson, Amanda  
Rosario, Mireilly  
Russo, Rachel Beth  
Healy, Nicole  
Pointer, Danielle  
Hickey, Taylor  
Simpson, Alisha

### Supplemental Educational Services

Elliott, Annashari  
Price, Alexandra  
Torres, Katherine  
Ames, Allyson

### Nutrition

Redman, Scott  
Tiedeman, Lorna  
Foster, Rashida  
Joslin, Laurie

### Retreat

Diaz Jr., Peter  
Green, Virginia  
McBride, Shellene  
Carrion, Aileen  
Blanks, Latoya  
Mallis, Marsha

### Asian Family Services

Simone, Kathleen Janice  
Thammavong, Sounthaly



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555 Windsor Street  
Hartford, CT 06120-2418

# March Birthdays

Legg, Marilyn	01	Ackerman, Julia	09	Hudson, Renita	14	Jean-Paul, Natacha	23
Mansfield, Kimberly	01	Colon, Jennifer	09	O'Neill, Page	14	Healy, Nicole	24
Solomon, Joyette	01	Long, Tuyen	09	Rivera, Daisy	14	Powell, Phillip	24
Walsh, Brooke	01	McBride, Shellene	09	Johnson, James	15	Waite, Clayton	24
Garcia, Carmen Rosa	02	De La Puente, Nadia	10	Soto-Sanchez, Jeanette	15	Brown, Sean	25
McCluskey, Chris.	02	Gabianelli, Glenn	10	Simone, Kathleen	16	Grados, Susana Theresa	25
Rivera, Ana	02	Simpson, Toni	10	Villodas, Eduardo	16	Larew, Deborah	25
Guite, Judith	03	Valdes, Yolanda	10	Trimmier, Shineka	17	St. Germaine, Bonnie	26
Jefferson, Sandra	03	Meade, Trevor	11	Perez, Elizabeth	19	Collins, Jerry	27
Williams, Marilyn	03	Shepard, Robert	11	O'Neal-Reid, Jennifer	20	Moore, John	27
Colon, Julie	04	Begley, Edward	12	Parker, James	20	Russo, Rachel Beth	27
Espinoza, Julia	04	Rolon, Danny	12	Payne, Hortense	20	Golzar, Maryam	28
Morales, Luz	04	Williams, James	12	Saimininkas, Julie	20	Howard, William Harold	28
Dawes, Gerard	05	Green, Latasha	13	Byrd, Jessica-Leigh	21	Cruz, Soledad	29
Jackson, Valda	05	Restrepo, Jacqueline	13	Campbell, Burnice	21	Nicholson, Theresa	29
Ortiz, Raquel	06	Richardson, Jacqueline	13	Gee-Lewis, Cheryl	21	Rivera, Gloria	29
Ortiz, Yolanda	06	Rodriguez, Wanda	13	Hardy, Andrea J.S.	21	Joseph, Declon	30
Walton, Vanessa	06	Weatherington, Robert	13	Acevedo, Jose F.	22	Kelly, Mary	30
Vega, Jose	07	Bottomley, Jessica	14	Gore, Destiny	22	Smoloski, Ann	30
Williams, Paula	08	Evans, Rhonda	14	Myers-Williams, Shontel	22	Thompson, Theresa	31

# April Birthdays

Deberry, Carlise	01	Pavasaris, Victoria	10	Majzel, Dale	15	Laney, Leslie	21
Perez, Maribel	02	Brewer, Cathi-Ann	11	Vazquez, Irma	15	Molestina, Dolores	21
Keach-Longo, Gustave	03	Gadson, Marcia	11	Lyons, Susan	16	Perez, Adiola	21
Hickey, Taylor	04	Velasco, Rosa	11	Martinez, Marcos	16	MacHado, Meladie	23
Williamson, Rhonald	04	Bajonero, Giovanna	12	Fair, Howard	17	Coleman, Jeffrey	24
Cawley, Deborah	05	Leary, Demetria	13	Morales, Samuel	17	Dominguez, Elvin	24
Brown, Kyra	06	Ransom, Brenda	13	Mundle, Re'shantia	17	Baez, Angel David	25
Baxter, James	07	Walker, Elisabeth	13	Oliver, Kristy	17	Leatherwood, Lessie	26
Arroyo, Isabel	08	Young, Leroy Jr.	13	Heredia, Teresa	18	Woods, Patricia	26
Esposito, Deborah	08	Acevedo, Brian	14	Stebbins, Katie Megan	19	Rodriquez, Stephanie	29
Perez, Suhail	08	Aiken, Elaine	15	Caine, Doris	20	Lovallo, Daniel	30
Vasquez, Ramona	09	Dobrich, Yakelin	15	Richards, Leona	20		

The Community Renewal Team, Inc. was formed in 1963 and is one of the oldest Community Action Agency in the country. We provide a range of antipoverty programs that help people become self-sufficient, including Early Care and Education; Meals on Wheels and meals at senior centers; criminal justice programs; affordable assisted living for seniors; neighborhood-based outreach; positive youth development; energy and weatherization assistance; employment and training; substance abuse and mental health services; emergency shelters and supportive housing. CRT is Connecticut's largest Community Action Agency.

InFocus is the bi-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 email to Nancy Shapiro at NancyS@crtct.org, phone (860) 560-5471.

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CRT InFocus lists employee birthdays as a service to those who wish to recognize their co-workers. If you do not want your birthday included, please contact Maria Cheema at CheemaM@crtct.org or (860) 560-5633.