



# Infocus

May/June 2007 | Vol. 18 No. 2

## Second Annual Safety Fair Extravaganza



The Safety Committee wants to thank everyone who participated in this year's event on May 11, 2007 in the Lumsden Center at 555 Windsor Street, Hartford.

**Remember:** If you participate in the Safety Contests you'll earn more CRT Bucks to spend. The Safety Slogan Contest will begin soon, so start thinking of those great slogans.

**Stay Safe and Have a Great Summer!!**



### CRT Grandfamily Housing Development

Construction is nearly complete of the CRT Hartford Grandfamily Housing Development in the Northeast neighborhood of Hartford.

The program will provide 24 two-, three- and four-bedroom apartments for grandparents raising their grandchildren and 16 one-bedroom units of affordable housing for seniors. Grandparents with



legal custody of their grandchildren are eligible to apply if they meet the income guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code. In order to be eligible to reside in the Senior Section of the development, seniors must be sixty-two (62) years of age or older.

In addition to new housing, residents will receive case management services, action plans designed to meet their individual needs and service coordination to make sure they are correctly linked to necessary services. If you know of someone who may be eligible for the program, please contact Raquel Rivera at Broad Park Development Corporation at 249-0649.

CRT's support for the community was evident when Monty Aheart, President/CEO of Meadows Real Estate Development Corporation met with St. Michael's Church regarding the project. At that time, the church was interested in helping one of their parishioners find a job. Monty arranged a meeting between the parishioner and Enterprise Builders who hired him as a permanent member of the construction crew.

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Infocus is a bi-monthly newsletter for employees and supporters of the Community Renewal Team. To suggest a story or submit a photo, please contact Connie Rose at 560-5456 or email me at [rosec@crtct.org](mailto:rosec@crtct.org).

The HIV Prevention Program is an integral part of the CRT Supportive Housing Team. The program is a natural fit because it confronts many of the same issues around homelessness that put populations at a higher risk of becoming infected with HIV/AIDS. CRT receives funding through the Department of Public Health (DPH) to deliver three specific HIV/AIDS prevention interventions. These include Healthy Relationships, The SISTA Project, and Community Promise. Under the direction of Judith Vasquez, Director of Supportive Housing, the HIV Prevention team consists of Yvonne Patterson, who manages the three interventions, Case Managers, Jeannette Soto-Sanchez and Wanda Gaines, Jennifer Ramiez, UCONN Workstudy student and Jose Vega who supervises all the department's prevention efforts.

Since beginning this new endeavor in 2005, CRT has emerged as a leader in this effort. CRT has achieved a great deal of success in educating the staff and the population served around stopping this epidemic. An epidemic, although said to be impartial, is marked distinctively by its effects on disadvantaged populations throughout the world. These grim statistics are hard felt in the United States, where although only 12% of the population is of African descent, over 50% of the HIV/AIDS cases are found among this same group. In response, CRT has continued to realize its mission by *preparing its diverse communities in meeting this challenge*. Two years after it was started, CRT has served more than 138 community members through both its multi-session group workshops (SISTA and Healthy Relationships) and neighborhood assessments by providing various in-reach and outreach activities, including one-on-one interviews with community members. This activity has resulted in the distribution of over 1,500 harm reduction stories and safer sex kits by recruited and trained neighborhood residents and local business owners.

Although the HIV Prevention team is limited in its staff, undoubtedly its good works and efforts continue to make a strong impact in the lives of many.

### HSI Tips (Human Service Infrastructure)

<b>HIV Prevention Program:</b>	HIV Prevention Program provides evidence based interventions endorsed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. Interventions target the specific strengths, barriers and opportunities of each group of participants:
<b>Who the Program Serves:</b>	Parents of Early Care & Education children, SAGA Case Management at the Family Service Centers & Fresh Start clients (SISTA)
<b>Income Guidelines:</b>	Available to all participants in CRT Early Care and Education Centers, SAGA Case Management and Fresh Start.
<b>Program Synopsis:</b>	Program tailored to the concerns of those being served, such as parents of young children, Latina and African American women. Community Promise brochures provide real-world anecdotes and testimony on steps to prevention. For additional information, please contact the HIV Prevention Specialist at: 560-5790 x225

These efforts have been made even stronger with the collaborations of many area agencies, including Community Health Services (CHS), Charter Oak Health Center (COHC) and The Hispanic Health Council.

If you would like to volunteer be a part of CRT's HIV prevention efforts please contact Ms. Yvonne Patterson at (860) 560-5790 ext. 225.

## Early Winners - Every Child Can Be A Champion Reader!

CRT is just completing the first, very successful year of a new after school reading program for children in kindergarten through Grade 3. More than 50 young children improved their reading skills and comprehension through Early Winners, which was offered this year at Burns, Martin Luther King and Milner Elementary Schools in Hartford. Seven part-time tutors provided intensive reading interventions, under the direction of Julie Sapia, a certified elementary school teacher.

Staff from the Capital Region Education Council (CREC), which supervises all of Hartford's No Child Left Behind tutoring programs, praised CRT for a strong start-up year. CREC's review of CRT cited students' academic improvement, high attendance and low drop-out rates. Parents have been very pleased with the program, as well. For example, Milner parent Jessica Blayman says that she tried several other programs for her daughter, Tamara, but she has seen the best results from the one operated by CRT. Even classroom teachers have mentioned the progress that they see in the students' work.

Early Winners will resume in October, adding Clark, Simpson-Waverly and Rawson Elementary Schools. The plan is to establish a tutoring program at each public school where CRT operates Head Start, to provide continuity for parents and continued academic support for our "Graduates." If you have a child who could benefit from this intensive reading assistance, or you hold a Bachelor's Degree and are interested in a part-time tutoring job, please contact Julie Sapia at 560-5161.



## This spring, think about quitting smoking for your child!

**"My mom got lung cancer from smoking... Smoking hurts everyone."**  
Jennifer, Hartford

**1-866-END-HABIT (363-4224)**  
Funding provided by the Department of Public Health

Smoking during pregnancy has been shown to increase the risk of pregnancy complications such as ectopic pregnancy, premature delivery, low-birth weight infants, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Low-birth weight is the leading cause of infant death in the US and increases the risk of many other future health problems. Smoking is linked with infertility and miscarriage. Smoking during pregnancy reduces the lung capacity of the unborn child. This can cause more respiratory problems in the future such as bronchitis and asthma. Recent studies have been showing that smoking during pregnancy increases the child's risk of developing attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

### When you quit during pregnancy:

Women who quit smoking during their first trimester can reduce their baby's risk of low-birth weight to that of a nonsmoker's. As soon as the mother quits, the unborn child will receive more oxygen to help their baby grow healthy. Their baby will be less likely to develop asthma, allergies and other lung problems. The baby's lungs will be more likely to work well reducing their risk for respiratory problems. The mother's breast milk will be healthier for the baby. The sooner you quit, the healthier you and your child will be.

### Avoid smoking around your child!

Secondhand smoke can cause many health problems for your child. Infants exposed to secondhand smoke are at a greater risk of dying from SIDS. Smoking around your child increases his/her risk of respiratory infections such as bronchitis and pneumonia. It greatly increases the risk your child will develop asthma. Children with asthma who are around secondhand smoke suffer more severe and frequent attacks. Secondhand smoke decreases lung function making your child less physically fit and more susceptible to future respiratory problems, such as lung cancer. Ear infections are caused from secondhand smoke and could result in hearing loss. Coughing and colds are more common in children exposed to secondhand smoke because their airways are smaller and more sensitive.

### Tips to avoid secondhand smoke:

Smoke outside of your home and always away from other people. Asthma attacks can be triggered from the smoke on clothes, so wear a jacket to smoke outside and remove it before going near your child. Smoking in small, enclosed places, makes secondhand smoke more dangerous, so avoid smoking in the car. If you must smoke inside, open a window and use a fan to blow the smoke outside.

**How to quit:** The CT Quitline, 1-866-END-HABIT, offers individual and free counseling over the phone to help you quit smoking.

For more information on tobacco and smoking cessation, please contact Vickey Pavasaris, CRT's Community Health Educator for the Tobacco Free Lifestyles Program at (860) 560-5790 ext 229 or email at pavasarisv@crtct.org. Information obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and the American Lung Association. **Watch for these and other CRT Billboards around Hartford this June!**

**"I quit smoking so my daughter wouldn't start"**  
April, Hartford

**1-866-END-HABIT (363-4224)**  
Funding provided by the Department of Public Health

The Sofia Gospel Choir of Stockholm Sweden sang for almost 100 seniors at the Retreat on Tuesday, April 3, 2007. They were guests of the Emanuel Lutheran Church in Hartford, which was started over 100 years ago by Swedish and Norwegian immigrants to the US. In their one full day in Hartford, the Sofia Church



Choir sang at The Retreat, had a tour and talk of the homeless shelter, South Park Inn, and gave a concert at the Swedish Emanuel Lutheran Church. They also walked throughout Frog Hollow. The group was interested in everything.

The Sofia Gospel Choir of Stockholm came to CRT through Irene Glasser, Director of Research/Planner, who knows the group through her son Nathaniel, who lives in Sweden, has sponsored many music groups as a cultural contribution to everyone living in Stockholm. The musical directors are Dan Arvefjord and Arne Johansson. Members of the Emanuel Lutheran Church in Hartford and Irene hosted the 28 Choir members in their houses for two nights.



## News & Notes - Did You Know?

### CRT CONGRATULATES YOU!

It is with great delight that the Early Care and Education Program congratulates Valencia Perez, Tracey Wright and Magali Maldonado for not only acquiring their Bachelor's degrees in Human Services, but also for sharing their positive experiences with staff, children and families in our program. The best of luck to you all. As the saying goes, "It's not where you start, it's where you finish." You are beginning from an important place, from a new and renewed commitment. *Ivelisse Santiago, Unit Manager*

Maria Franco, Manager, Unit B received her CT Director credential at the State Capitol and Ana Cruz-Diaz, renewed her CDA credential.

Congratulations to Bridget Sutherland of the Nutrition Dept. who received her MBA.

### FUN FACTS: INVENTORS

1. In 1889, the first coin-operated telephone, patented by Hartford, Connecticut inventor William Gray, was installed in the Hartford Bank. Soon, "pay phones" were installed in stores, hotels, saloons, and restaurants, and their use soared. Local calls using a coin-operated phone in the U.S. cost only 5 cents everywhere until 1951.
2. The first commercial vacuum cleaner was so large it was mounted on a wagon. People threw parties in their homes so guests could watch the new device do its job. And the first VCR, made in 1956, was the size of a piano.
3. James Ramsey invented a steam-driven motorboat in 1784. He ran it on the Potomac River, the event was witnessed by George Washington.
4. Dr. Samuel Langley was able to get many model airplanes to fly, but on December 8, 1903, Langley's "human carrying flying machine", plunged into the Potomac River near Washington D.C., in front of photographers who were assembled to witness the event. Reporters around the country made fun of the idea that people could fly, but nine days later, Wilbur and Orville Wright proved them wrong.

On April 27, 2007, The Retreat held its first Memorial Service in honor of those neighbors who have passed away since it opened in 2005. The evening was filled with reflections from Gus Keach-Longo, Executive Director, who watched as the Retreat evolved from that of a shell to a living community where neighbors have become friends.

When the facility first opened its doors, the staff was unsure how people from diverse backgrounds and life experiences would live together. In the two and one half years since it opened, the staff has watched as the members opened up to one another, sharing their heritages and learning from one another.

The evening was one of reflection in which staff and families remembered their friends and the impressions they left on everyone they touched. We remember Olga Anderson, Vivian Bacon, Clarice Bayek, Freda Belber, Bernice Calef, Asuncion Diaz, Marjorie Fox, Laura Gamache, Alfred Garceau, Violet Goshidigian, Leonida Goupil, Genevieve Holmegren, Margaret Johnson, Nora Kaplan, Elizabeth McGuire, Gladys Mitchell, Bertha Precourt, Anna Ricci, Stanley Sablosky, Frank Scepaniski, Willard Seedman, Rosalina Segarra, Wanita Shaw, George Stewart, Seberty Thompson and Thelma Tronsky.

*Go out into the world in peace.  
Have courage.  
Hold on to what is good.  
Return to no person evil for evil.  
Strengthen the fainthearted.  
Support the weak  
Help the suffering.  
Honor all beings.*



### Book Drive Benefits ECE

In April, The Eastbury School in Glastonbury held a book drive and donated 1,984 new and gently used books to the Early care and Education Program. This is the third year Eastbury has been collecting books for our program. Some of the books went home, while others were added to the classroom lending libraries.



### Congratulations are in order for CRT's Middletown Summer Food Program,

which serves breakfast and lunch to low-income children when school is closed. The State Department of Education recently presented an award to CRT for increasing the 2006 participation by more than 50%! Special kudos go to Phyllis Pollock, who managed that program from 1988 until her retirement; Jennifer Squier of Neighborhood Services, who has recruited and trained the site monitors and organized children's activities for the past six years; and Bruce Brown, who used to prepare meals in the Middletown kitchen, and now works in the Central Kitchen on Windsor Street.

The number of hungry children that we feed should rise again this season, thanks to an exciting collaboration with End Hunger Connecticut. Through a grant from the UPS Foundation, End Hunger assigned a community outreach worker to Middletown, to recruit more sites and plan activities for the participants. She is working closely with Bethany Sanderson, who recently began coordinating CRT's Middletown Nutrition Programs. By adding church and Recreation Department sites, we should be able to double the meal count for 2007!

To spotlight this campaign, End Hunger is bringing the state-wide press conference for Hunger Awareness Day to Middletown this year. It will be held at MacDonough School, one of CRT's largest meal sites, on June 5. For more information, please contact Bethany Sanderson or Jennifer Squier at 347-4465.

## INFOCUS WITH:



Shalon Aranda Hardy, granddaughter of Effie Brown, Executive Assistant, Executive Office



Krish Agarwal, son of Mamta Agarwal, Quality Assurance Department



Danielle P. Myers, daughter of Patricia Samuels of the Nutrition Department  
Danielle made the Dean's List with a 3.25 GPA and the Freshman Honor Roll with a 3.0 GPA. She attends Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, GA and is majoring in Speech Communications.



Natalie Deoleo, daughter of Rael Ortiz, MIS Assistant.  
Natalie starred in a play called Beauty and the Lonely Beast. She attends Noah Webster School. She also received the Student of the Month award for the month of April. Natalie is in the fourth grade.



### Over \$5 Million!

CRT congratulates its **staff and volunteers** for... returning millions of dollars to Connecticut's low-income citizens through free tax preparation! Refunds, Earned Income Tax Credits, Child and Education Tax Credits and tax preparation savings went into the pockets of Connecticut's working families!

**CRT Community Renewal Team**  
\$5.5 million returned to 2,120 families  
\* \$4.2 million in Hartford



Congratulations to **Crystell Baker and the Albany Avenue staff** for preparing the greatest number of returns.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL ON A JOB WELL DONE!**

**▼ New Employees**

**Welcome to New Staff:**

**New Employee Orientation:** "Few things are more important to a company's long-term performance than choosing the right employees and ensuring they have the proper outlook from day one". - CBIA News, April 2007.

**To assist new employees** in making a smooth transition into the Agency, Human Resources in partnership with hiring managers, began conducting formal two-day New Employee Orientations in April. Orientations are held the first two days of a non-payroll processing week, and provide new employees with Agency, department and human resource information, including training in CRT's Fundamentals.

**Training:**

CRT "Fundamentals" are the first in our professional development series of training. Open to all CRT employees, "Fundamentals" represent *standards of behavior* that are meant to help enhance our relationships with coworkers, clients, funders and others. The four Fundamental workshops include Non-Harassment, Cultural Competence, HSI and Workplace Safety. To date, more than 160 employees have completed all or part of these trainings.

**Writing Skills I**, an eight-week class facilitated by the Esperanza Academic Center of Jubilee House, ran from mid-January to mid-March. Open to all CRT employees, classes were held on Saturday mornings for all who desired to improve their skills in basic English writing, grammar and sentence structure.

**Education Works!**

A number of employees are actively engaged in furthering their education. CRT's Intranet homepage boasts a link (bottom left box "Information") called **Scholarship Directory** which lists websites for grants, scholarships and other financial aid information. Grants and scholarships go unused every year because people do not take the time to apply. It may take some extra work, however, the benefits could be invaluable - getting your education without having to borrow or pay back money! Congratulations on making such an important commitment to yourself and in your future!

**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. Please phone Valerie Taylor at 560-5801 for more information.

<b>Behavioral Health</b> Edwina Monique Miller	<b>East Hartford Shelter</b> Ilesha López Charles K Hardy	<b>Executive</b> Donald A. Neel	<b>McKinney Shelter</b> Ames Manderville Anthony Pruitt William Colon	<b>Nutrition</b> Charles Chapman Jr Clarence J. Nixon Deborah Graff Ann Grogan Gordon Hill Irma Torres
<b>Bristol AIC</b> Katie Megan Stebbins	<b>ECE</b> Kimberly Rose Mansfield Sherrell R Pinnock Yamileth C. Lisboa Mara A. Calderon Padilla	<b>Finance</b> Tamisha M. Foster	<b>Neighborhood Services</b> Tanya M. Rosario	<b>The Retreat</b> Joseph Dunson Christian Morin Gloria A. Ray
<b>CAFCA</b> Juliet Manalan	<b>Enfield AIC</b> Caryn Spano	<b>Fresh Start</b> Constance S. Jeter	<b>MIS</b> Joe L. Stanford	
<b>Community Service</b> Yolanda Ortiz		<b>Forensic Services Housing</b> Toni R Simpson Ethel Boyd Adreanne S. McKenzie Deborah Sheila Hulien		
<b>Day Care Homes</b> Zhi Hua Wu				

Contact Nancy Greer at 560-5613 or Andrea Bonello at 560-5656 in HR for any information and/or suggestions regarding CRT Training.

**EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION PROGRAM**

CRT launched its expanded Employee Recognition Program by introducing the **Wall of Excellence** in the 3rd floor lobby of 555 Windsor Street.

Each month managers from an assigned department recognize an employee who continuously provides exceptional service to the Agency, and within the community. This employee is honored on the Wall of Excellence. Exceptional performers receive:

- . \$500 CRT Bucks
- . A financial reward of \$100 (after deductions)
- . Recognition at a reception held in the employee's honor
- . A certificate profiling "why" the individual was selected
- . Their photo and nameplate from the "Wall" at year-end



Our honoree for the month of March was **Marcolina Garcia**, Clinician, BHS. Marcolina demonstrates commitment and a consistency in knowledge and application of CRT policy and procedure, serving clients while being actively involved in a variety of community activities. She is well respected by colleagues and staff, and is always willing to go the extra mile.

**Heriberto "Tito" Martinez**, Cook at The Retreat, was our honoree for the month of April. Tito has proven himself, going above and beyond his role. He anticipates what is needed, and keeps things running smoothly in the kitchen. He consistently exceeds the results required, and is "always there to pull things together".



The goal of this program is to recognize outstanding individual contributions and encourage all employees to aspire to similar levels of performance. Stay tuned for more information as the Employee Recognition Program develops!

Please call CRT's Human Resources Department at **(860) 560-5613 or 560-5656** with questions, comments or suggestions.



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 555 Windsor Street  
 Hartford, CT 06120-2418

## June Birthdays

Canino, Tyrone	1	Cruz, Melanie	10	Gooden, Shernette	17	Guadalupe, Omar	21
Dixon, Patricia L	1	John, Claudette R	10	Torres, Gladys	17	Silvestre, Gladys	22
King, Joyce E	1	Williamson, Vanessa	10	Biscette, Yvonne	18	Ayende, Nellie	23
Clark, Roger D	2	Johnson, Carol	11	Pestana, Alexander P.	18	Battle, Doris	23
Allen-Frazier, Yvonne	3	Rivera, Nydia	11	Pitt, Spencer	18	Squier, Frank	23
Rivera, Maria D.	3	Simpson, Warren Lee	11	Rivera, Liss Joanis	18	Chung, Michelle	24
Williams, Laytricia	3	Fothergill, Della	12	Turner, Sellisa N.	18	Green-Patterson, Annette	24
Donovan, Patricia	4	Rosario, Tanya M	12	Williams, Zoey	18	Kyranakis, Gabrielle J.	24
Luna, Stacey L	5	Scott, Shalai Michelle	12	Crocker, Robert	19	Pino, Mayra E	24
Bernardo, George	6	Terry, Sandra Jean	13	Ellison, Elaine	19	Manalan, Juliet	27
Rodriguez, Yeriam	6	Tomassi Sr, Charles J.	13	Gumbs, Germaine L	19	Ramirez, Madeline	27
Rodriguez, Ana	8	Holmes, Robin	14	Miller, Edwina Monique	19	Peay, Teta B.	29
Tanksley, Garland	8	Novarro, Jane P	15	Rodriguez, Janet	19	Quesnel, Beatrice E	30
McMillan, Judith	9	Harrison, Cora W.	16	Castro, Sara	20	Rodney, Angela E.	30
Walker, Gloria	9	Cartagena, Yvette	17	Deaner, Laurie	20		
White, Julia M.	9	Dosreis, Saundra	17	Halpert, Karen	20		

## July Birthdays

Bradwell, Diane W	1	Mitchell, Dean	7	Velasquez, Christina	14	Falcon, Christina	24
Compton, Tina L	1	Grace, Michael	9	Fraser, Sinseara	16	Martinez, Candence	24
Cooper, Kimberly	1	Negron, Mildred	9	Harris, Sherry W	16	Mosquera, Elizabeth	24
Favale, Maria Teresa	1	Ocasio, Gregorio	9	Monroe-Dees, Geraldine	16	Parker, Dorian G	24
Mungo, Ian M.	1	Dallessandro, Angelina	10	Perez, Valencia L	16	Adamson-Jackson, Lorna	25
Richards, Eric	1	Gomez, Joel	10	Prescott, Pamela K.	16	Ferrer, Jose M	27
Lopez, Idamaris	2	Tifa, Ercilia	10	Baker Jr., Charles	18	Casey, Katherine	29
Rhodes-Gooch, Marilyn	2	Anzaldi, Matthew W.	11	Carhuahuanca, Teresa		Parks, John	29
Smith, Martha Ann	2	Brown, Effie L	11	Del Carmen	18	White, Margaret	29
Ward, Phylcia S.	2	Dominguez, Adrienne	11	Brown, Daniela	19	Kershaw, Hawanya	
Cote, Paula	3	Sanchez, Ana C	11	Larose, Rachele	19	N'Neka	30
Alicea, Marilyn	4	Wilson, Beatrice	11	Johns, Kevin B	20	Parks, Lori	30
Flores-Braxton, Dimari	4	Braswell, Melvin D.	12	Santana, Elizabeth	20	Vazquez, Anibal	30
Powell, James	4	Thompson, Tamara A.	12	Douglas, Marvin	21	Williams, Cynthia A.	30
Winterfield, Jane	4	Wilcox, Mary	12	Weidig, Michael	22	McDaniel, Lakisha	31
Adams, Maria	5	Moctezuma, Raquel	13	Wright, Tracey	22	Snow, Kathleen	31
Melendez, Wanda	5	Sanabria, Luis	13	Gosselin, Mark S.	23		
Frazier, Sherry D	6	Glasser, Irene	14	Mercado, Leonilda	23		

The Community Renewal Team, Inc. was formed in 1963 and is one of the oldest Community Action Agencies in the country. We provide a range of anti-poverty 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 Cornelia Rose at [rosec@crct.org](mailto:rosec@crct.org), phone (860) 560-5456.

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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 Cornelia Rose at [rosec@crct.org](mailto:rosec@crct.org) or (860) 560-5456.