

YAT Delights Community with Art and Music

STROKES OF GENIUS - A showcase of artwork featuring two gifted kids

More than 100 guests filled the Youth Artisan and Technology Center (YAT) on Sunday, September 25, for the opening of an exhibit called Strokes of Genius. The professionally hung show featured the lush impressionist paintings of 6 year-old Stephen Mills, the youngest winner ever of a CRT National Arts Program Award, and the detailed cartoons of 10 year-old Jacob Rochester, who studies under CRT's Joe Young. As The Hartford Courant put it in their article, "The creations are truly something to see."

Young, who is the Program Director, oversees all of the programming at the YAT, including a professional recording studio, visual arts programs and computer animation. In addition, Young, an accomplished animation artist, instructs and mentors many of the young people. "It's great to have a place like the YAT Center," he explained. "It's a bridge between the community and CRT...Art should be for everyone to enjoy. Art is for the people!"

From ages three to 93, the supporters and relatives who poured into the gallery were impressed with the artwork and the surroundings - from lighting to refreshments to a musical accompaniment on a grand piano. Young and his staff are developing a list of upcoming gallery shows, including an exhibit to highlight CRT's talented employees. Please contact him at 560-5689 if you would be interested in submitting work for a staff show.

The Youth Artisan Program is also seeking donations of acoustic guitars to help our inner city youth learn to play the guitar.



Page 5
Page 5
Page 6

Festival of Light Ceremony

Youth enrolled in CRT's Youth Artisan Program will once again delight the public as they perform at the Festival of Light at Constitution Plaza. This year, the youth led by the talented Geannetta Bennett will be joined by the St. Joseph's College Gospel Choir to help ring in the holiday season in a performance late in the afternoon of November 25, 2005. Although part of this event will be televised, there is nothing more spectacular than a live performance. CRT encourages staff to bring their families to join the sing-a-long and support our program.



It's downtown Hartford's largest, longest running Winter Fantasy Wonderland tradition! For forty-one years the Hartford's Festival of Light has marked

the official start to the Holiday Season for thousands of Connecticut residents and visitors. So bring your family to Constitution Plaza to admire the zillions of bright, white twinkling lights. Enjoy the holiday music of CRT's Youth Artisan as you view the shimmering plaza and the decorative trees, fountains, and sculptures aglow with the magic of the holidays. And don't forget the Hot Chocolate!!

HSI Tips

YOUTH ARTISANS PROGRAM (YAT) 560-5306

Who the Program Serves: Youth ages 12 - 16
 Income Guidelines: None
 Other Criteria: Regular attendance is required.
 Program Synopsis: YAT serves youth ages 12-16 in the area of scholastic support, visual and performing arts in order to cultivate appreciation for the arts, develop performance abilities, build leadership skills, improve academic achievement and expand positive relationships with their peers and with adults.
 Documentation Needed: General demographic information needs to be provided along with parent authorization to participate in program activities.

CRT Holiday Celebration
 CRT Cruise Winner
 HR Corner

Page 2
 Page 3
 Page 3

ECE Somalia Outreach
 Employee of the Month
 InFocus With

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 560-5637 or email me at rosec@crct.org.

INSIDE...

MEET Abdi Aziz Hussein - ECE Teacher's Assistant/Family Service Worker - Children's Learning Center, Hartford

When Abdi Aziz Hussein walked into the CRT Neighborhood Center on Wethersfield Avenue a little over a year ago, he couldn't have known that one day he would be working for CRT and helping other Somali families deal with the cultural shock and perplexing issues that he and his family experienced.



of a refugee is difficult and uncertain. Aziz was born in Jilib, Somalia in 1975. He, his family and 12,000 other refugees fled to Kenya during the civil war in which his father and sister were killed. He grew up in Kenya, learned to speak English, met his wife and started a family, but the life



As Refugees International explains it, refugees are held in remote camps, cannot leave and are prevented integration with the local communities.

Aziz and his family were part of a group of Somali Bantu who tried to get help from Mozambique and Tanzania, but these countries could only accommodate some of the refugees and they wanted to stay together. In 2001, they met an official from the United States Embassy who promised to help them get their visas to go to America. It took three years and assistance from many organizations, but finally, in July 2004, Aziz, his ten family members and eight other families were on their way to the United States. Three families settled in Chicago, three in Boston, one in New York and one in Connecticut.

They had traveled thousands of miles from Hagadera Kenya to Amsterdam, Holland, New York City and finally Hartford. But the challenges were not over.

Upon their arrival, they were taken to a three-bedroom apartment in Hartford. Their counselor gave them a few quick lessons and pieces of advice. On how to use a stove: "Don't let the children touch it, it will burn them." How to use a refrigerator: "Keep the door closed, it keeps food cold." And how to work the shower: "This has hot and cold water." After she explained where everyone would sleep, she was gone.

As the family settled in, they were startled by the sound of an alarm ringing in the apartment. Aziz remembered being told to get everyone out of the house if he heard a fire alarm. But when he tried to open the door, he found that it had two locks. It seemed each time he opened one, he didn't know he was accidentally locking the other. So after four or five

attempts, he gave up; he couldn't open the door. He went to the window, and watched for fire trucks and smoke; since he didn't see anything, he breathed a sigh of relief. Sadly, the family was stuck in the house for five days until their counselor returned. When she rang the doorbell, he recognized the same sound he had thought was a fire alarm. Still unable to open the door, he waited. The counselor opened the door with a key and explained to them how to open both locks.

Aziz looks back on incidents like that, and realizes that he has come a long way. Now he can offer assistance to others, just like the Somali-Bantus who showed his family how to manage their first trip to an American grocery store, how to use public transportation, open a bank account and use an ATM.

It was one of those more experienced settlers who helped Aziz find CRT. One winter day, while out with his family, a woman heard him talking, and asked if he was from Somalia. She told him that she had come here from Somalia more than twenty years ago. As they talked, she mentioned CRT and the programs we provide to families. The woman accompanied him to CRT's Family Service Center on Wethersfield Avenue where he signed on for Energy Assistance. When CRT learned about Aziz and the other Somali

HSI Tips

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION PROGRAMS: EARLY CARE & EDUCATION HEAD START - 560-5406

Who the Program Serves: Children three to five years in Hartford, East Hartford, Bloomfield, Bristol, Clinton, Middletown & Windsor

Income Guidelines: 150% of the poverty level.

Other Criteria: 10% of the families may be over income and at least 10% of enrollment is available to children with special needs.

Program Synopsis: Comprehensive Early Childhood program for children and families.

Documentation Needed: Birth certificate of child, social security number for child and parent, proof of parent income. (W-2 form, pay stubs, etc.)

HSI Tips

ENERGY ASSISTANCE: 560-5800 (ENERGY)

Who the Program Serves: Low income seniors, families, disabled and singles

Income Guidelines: Currently, 200% of poverty. May go as high as 60% of state median

Other Criteria: There is an assets test for this program. Singles may not have over \$7K in liquid assets and families may not have over \$10K in liquid assets.

Program Synopsis: The Energy program provides supplemental assistance to help defray heating costs

Documentation Needed: Proof of previous four weeks pay from date of application, entire utility bill if heat with utility, d.o.b., SS# for all household members, proof of any household income from any source.

Continued on Page 4

To nominate a colleague for the employee of the month, please contact CRT's Human Resources Department at (860) 560-5665



November
Ruth Watkis
Case Manager,
East Hartford Shelter

◀ **October**
Virginia Lopez
Family Service Worker, ECE



NEW MILEAGE RATE

Because of the increase in the cost of gasoline, CRT will increase the employee mileage reimbursement from .405 per mile to .485 per mile. This is effective from September 1st - December 31st, 2005. Remember the mileage report for use of your personal auto is due by the 15th of each month for the previous month's expenses.

CRT'S SAFETY BUCKS

SAFETY Slogan Contest

November 1st - December 31, 2005. Earn \$5 in Safety Bucks for each entry!!! You may enter as many slogans as you like.

Winners will be determined monthly; from Nov. and Dec. entries, each month will have 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th place winners.

Slogans can be entered through your Safety Committee Rep via e-mail, interoffice mail, regular mail, or hand delivery.

Include your name, dept, phone number and date with your entry.

Winning slogans will earn Safety Bucks and notoriety; we will send them out via everyone e-mail and publish them in CRT's In-focus.

SAFETY BUCK PRIZES:

1st place \$100.00
2nd place \$ 50.00

3rd place \$ 20.00
4th place \$ 10.00

Be Hip, Don't Trip

Safety is no Accident

FUN FACTS

1. "I am." is the shortest complete sentence in the English language.
2. The first letter of each of the continent's names is the same as it's last; America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, Antarctica.
3. A dragonfly has a lifespan of 24 hours.
4. Americans eat about 675 million pounds of turkey on Thanksgiving.
5. Domestic turkeys can't fly. Wild turkeys, however, can reach flight speeds of 55 miles per hour.

INFOCUS WITH:



Raven Celeste Bohmier - Daughter of Elizabeth Hill Bohmier
- CAFCA - Raven Celeste was born on Tuesday, October 11th at 1:43 pm. She weighed in at 8 pounds, 13 ounces, 20 ½ inches. The proud parents Elizabeth & Eric Bohmier.

Jonathan Shapiro - Son of Nancy Shapiro - CRT's Development Director

Jonathan has recently joined the Stamford Law Office of Day Berry & Howard specializing in litigation.



David Shapiro - Son of Nancy Shapiro - CRT's Development Director

David is now a fully licensed physician having passed the final set of boards. He's currently a 4th year surgical resident in the UCONN system.



Aja Wilson - Daughter of Brenda Ransom - CRT's Facilities Director

After spending her summer as an Aetna employee, Aja Wilson, is now an intern in the finance department of Aetna. Aja is an honor student at Granby High School. She enjoys singing & dancing. She's also a member of the Chamber Singing Choir & the Chorus Choir. She will be a 2006 Graduate. She's touring four colleges: Long Island University, Howard University, Temple University & University of Hartford.

Button Up Connecticut Coat Drive

With the cold winter quickly approaching, CRT will once again participate in the Button Up Connecticut Coat Drive. Information about the program has been posted on the United Way website and asks individuals and groups wanting to donate coats to make direct contact with organizations like CRT who have clients in need of coats. Last year, we distributed thousands of coats, mostly through our programs. We received numerous donations through public school coat drives, church drives and others and we also shared some of the coats with other organizations.

If your church or community group would like to donate coats, or if you have clients who are in need, please contact Connie Rose at **560-5637** to arrange a drop off or pick up beginning November 28th.

CRT Holiday Celebration

Friday, December 2, 2005

HURRY AND GET YOUR TICKETS...

SPECIAL DOOR PRIZES INCLUDE:

"Dessert Tray from Mozzicato De Pasquale, Bakery and Pastry Shop"
"Complimentary Dining Experience at Mohegan Sun's Seasons Buffet"

Where: **Sheraton Hartford Hotel**, 100 East River Drive, East Hartford, CT

6 pm Reception - 7pm Dinner - Employee: \$10.00 ~ Guest: \$30.00

Dinner Buffet: Chicken Piccata, Roast Top Sirloin au jus, Baked New England Scrod w/breadcrumbs, Roast Pork Loin w/ Apple Glaze
Includes: Reception hors d'oeuvres - Dinner includes salad, assorted rolls with butter, Seasonal Fresh Vegetables and potato, coffee, tea along with dessert. Cash Bar Available. Music Provided by: **The Ken Reeder "Experience"**

Tickets are available and can be purchased in the Finance Department located on the 3rd floor of 555 Windsor Street (main office).

Deadline to purchase tickets is December 1st @ NOON-NO EXCEPTIONS

Holiday Rate of \$69.00 is available for overnight stay. Contact the hotel directly at 860-528-9703.

This event is brought to you by CRT and the CRT SPC.

Reminder: If you are purchasing tickets in finance for other employees you must provide the employees name and department. Also all tickets will be matched to ID's at the Registration table at the Sheraton.

ECE SOMALIA OUTREACH

Continued from Page 2

families, they recognized that CRT had other programs and services that would benefit the Somali families. Since Aziz could speak English, they ask him if he could take time off from his job and bring the families to CRT?

When he arrived for the appointment, he came with eighteen Somali mothers and their children. CRT passed out winter hats to the children and registered them for Head Start. Sue Lyons and Tracy Wright helped to coordinate the services the Somali families would need. Aziz was instrumental in assisting the families to their doctor's appointments; helping with home visits and showing them many of the things he had learned. He had done such a great job working with the Somali families; CRT offered him a job as a Teacher Assistant and later as a Family Service Worker in Head Start. This is a wonderful example of HSI, Connecticut and CRT's initiative to improve coordination between human service organizations and outcomes for people who need our help.

Aziz has come a long way since he first arrived in Hartford. When asked how he liked working for CRT, he said, "It's wonderful!"

"The teachers are very nice to me. When I started they would hug me every morning...when I stopped at the main office, [Education Director] Paul Copes would ask me 'How was your day today?' Everyone had polite words for me and I wondered, 'Am I special or do they treat everyone like this?' Working at CRT makes me very happy and I want to work here forever and ever."

Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce Expo

On Friday and Saturday, October 14 and 15, 2005, CRT participated in the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce Expo held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Cromwell. The Expo provides an opportunity for business, industry and government programs to showcase the things we do for the community and provides an excellent environment to network and establish strong relationships with other area organizations.

The Middletown staff enthusiastically supported this event, manning the booth throughout the weekend and offering information about our many programs to individuals and organizations throughout the area.

CRT CRUISE RAFFLE!!!

Daisy Q. Mendez is the lucky winner of an all expenses paid cruise for two aboard the Carnival Cruise ship "Imagination". With the winter weather quickly approaching, Daisy and a friend are eagerly awaiting the December 10th departure date when she will join CRT staff on her first ever cruise. The ship will dock in two exciting ports, The Grand Cayman Islands and Ocho Rios, Jamaica. Congratulations too to Effie Brown who sold the winning ticket. Bon Voyage Daisy and to the CRT staff - Have A Great Time!!!



Emergency Planners Win Award



Roxanne Aaron-Selph (left), head of the Aging Services Division of the State Department of Social Services, and Terry Madigan, Executive Director of the East Hartford Housing Authority, discuss the Excellence in Aging Programs award being presented to the CRT Senior Emergency Planner program. The program, under the direction of Mary Wilcox, recruits and trains two emergency response coordinators from each East Hartford senior housing complex. This is the fourth state or national award that the program has won; three other cities are currently replicating the CRT model.

MOBILE FOOD SHARE

The Mobile Foodshare Program deliveries scheduled for Thursday & Friday November 24 & 25 have been canceled because of the Thanksgiving holiday. If your site is scheduled for delivery on either date, please inform your clients.

▼ **New Employees**

Neighborhood Services

Keyser, Jennifer L.
Parsons, Ryan Daniel
Hill, Janie
Kershaw, Hawanya N'Neka
Lowery, Samantha L
Gaynor, Nakaya Latiah-Samone
Pinkney, Kimberly M.
Monahan, Kimberly A
Lebron, Alicia E
Quiles, Denise
Vargas, Tamarah L.

Retreat

Smalling, Christina R

Behavioral Health

Doak, Barbara E
Gleason, Joan
Ralston, Peter
Johnson, Lynn

Finance

Godek, Elizabeth

ECE

Sanchez, Ana C
Oyola-Diaz, Lydia

Facilities

Mercado, Luis

MIS

Daly, Michael C
Telgarsky, Pamela

Community Services

Chung, Nichole
Vazquez, Anibal
Soto, Daniel

Middletown Nutrition

Shaw, Janeen
Young, Robert

Planning

Pappas, Nancy
Tymoszczuk, Justyna

Criminal Justice

Leary, Demetria

Something To Ponder:

When you see geese flying along in a 'V' formation, you might be interested in knowing what scientists have discovered about why they fly that way. There are lessons we can learn from their findings that can be applied to the workplace.

Fact #1 As each goose flaps its wings it creates an 'uplift' for the birds that follow. By flying in a 'V' formation, the whole flock adds 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew alone.

Lesson: People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going more quickly and easily because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.

Fact #2 When the lead goose tires, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies to the point position.

Lesson: It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership. As with geese, people are interdependent on each other's skills, capabilities and unique arrangement of gifts, talents or resources.

Fact #3 The geese flying in formation honk to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

Lesson: We need to make sure our honking is encouraging. In groups where there is encouragement, the production is much greater. The power of encouragement is the quality of honking we seek.

November

TRAINING

Contact Michelle Farina in HR for any information &/or suggestions regarding CRT Training at 560-5661.

What:	When:	Where:	Presented by:
Safety Roll-Out (Mandatory for all levels of Management)	Tuesday 1st 10-12	Lumsden Center rm #3	CRT Safety Committee, Bank North, Sue Nelson, Director of Compliance & Risk Management
HIPAA Training (for Behavioral Health Employees Only)	Tuesday 1st 2-4	675 Tower Avenue Site	Sue Nelson, Director of Compliance & Risk Management, Guests
Sexual Harassment Awareness (Mandatory for all employees)	Monday 14th 1:30-3:30	Johnson Center Conference Room 2nd Floor	Sue Nelson, Director of Compliance & Risk Management, Guests
HSI Training (Mandatory for all employees)	Wednesday 16th 1:30-3:30	Johnson Center Conference Room - 2nd Floor	Jim Pestana of Neighborhood Services, Julie Ackerman of Planning
Customer Service Skills	Thursday 17th 1:30-3:30	Johnson Center Conference Room - 2nd Floor	Michael Daly of MIS
Diversity Awareness (Mandatory for all employees)	Friday 18th 1:30-3:30	Johnson Center Conference Room - 2nd Floor	Art Athanson of Human Resources
Business Writing & Grammar Skills	Monday 21st 10-12	Lumsden Center rm # 2	Elizabeth Horton Sheff of Neighborhood Services
E-Time Refresher Training	Tuesday 22nd 10-12	Computer Training Room - 2nd floor	Andrea Bonello of Human Resources
Progressive Discipline Training	Monday 28th 1:30-3:30	Lumsden Center rm # 2	Christa Harrington of Human Resources

Community Renewal Team, Inc.
555 Windsor Street
Hartford, CT 06120-2418

November Birthdays

Diaz, Santa	01	McCall, Clifford	08	Linker, Amy	14	Braddock, Jessica	23
Gomez, Santa I.	01	Pallet, Deborah	08	Bennett, Geannetta	16	Derosier, Phillip	23
Outlaw, Hattie	01	Ortiz, Thelma L	09	Jimenez, Maria	16	Dejesus, Emely	24
Velazquez, Virgilio	03	Bell, Albert	10	Michele, Maria	16	Crespo, Aurelio	25
Bernard, Claudine	04	Cuascut, Andrea	10	Oliveras, Ivette	17	King, Tamika	25
Davis, Teresa	04	Hernandez, Cesareo	10	Levy, Mindy	18	Bowen, Lawrence	27
Walters, David	04	Juda-Karner, Lynda	10	Shaw, Janeen	18	Bell, Wanda	28
Caruso, Georgia	04	Barnes, Faith	11	Hatten, Reyana	18	King, Tamika	28
Smith, Jeree	04	Griffin, Eugenia	11	Johnson, April	18	Thomas, Ossie	28
Dawes, Zephline	05	Lopez, Virginia	11	Hamilton, Tracy	19	Green, Sabrina	29
Ortiz, Estrella	05	Sotomayor, Mayra	12	Hunt, William	19	Sforza, Phyllis	29
Glasser, Michael	06	Campbell, George	13	Diaz, Dennise	21	Turcotte, Hugh	29
Parker, Maryellen	06	Edwards, Edwina	13	Williams, Monique	21	Vazquez, Carmen	29
Donato, Carmen	07	Rodriguez, Minerva	13	Gorey, Robert	22	Galloway, Dean	30
Sastre, Carian	07	Cooke, Neville	14	Grant, Earlene	22	Speller, Glanda	30
Coleman, Jonathan	08	Tymoszczuk, Justyna	14	Rodriguez, Pedro	22		
Quinones, Maria	08	Walker, Lewis	14	Smith, Bridget	22		

December Birthdays

Baldinger, Corinne	01	Capers, Rita	08	Saffold, Tyeisha	17	Weatherington,	
Mathis, Valerie	01	Guzman, Isabel	08	Wisdom, Claudette	17	Robert	22
Young, Tammy	01	Jones, Lucretia	08	Fennimore, Christopher	17	Rodriguez, Virgen	24
Arburr, Carol	02	Mirabal, Maria A.	08	Gayle, Donneth	17	Santos, Maria	24
Copeland, Janice	02	Bell, David	09	Bonello, Andrea	18	Feliciano, Katherine	24
Thomas, Serlena	02	Ellenbogen, Dale	09	Greenfield-Louis,		Greer, Nancy	25
Aviles, Miriam	03	O'Neill, Kevin	10	Marva	18	Brew, Elizabeth	26
Davis, Regie	03	Hunter, Nancy	11	Godek, Elizabeth	19	Cortes, Mariano	26
Miller, Melissa	03	Sierra, Lisandra	11	Rivera, Sandra	19	Mellon Jr., John	26
Woolley, Bruce	03	Martinez, Heriberto	12	Rodriquez, Yiovannie	19	Bohmier, Elizabeth	27
Bobb, Natasha	04	Moody, Christine	12	Walker, Sadie	19	Owens, Carrie	27
Clarke, Dawn	04	Pearson, Sharon	12	Amos, Brenda	19	Young, Joseph	27
Soutar, Camille	04	Fagan, Sylvia	13	Diaz, Marta	20	Caplinger, Heidi	28
Bennett, Alicia	05	Watkis, Ruth	13	Mathis, Bobby	20	Rodriguez, Olga	28
Dyson, William	05	Easton, Kelly	14	Sanderson, Bethany	20	Davis, Frances	29
Lefebvre, Angela	05	Huseini, Andrea	14	Lyons, Beverly	21	Pagan, Emelin	29
McKinley, Princess	05	Lowery, Samantha	14	Rodriguez, Marie	21	Casey, Laura	30
Blyther, Linda	05	Farrell, Samuel	15	Wright, Alvin	21	Dejesus, Gloria E	30
Jones, Julia	06	Samuels, Patricia	15	King, Mary Ann	22	Johnson, Daniel	31
McCollum, Shatoyia	06	Vandertuin, Alberto	16	Owens-Osayande,		Leslie, Shirley	31
Moriarty, Timothy	07	Vargas, Rosa	16	Kionna	22		

The Community Renewal Team, Inc. provides a range of anti-poverty programs that help people and families become self-sufficient. Programs include Head Start and 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; 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 Cornelia Rose at e-mail rosec@crtct.org, phone (860) 560-5637.

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