



Infocus

Jan/Feb 2006 | Vol. 15 No. 8

New Leadership at CRT

Lena Rodriguez Named President/CEO



On December 7, 2005, the Board of Trustees of CRT officially appointed Lena Rodriguez as President/CEO. Lena has been CRT's Executive Vice President/Chief Operating Officer since 1999, and was previously the Director of Finance for the New York City Board of Education's Division of Special Education, where she oversaw a \$500 million budget and programs in 1,000 school buildings.

As Executive Vice President of CRT, Lena has overseen program expansion, a reorganization of the agency's divisions and the roll-out of many new initiatives, including innovative housing for the elderly, a behavioral health clinic for individuals with intense mental health issues, and a unified intake system for all clients. Six years ago, she was recruited and selected by the Board of Trustees through a comprehensive and independent process to be the likely successor to Paul Puzzo.

"We are very pleased to be able to make this announcement. It's clear that Lena is the right person at the right time," said Fernando Betancourt, Chair of the CRT Board of Trustees and Executive Director of the state's Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission. "Under Lena's direction, CRT will be moving toward a strategic approach to addressing poverty, rather than the traditional program-by-program method. Lena will offer dynamic leadership in challenging times."

Lena assumes the position of CEO as Paul C. Puzzo steps down, after 22 years at the helm. Mr. Puzzo has played key roles at CRT for more than 40 years, helping it grow from a small community action agency with a \$75,000 annual budget to a complex \$50 million organization. Mr. Puzzo's new title of President Emeritus denotes the esteem in which he is held by the board, the CRT staff and the community.

"The board is proud to say that Paul will be remaining with the organization, taking on special projects and supporting our work throughout our communities," Mr. Betancourt said. "We feel it's valuable for the institution to have continued access to the knowledge, contacts and credibility Mr. Puzzo has built over more than 40 years at CRT," added Betancourt.

Lena is a resident of Wethersfield and holds a Master's Degree in Management from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Bernard Baruch College. She serves on the boards of Capital Community College and the Eastern Connecticut State University's Foundation.

In a statement released at the time of her appointment, Ms. Rodriguez said, "I am honored by the opportunity to succeed the dynamic service of Paul Puzzo. During the past six years, I have been preparing to effectively lead this agency into the next phase of service to our community. I look forward to building on our successes and continuing to meet the growing needs of those we serve."

Fred Lynn Appointed Chief Program Officer

CRT is pleased to announce that Fred Lynn has been appointed to the position of Chief Program Officer.

Fred brings a wealth of experience to his position. He has served as the Director of Planning for CRT for the past two years and has previous experience as the Director of Planning at Community Solutions, Inc., an organization that provides comprehensive services and developmental opportunities to at-risk and disadvantaged populations, persons exhibiting criminal or delinquent behavior, and those in need of care and protection. Fred holds a Bachelor's degree in Economics from Fordham University and an M.S. in Urban Studies from Southern Connecticut State University.

In assuming his new role, Fred said, "I'm looking forward to both the challenges of the position and the opportunity to have maximum positive impact on the community we serve."

Lena and Fred would like to encourage you to share in their commitment to the elimination of poverty and to continue to take responsibility as we move beyond addressing basic human needs. Together we can make our vision for CRT a reality.

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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 560-5637 or email me at rose@crtct.org.

Spotlight

Program of the Month

IDA (Individual Development Accounts) Homeownership

IDA Program Makes Dreams Come True

“CRT Helps People Who Help Themselves”



One of the most exciting moments of Ava Gordon's life was the night she spent sleeping on the floor of her brand new house in New Britain. No furniture. No hot water. “But it was mine, and I wanted to spend my first night there,” says the 24-year-old who attends school and holds down two jobs. “When they handed me the keys I stood there and asked, ‘Are you sure this is really my house?’ ”

Ava bought her house through CRT's HOME Center, using an IDA, or Individual Development Account. For every dollar saved (up to \$2,000) the program matches with two more,

making a total of \$6,000 toward the purchase of a first home, establishment of a small business or to further one's education. At the same time, monthly seminars at the Savings Club and homeownership classes guide the first-time home-buyer through the challenges of credit ratings, realtors, closing costs, attorneys, etc.

Ava was one of the speakers at the December celebration for successful “graduates” of the HOME Center program. She and a fellow grad, Merlette Hansel, each spoke to current Savings Club members about their decisions to stretch for the purchase of two-family homes. Merlette worked for four years to buy a house in East Hartford for her three daughters - one of whom worked during high



school and college to boost the family's eligible income toward getting a mortgage.

During 2005, nine people completed the IDA program; four purchased homes, four invested in starting a business and one went back to school. In January 2006, there were 46 active customers enrolled in IDA. One of those business owners, Saundra Magana, fabricates textiles for interior design, theatrical productions and more. She



purchased a very costly custom embroidery machine, with which she created the following banner: CRT Helps People To Help Themselves.

For more information, please call CRT HOME, 8 Stonington Street, 560-HOME (4663).

HSI Tips (Human Service Infrastructure)

CRT HOMEOWNERSHIP

- Who the Program Serves:** Hartford Homeowners or prospective homebuyers in Hartford.
- Income Guidelines:** Eligibility requirements vary by program
- Program Synopsis:** The CRT HOME offers total assistance in homeownership training for first time homeowners, including Home Renovation Services, Home Purchase Services, and workshops, seminars and counseling.
- Also available is a financial literacy counselor who is available to conduct workshops and one to one counseling of individuals.
- Documentation Needed:** Attendance at a homeownership workshop (for homebuyers) or be a Hartford Homeowner.

MILEAGE

Effective January 1, 2006 the staff mileage reimbursement rate will decrease from 0.485 to 0.445 to match the current Federal mileage reimbursement rate. The Nutrition Staff Volunteer rate will be determined by the Nutrition Dept. The revised form is located on our Intranet and blank forms are also located in the Human Resources and Finance Departments.

Hoffman Holiday Baskets



On Friday, December 16, 2005, Jeff and Brad Hoffman of the Hoffman Auto Group stopped by The Retreat to deliver 200 holiday baskets. Each basket was filled with the essentials for a holiday dinner for ten people, guaranteeing that some of CRT's most needy clients would enjoy a wonderful family dinner this season.

Mark Pallatino and his crew from the Enfield AIC helped to deliver the baskets and CRT is extremely grateful to him for his assistance in making the project a success.

The Hoffman family has been donating baskets for many years and is extremely proud of the tradition. At CRT, we truly appreciate their generosity and look forward to making the holiday bright for some of our families.



VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE 2006

The 2005 tax year is coming upon us, and we are looking at building upon an already very successful VITA/Earned Income Credit program. Last year, CRT staff and volunteers were able to assist nearly 1,600 low-income households in preparing and e-filing their state and federal tax returns. This effort resulted in over \$4.1 million dollars being returned to clients in Hartford, Middletown, East Hartford, and Manchester.

Employees Participating in VITA:

CRT also needs to identify department staff who are interested in and will be approved to participate as tax preparers. The 2005 team was wonderful and we were impressed by their dedication to deliver this much-needed service to the community. The training process will be somewhat different this year and will be coordinated internally by Andrea Hardy, (CRT HOME) and Jim Pestana.

CRT VITA Sites: Last year CRT had 8 sites for tax preparation. If your site is interested in participating this year, please contact Jim Pestana, Director, Neighborhood, Energy & Youth Services via email jimp@crtct.org or at 560-5769.

“When someone comes to us for tax assistance, we tell them about other CRT programs, like energy assistance, the Individual Development Accounts, or Head Start,” said Lena Rodriguez, CRT’s CEO. “There’s so much people can do to build their assets and we want to be able to share that information with them.”

CRT’S Safety Slogan Contest

NOVEMBER - Winning Slogans:

BRIDGET SMITH - 1st PLACE - Full Monty (\$100):
Stay Alert!! Don't Get Hurt!!

Bridget Smith - 2nd Place - (\$50):
Safety Pays in Many Ways!

Geannetta Bennett - 3rd Place - (\$20)
Neglect Hurts, put safety first

Elizabeth Horton Sheff - 4th Place - (\$10)
Treat Your Workplace like a Child - Keep it Safe!



CRT’S Safety Slogan Contest

DECEMBER - Winning Slogans:

BRIDGET SMITH - 1st PLACE - Full Monty (\$100):
Work Safely! Think Safety!

Rhonald Williamson - 2nd Place (\$50):
Don't Clown! Slow Down!

Bridget Smith - 3rd Place (\$20)
The Right Way is The Safe Way!

Julie Ackerman - 4th Place (\$10)
Ensure that safety prevails always use the handrails.



HSI Tips (Human Service Infrastructure)

FINANCIAL LITERACY & INDEPENDENCE

Who the Program Serves:	Low Income working families
Income Guidelines:	None
Other Criteria:	Volunteers generally are able to assist with simple, uncomplicated tax returns where the household's primary income source is from employment.
Program Synopsis:	IRS trained volunteers at CRT Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites in Hartford, East Hartford, Manchester & Middletown. CRT VITA volunteers help taxpayers prepare basic tax return forms. The tax returns are filed electronically from the sites at no cost.
Documentation Needed:	All W2's for household, 1099 Forms (if any), Social Security Card(s) or Individual Taxpayer ID Number(s) for all household members, last years tax return (if you have one) Childcare provider name, address & tax ID number. Education expenses and student loan information. For Direct Deposit, a check or savings account number with routing number. Any other tax-related documents you have received.

2006 Safety POSTER Contest

Contest Date: January, 2006 - March, 2006

Design a safety related poster no larger than 14x17 and turn it into your safety representative no later than March 1st. Enter as many times as you like. You will receive \$20 Safety Bucks for each entry.

1st Place - \$400 Safety Bucks 3rd Place - \$200 Safety Bucks
2nd Place - \$300 Safety Bucks 4th Place - \$100 Safety Bucks

So get out those markers and let's have some fun! Please put your name, dept and phone number on the back of your posters.

News & Notes - Did You Know?

Theresa Heredia

Theresa is a Head Start Teacher at CRT's Locust Street ECE. She has been working with us for about five years and has a Masters' degree in Bilingual Education. Since last semester, she has been working as a bilingual Professor at Capitol Community College, teaching Health Safety and Nutrition in Spanish.

Clinton Head Start has been designated as a nationally accredited childcare center. Please join me in congratulating Lisa Ellis, Unit Manager, and the Clinton Headstart staff, Jane Novarro, Carol Johnson, and Robin Holmes for their outstanding accomplishment. Deborah Cawley, ECE

CRT Employee of the MONTH

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



DECEMBER

Rose Hyde
Behavioral Health Transportation Coord.

JANUARY

Lewis Walker
Facilities



ALL ABOARD



Thirty-five members of the CRT staff and their friends and family set off for the high seas in early December for an unforgettable trip aboard the Carnival Cruise Ship Imagination. The weather was superb and the food was delicious. Staff enjoyed stops at two ports; Grand Cayman Island and Ocho Rios, where we climbed Dunn's

River Falls, swam with Dolphins and shopped at the many duty free shops. Each evening presented us with a new adventure in fine dining. We enjoyed Las Vegas style entertainment at the nightclub and witnessed the talents of several among us who braved a critical audience to sing Karaoke. We would tell you more, but you know the expression, "What happens on the ship, stays on the ship!"

If you'd like to know more, you'll have to wait for next year's trip, which is still in the planning stages.

FUN FACTS

1. The length from your wrist to your elbow is the same as the length of your foot.
2. Our eyes are always the same size from birth.
3. Approximately two-thirds of a person's body weight is water. Blood is 92% water. The brain is 75% water and muscles are 75% water.
4. The heart pumps about 101,000 times a day and pumps about 800 million pints of blood during an average lifetime. It beats once from the left and once from the right-hand side in separate beat motions.
5. We actually do not see with our eyes - we see with our brains. The eyes basically are the cameras of the brain. One-quarter of the brain is used to control the eyes.

INFOCUS WITH:



Manaal Yasseen Sheriff - Daughter of Maria Cheema - Planning Department - was born on November 22, 2005. She weighed 7 pounds.



Melissa Brewer - Daughter of Cathi Brewer, CRT's Meadows

Melissa Brewer, 13, earned a place on Chippen's Hill Middle School's honor roll in December.



Samantha Brewer - Daughter of Cathi Brewer, CRT's Meadows

Samantha Brewer, 16, earned a place on Bristol Central High School's Principal's Commendation on the honor roll in December. Additionally this year Samantha served in ministry when her church, Liberty Baptist Church sponsored a mission's trip to Belize, Central America in July. Samantha raised money for the trip through work, donations and special projects. While there Samantha taught Belizean children the Bible at Vacation Bible School and Camp.



Aja Wilson - Daughter of Brenda Ransom, CRT Facilities Director

Aja is pictured with Mayor Perez. Aja, a YES (Youth Employability Skills) Academy graduate intern spoke to area business leaders at the Hartford Club about her success working directly for the CFO of Aetna.

▼ New Employees

Welcome to the CRTeam!

Please join us in welcoming Joseph Coppola as CRT's new Director of Human Resources.

Joe comes to CRT with 30 years of experience in the HR field. He has an established record of success in all functional areas of Human Resources. In addition to his genuine commitment to HR Service Excellence, his knowledge and experience will be a tremendous asset to CRT.

Joe is located on the first floor of our Windsor Street office in the Human Resources Department. His phone number is 560-5663.

Administration

Joseph Coppola

Community Services

Yvonne Patterson

Hartford Nutrition

Diane Bradwell
Jamie McDermot
Mary M-Lewis

MIS

Joseph DiCicco

Behavioral Health

David Ketner
Judith Hunt
Marcolina Garcia

East Hartford Shelter

Claudette Small
Joseph Declon

McKinney Shelter

George Garnes
Raul Acevedo

Neighborhood Svcs

Tabia Gaston

One-Stop

Wanda Bush

CAFCA

Ruth Medina

ECE

Debra Green

Milford AIC

Michael Evans
Nakisha Grant

Supportive Housing

Sonia Brown

T R A I N I N G

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

The HR Resource Library is now available on the CRT intranet. Log on and click on departments- Human Resources-resource library. You can view all upcoming CRT & area trainings offered, as well as, browse the catalog of resources available for you to utilize immediately!

Visitors are always welcome to the Human Resources department to browse through the HR Resource Library directly! Contact Michelle Farina in HR for any information and/or suggestions regarding CRT Training at 560-5661

B E N E F I T S

At this time, all enrolled employees should have received their Aetna health cards in the mail. If you have not received your card, please contact Aetna member services directly at 1(877) 402-8742.

As a participant in the Aetna Health Insurance Plan, you may visit www.Aetna.com and register as a user to view information about who is covered under your plan, search for a participating healthcare professional or facility, request to change your primary care physician (PCP), check the status of a claim or review an explanation of benefits statement.

Did you know that your Aetna group medical plan prescription drug coverage includes home delivery of medication?

Aetna Rx Home Delivery offers you:

- . Convenient-quick confidential shipping of your maintenance medications right to your home.
- . Ease of Use - a simple two step process makes ordering your maintenance medications easy.
- . Quality Service - registered pharmacies check orders for accuracy and they are available 24 hours a day 7 days a week in case of emergency.
- . Cost Savings - a 90-day supply for the co-pay of a 60-day supply and standard shipping is always free.

If you would like more information about this great service, pamphlets are available in HR, contact Jorge Diaz @ 560-5668.



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Hartford, CT 06120-2418

February Birthdays

Bratz, Catherine	02	Sanders, Classie	09	Keyser, Jennifer L.	18	Carreon, Silvana	23
Carmona, Judith P	02	Bocompani, Joyce N	10	Rodriguez, Teresa	18	Diakon Jr., Timothy	25
Mapp, Gary T.	03	Jones, Denise M.	10	Taylor, Kenneth W	18	Grant, Dennis	25
Alexander, Imogene	04	Andrades, Cristina	11	Abate, Brandon	19	Green, Leo	25
Biscette, Theresa	04	Carter, Aurra	11	Davila, Milagros	20	Healy, Katharine Y	25
Jackson, Marcia	04	Hin-McCormick, Mui Mui	12	Gonzalez, Caridad S.	20	Oyola-Diaz, Lydia	25
Lynn, Fredrick M	04	Randle-Smith, Janet	12	Hayes, Debra	20	Wiggins, Ericka	26
Pare, Lisa	04	Rojas, Helga	12	Howard, Melissa D	21	Ellis, Lisa T	27
Gleason, Joan	05	Weston Piexotto, Len	13	Oates, Glenwood	21	Gibson, Mildred	27
Gonzales, Gilberto	07	Harrington, Christa	13	Perez, Glenda	21	Bendickson, Marlin S	28
Shapiro, Nancy	07	Kelly, Trevor L	14	Ralston, Peter	21	King, Myra	28
Hyde, Rosalie	08	Ramos, Magda	14	Cicero, Georgette	22	Maldonado, Magali	28
Rivera, Wanda Ivonne	08	Correa, Wilda	15	Rodriguez-Ortiz, Teresa	22		
Vecchitto, Elia Marie	08	Keen, Julie A	15	Smith, Patricia A	22		
Pichiule, Irma E	09	Small, Claudette	15	Wright, Martha W	22		

March Birthdays

MacDonald, David M	01	Bernard, Erica	10	Sibley, Annie	16	Figueroa, Judy	24
Solomon, Joyette A	01	Lucas, Ethel	10	Villodas, Eduardo	16	Powell, Phillip	24
Lewin, Rhianna D.	02	Santana, Carmen	10	Coker, Lee C	17	Larew, Deborah	25
McCluskey, Chris	02	Collazo, Emily	11	Mote, James	17	Merrick, Judith	25
Rivera, Ana	02	Begley, Edward T.	12	Squier, Elsie	17	Davis, Jora Lewis	26
Acevedo, Raul	03	Feliciano, Nydia E	12	Williams, Veronica	17	Moon, Kara	26
Guite, Judith B	03	Rolon, Danny	12	Sattaur, Basmattie V	18	St. Germaine, Bonnie	26
Williams, Marilyn V.	03	Williams, James S.	12	Perez, Elizabeth	19	Collins, Jerry	27
Colon, Julie	04	DiCicco, Joseph	13	Lopez, Awilda	20	Moore, John B	27
Espinoza, Julia L	04	Green, Latasha	13	Payne, Hortense	20	Savariau, Latoya R	27
Gonzalez, Stacey	04	Restrepo, Jacqueline	13	Saimininkas, Julie A	20	Branfalt, Destiny	28
Stewart, Grace A	04	Rodriguez, Wanda I	13	Washington, Jane	20	Golzar, Maryam	28
Alvarez, Wanda	05	Weatherington, Robert	13	Athanson, Arthur	21	Cruz, Soledad	29
Best, Allen E	05	Wilcox Jr., Jack C.	13	Campbell, Burnice	21	Nicholson, Theresa C	29
Dawes, Gerard B	05	Evans, Rhonda R	14	Gee-Lewis, Cheryl	21	Rivera, Gloria	29
Jackson, Valda L.	05	Hudson, Renita S	14	Hardy, Andrea J.S.	21	Echo, Tara	30
Walton, Vanessa L	06	Halloran, Mary S	15	Acevedo, Jose F.	22	Joseph, Declon	30
Abrams, Dionne	07	Johnson, James	15	Martinez, Iris	22	Smoloski, Ann L.	30
Kulmacz, Jessie	07	Kitchens, Roberta	15	Russ-Phulbas, Shontay	22	Acevedo, Rosa Maria	31
Vega, Jose	07	Mulero, Lydia	15	Diaz, Jorge L.	23		
Robinson, Rachel	08	Smalling, Christina R	15	Jean-Paul, Natacha	23		
Williams, Paula	08	Soto-Sanchez, Jeanette	15	Ortiz, Ramona	23		
Ackerman, Julia	09	Velez, Myrla I.	15	Dorsey, Shayla	24		

The Community Renewal Team, Inc. was formed in 1963 and is one of oldest Community Action Agency 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

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 rose@crtct.org, phone (860) 560-5637.

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