

Tobacco Free Lifestyles Program's Billboard Contest

CRT's Tobacco Free Lifestyles Program ran a billboard contest at the Youth Artisan and Technology Program (YAT), in Hartford. The YAT program provides Hartford youth, ages 12-17 with after-school educational and positive youth development activities in the creative arts and related technology.



Through CRT's community health educator for the tobacco free lifestyles program, Victoria Pavasaris, the students have been learning about the dangers of tobacco use and secondhand smoke. Along with the help of the YAT staff, Director Joe Young, Spencer Pitt, and Myrton Bewry, the students worked hard to create anti-tobacco billboards. Their drawings depict why smoking is harmful and why someone should not smoke. They used their creative abilities and knowledge about tobacco to create extraordinary pictures. They used their skills in PhotoShop to add color and really make their drawings come alive. All of the students put a lot of effort into these billboards and their talent and creativity really show. Also during the months of December and January, the students used their artistic talent to make cartoon strips, rap music, and public service announcements all on tobacco prevention.

The billboard contest was to draw a picture that shows why someone should not use tobacco. The contest was open to Hartford youth, at the YAT center, ages 22 and under. Six drawings were turned into billboards displayed in the North and South ends of Hartford.

The staff at CRT chose the winners based on the picture's powerful message and creativity. The billboards were on display until February 28th. These students and their billboard locations are: Franklin Morales, age 15, at 325-327 Brown St. and Maple Ave., Shaneshia Rowe, age 17, at 3670 Main St. (south of Sunset St.), Luis Morales, age 11 and Anthony Acquavotta age 16 at 25 New Britain Ave., Carlos Ortiz, age 15, at 714 Albany Ave. at Magnolia, Jonathan Echevarria, age 16, at 433 Zion St. (south of Hamilton St.) and Spencer Pitt (YAT Staff), age 22, at 392-394 New Britain Ave. Funding for the billboards and the Tobacco Free Lifestyles program is provided from a grant at the Department of Public Health.

On Thursday February 8th at 4pm, a ceremony was held for the dedication of the 6 winning anti-tobacco billboards and to acknowledge all of the YAT student's hard work. The Mayor of Hartford, Eddie Perez, and CRT's CEO and President, Lena Rodriguez, honored the students by handing out prizes to the winners and all participants. Channel 30 covered the event as well as the Hartford Courant. This took place at 325 Brown Street, at the Maple Avenue CVS back parking lot, where the grand prizewinner's, Franklin Morales, billboard was displayed. After the ceremony, a celebration was held at the YAT center where refreshments were served.



The Tobacco Free Lifestyles Program works with CRT clients and staff. The Community Health Educator makes group and/or one on one presentations on tobacco prevention. Some of the topics include the health benefits of quitting smoking, the dangers of smoking, secondhand smoke, smoking and pregnancy, smokeless tobacco, and information on smoking cessation.

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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@crct.org.

Early Winners

Every child can be a champion reader!

CRT has started a new after school tutoring program for children in kindergarten through Grade 3, who need help in reading. Funded by the State Department of Education under No Child Left Behind, this free program provides an assessment and targeted help to students who attend Burns, Martin Luther King and Milner Elementary Schools. The groups meet once a week, at the end of the day. Short, fun lessons target the students' difficulties, and hold their attention. For more information, contact Julie Sapia at 560-5161.

ECE Kindergarten Registration

The CRT Early Care and Education Program has been working with Margarita Santana from the Hartford Board of Education to register children for kindergarten. This is the first time that CRT has been involved in the process that will continue until April 1. Only those children residing in Hartford who will attend the Hartford Public Schools in the fall are involved in this process. To date, 60% of eligible children have completed their registration.

ECE is beginning a series of Parent Trainings on January 19th, which will be held every other Friday. Parents completed a survey requesting topics that they were interested in and the training schedule has been developed from that survey. Some of the scheduled trainings are as follows:

January 19: **"Sex and Your Health"**

February 2: **"Breaking the Chain of Violence"**

February 16: **"CRT Services Available"**

March 2: **"CPR" & "Controlling Your Child's Asthma"**

March 16: **"Substance Abuse, symptoms and affects"**

March 30: **"Increasing our Parenting Skills Series"**

April 13: **"Dealing with our Stressful Lives"**

April 27: **"Preventing Stroke and Heart Disease"**

May 25: **"Losing Those Extra Pounds"**

May 11: **"Grandparents as Parents"**

June 8: **"Resume Writing"**

Presentors will include ECE and other CRT staff knowledgeable of the subjects presented, as well as outside agency presentors. The series will be open to any CRT parent interested, by calling Dawn Clark at 5453 or Sue Lyons at 5400 to reserve a spot.

HSI Tips (Human Service Infrastructure)

Early Care & Education Programs: Early Care & Education Programs: Head Start, School Readiness and Infant and Toddlers Child Care 560-5401 or 560-5565

Who the Program Serves: Children three to five years of age and live in Bloomfield, Clinton, Hartford, Middletown, Portland & Windsor.

Income Guidelines: 150% of the poverty level.

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

Program Synopsis: Comprehensive Early Childhood program for children and families. These programs support cognitive abilities, reading, language, mathematics, social & emotional competence, motor development, and physical health. These programs include: Infant & Toddler Day Care, Head Start & School Readiness.

Documentation Needed: Income Tax Forms, W-2 Form, Unemployment Compensation (if applicable), Birth Certificate of child, Social Security number for child and parent.

News & Notes - Did You Know?

State of Connecticut Recognizes CRT Staff

Three members of the CRT Forensic Services staff have been recognized by the State of Connecticut for excellence.

Reverend Keith Kearse, Program Manager at the Enfield AIC was honored by the Judicial Branch/Court Support Services Division for his contributions in the area of AIC Program Spirit/Pro-Social Modeling.

George Hanburg, Intervention Specialist at the Bristol AIC was honored for his work in the area of Motivational Interviewing.

Finally, **Betty Brew**, Intervention Specialist at the Enfield AIC was honored for her work in the area of Gender Specific/Female Responsive Groups.

Congratulations to all our staff for a job well done!!

In Memorial - John "Jay" Mellon, Jr.

CRT is saddened to report the passing of John W. "Jay", Mellon, Jr., of Bristol on Saturday, December 2, 2006. Jay was employed as the Community Service Coordinator for the Community Renewal Team AIC Program in Bristol for many years and is remembered for his commitment and dedication to his job. Jay believed that in order for his clients to successfully complete the required community service, it was important to "lead by example" and could often be seen working side by side with each one of them.

Jay was legendary both within CRT and among the state's Alternative to Incarceration Centers for his abilities to coordinate various community service activities on behalf of the agency and the larger community. It is for this reason that he was honored by the CRT Board of Trustees with the George A. Athanson Humanitarian Award in 2005.

Jay will truly be missed by all who knew him.

Forensic Services

CRT is fortunate to have created a program model that has drastically reduced the recidivism rate among former offenders. The Department of Correction Transitional Supervision Residence Program, the Byrne Memorial Housing Pilot Program and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services Community Offender Re-entry Program are creative and innovative alternatives to congregate housing models that provide scattered site housing for former offenders. In addition, holistic wrap around services including substance abuse and behavioral health services, comprehensive case management, housing and financial literacy training have dramatically cut the re-arrest rate among participants.

Chris McCluskey, Director of CRT's Forensic Services Program said "the program shows promising results as compared to the State of Connecticut recidivism rate and I am pleased that our success has led to our being awarded a contract for ten additional housing slots."

HSI Tips (Human Service Infrastructure)

Financial Literacy & Independence

Who the Program Serves:	Low Income working families
Income Guidelines:	None
	LOCATIONS FOR TAX PREPARATION:
Hartford:	555 Windsor Street 1229 Albany Avenue 395 Wethersfield Avenue 842 Park Street, 8 Stonington Street
Middletown:	282 Main Street Extension
East Hartford:	Connecticut Training Center Goodwin College East Hartford Shelter
Manchester:	479 Main Street.
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.

VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE: 2006

The 2006 tax year is upon us, and we are 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 customers in Hartford, Middletown, East Hartford, and Manchester.

Employees Participating in VITA – We had a wonderful team last year and I was impressed by their dedication to deliver this much-needed service to the community.

I am looking forward to another successful season. Thank you for your help. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me via email or at 560-5769.

Jim Pestana, Director Neighborhood, Energy & Youth Services

FUN FACTS: Benjamin Franklin invented the harmonica, the rocking chair, the street lamp, the lightning conductor, and the Franklin stove - to name a few.

- He originated the first circulating library.
- He is the originator of Daylight Saving Time.
- He originated the first street-cleaning department.
- He was the first reformer of English spelling.
- He is the father of modern dentistry.
- He organized the first fire department.
- He was the founder of the Democratic party.
- He established the modern post-office system.
- He was a pioneer of the modern voting system for Congress.

You Can Earn More CRT Bucks...Both the Safety Poster and Essay Contest are being extended until the end of March. You can enter as many posters or essays as you like. Include your name, department and phone number and turned in to your Safety Committee Rep. - 1st Place: \$500; 2nd Place \$300; 3rd Place \$200 and 4th Place \$100. Judges will consist of Reps from CRT's Safety Committee; Entries judged on safety related content and design; Judging will be held 1st week in April and winner will be notified.





YEARS OF SERVICE AWARDS

Wednesday, November 29, 2007, CRT honored 75 employees at our Annual Years of Service Breakfast. A wonderful meal was prepared by Stefanie Belding and the staff of the Elderly Nutrition Program and was enjoyed by all who attended.

While our space in the InFocus is limited, CRT was especially pleased to honor Janie Aiken from Middlesex Services for 35 years of service, Bruce Brown and John Moore from Nutrition for 30 years of service, Mildred Gibson from Early Care and Education and David Walters, Chief Financial Officer for 25 years of service. Thanks to Trish Donovan and



her staff in Human Resources for a wonderful celebration of CRT's talented and committed staff.

Grand Families Project

CRT recently broke ground for the Grandfamily Housing Development, a project for grandparents raising their grandchildren. The project was created in response to a growing need to provide housing and services to those families who were coming to CRT in increasing numbers requesting help.

In response to the need, Councilwoman Elizabeth Horton-Sheff submitted a resolution to the Hartford City Council. As a result, the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Program, Task Force and the Commission were established. The Task Force is comprised of staff from the city responsible for oversight of the overall aspects of the program. The Commission is comprised of grandparents raising grandchildren and representatives from the various organizations and entities who can address the legal and social issues arising from this unique family structure. For example, one commission member conducted a series of workshops at the University of Hartford to help the grandparents adjust their parenting skills.

This intergenerational housing development will be composed of 24 units of affordable housing and is scheduled to open in June of 2007.

Leadership Greater Hartford

Three of CRT's managers have just completed a busy year, participating in the Quest Program at Leadership Greater Hartford. This program brings together more than 60 people from the business,

education, government and non-profit fields for monthly seminars, tours of Hartford's neighborhoods, meetings with key local leaders, and the completion of a project that



benefits the community.

Budget Manager, Doris Battle worked on raising awareness of Foodshare among Hartford's young professionals; Director of Housing Judy Vasquez concentrated on increasing the diversity among medical professionals in this area; and Assistant Director of Housing Jose Vega helped to organize a safe Halloween event for Hartford children.

What was the toughest part of the year? Keeping on top of your own job while getting to the LGH meetings and events, participants say. And the best parts? Meeting others in the community; touring little-known parts of Hartford; and finding the courage to try the high ropes adventure course with the rest of the group!

Others at CRT who have gone through LGH programs include Tyrone Canino, Nancy Pappas, Lena Rodriguez and Paula Wright. If you're interested in hearing more about this program, or being considered for future Leadership opportunities, please speak with any of the "alums."

INFOCUS WITH: CRT New Editions



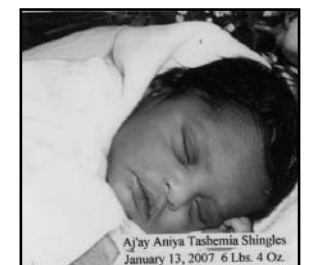
Jordyn Sanaia Saffold
daughter of Tyeisha Saffold,
Program Manager, Youth Services



Solimar Medina daughter of
Ruth Medina, Administrative
Assistant, CAFA



Jadya Mia Colon, daughter
of Ivette Ovettes, Administrative
Assistant, Facilities



Aj'ay Aniya Tashemia
Shingles, daughter of
Donnie Shingles, Facilities



De'Saunie Catherine
Monae Brown,
granddaughter of Katherine
Casey, Administrative Assistant
Planning Dept.



Edwin Jayden Campos,
son of Edwin Campos,
Facilities Dept.,

▼ **New Employees**

New Team Members: We would like to welcome Valerie Taylor and Mary Kozich to CRT and the Human Resources Department team. Valerie Taylor who has brought with her a vast experience in building programs that promote personal growth for all levels of employees will oversee the Training and Development Program of CRT. All CRT employees will have access to training that will allow them to broaden their horizons and take advantage of opportunities for growth within CRT. Mary Kozich comes to CRT from Hebrew Health Care, where she was an HR Manager. Prior to her role at HHC, Mary had worked as the Assistant Director of HIV Services for New York City Health and Hospital Corp. and as the Director of Human Resources for Bon Secours Charity Health System. Mary is not a stranger to community services as she has been an active volunteer with agencies such as; Habitat for Humanity, Salvation Army, St. Vincent DePaul and Red Cross. Mary also spent 6 months as a VISTA volunteer with AmeriCorps in New York City, where she collaborated in putting together a disaster preparedness plan with 500+ social and community service agencies throughout the city.

Behavioral Health

Myrna Ivette Lopez

Bristol AIC

Jean A. Dalomba

East Hartford Shelter

Michael J Morris

ECE

Ashley R. Hill
Chelyl Ann Nolan,
Ana Maria Cruz-Diaz
Rosa Rivera
Kimberly Cooper
Maria C. Nieves
Jacqueline Christene
Fabiano
Gabrielle J. Kyranakis
Cecile Schroeter

ECE

Jessica-Leigh Byrd
Teresa Del Carmen
Carhuahuanca
Karen Davis
Mecadia Alicia Garrell
Ruth Noemi Gayle
Omar Guadalupe
Monica Lopez
Lamarra C McCall
Raquel Moctezuma
Pamela S Muhammad,
Petra MuleroJennifer L.
Sanchez,
Shineka Trimmier
Eulalia Varela
Christina Velasquez
Latoria Wise
Enfield AIC
Dimari Flores-Braxton

Facilities

Edwin J Campos
Brian W Kerr
Donnie M. Shingles

Finance

Denise J. Callahan

Forensic Services

Elizabeth T. Angelillo

Fresh Start

Hendzel, Lynne Joy

Human Resources

Ana M. Echeverria
Mary Agnes Kozich

MIS

Michele I. Palazolo

Milford AIAC

Matthew W. Anzaldi
Nicholas J Benas
Catherine J. Scillia
Stacy Taylor

Neighborhood Services

Maria L. Feliciano

Nutrition

Diann Baldwin
Suhail Perez
Jose M Ferrer
Yeriam Rodriguez
Clifton L. Smith
Nellie Ayende
Elaine Belin
Ann L. Smoloski

Substance Abuse

Emely Linette Dejesus
Steven Jones

Supplemental Ed. Services

Rocio E. Heredia
David S. Pontrelli
Cynthia A. Williams

Supportive Housing

Teta B. Peay

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

Winter Closing: CRT management will attempt to make storm closing decisions as early as possible. Following are the general guidelines:

When the state is **closed**, CRT will be closed, including ECE and The Elderly Nutrition Program. Only staff for McKinney, EH Shelter, Fresh Start and Transitional Supervision need to report. State closing announcements are carried on most television and news radio stations.

Information will also be communicated on Channel 8, Channel 3, Channel 30 and CBS Radio Stations (WTIC, WRCH, WZMX). When the state is opening late (on delay), CRT will open at its regularly scheduled time.

Public school ECE sites will follow the Board of Education decision: If the building is closed or opening late, our site will follow the same schedule. **However**, if a site is closed but the Agency is open, staff from that classroom are expected to report to 555 Windsor Street or other assigned location.

Employees who fail to report when CRT is open will not be paid for that day. Use of sick time will only be allowed if a doctor's note is presented upon return to work.

Child Care: Please make sure that you have made alternative child care arrangements in advance. Your child's school may be closed when CRT remains open. Presently CRT does not have licensed arrangements for employees to bring their children to work.

If you experience a hardship in meeting any of these expectations, please bring it to the attention of your supervisor immediately.

Reminder: If you have moved, changed you name, phone number or any other personal information, please contact Human Resources. This information is used to locate your point of contact in the event of an emergency or to forward important records such as W-2 tax forms.



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March Birthdays

Legg, Marilyn L.	01	Kulmacz, Jessie	07	Soto-Sanchez, Jeanette	15	Nolan, Chelyl Ann	26
MacDonald, David M	01	Vega, Jose	07	Sibley, Annie	16	St. Germaine, Bonnie	26
Solomon, Joyette A	01	Robinson, Rachel	08	Villodas, Eduardo	16	Collins, Jerry	27
Garcia, Carmen Rosa	02	Williams, Paula	08	Trimmier, Shineka	17	Moore, John B	27
McCluskey, Christopher	02	Ackerman, Julia	09	Perez, Elizabeth	19	Robinson, Marianne B.	27
Rivera, Ana	02	De La Puente, Nadia	10	Parker, James	20	Savariau, Latoya R	27
Acevedo, Raul	03	Begley, Edward T.	12	Payne, Hortense	20	Branfalt, Destiny	28
Guite, Judith B	03	Rolon, Danny	12	Saimininkas, Julie A	20	Golzar, Maryam	28
Jefferson, Sandra	03	Williams, James Stewart	12	Byrd, Jessica-Leigh	21	Cruz, Soledad	29
Williams, Marilyn V.	03	Green, Latasha	13	Campbell, Burnice	21	Nicholson, Theresa C	29
Colon, Julie	04	Restrepo, Jacqueline	13	Gee-Lewis, Cheryl	21	Rivera, Gloria	29
Espinoza, Julia L	04	Rodriguez, Wanda I	13	Hardy, Andrea J.S.	21	Echo, Tara	30
Rose, Tasha N.	04	Weatherington, Robert	13	Acevedo, Jose F.	22	Joseph, Declon	30
Stewart, Grace A	04	Evans, Rhonda R	14	Gore, Destiny	22	Kelly, Mary	30
Dawes, Gerard B	05	Hudson, Renita S	14	Jean-Paul, Natacha	23	Smoloski, Ann L.	30
Jackson, Valda L.	05	O'Neill, Page	14	Ortiz, Ramona	23	Kerr, Brian W	31
Ortiz, Raquel	06	Halloran, Mary S	15	Powell, Phillip	24	Taylor, Stacy	31
Walton, Vanessa L	06	Johnson, James	15	Brown, Sean A	25	Thompson, Theresa	31
Abrams, Dionne	07	Smalling, Christina R	15	Larew, Deborah	25		

April Birthdays

Deberry, Carlise	01	Vasquez, Ramona	09	Lyons, Susan	16	Molestina, Dolores M	21
Brown, Kevin	02	Vibber, Rhea M.	09	Martinez, Marcos	16	Perez, Adiola	21
Dejesus, Ileana	02	Pavasaris, Victoria G.	10	Morales, Samuel	17	Garnes, George	22
Perez, Maribel	02	Rivera, Hipolita	10	Nieves, Maria C.	17	Coleman, Jeffrey	24
Keach-Longo, Gustave	03	Brewer, Cathi-Ann	11	Oliver, Kristy D	17	Dominguez, Elvin	24
Holmes, Rochelle	04	Velasco, Rosa	11	Torres, Miriam E	17	Baez, Angel David	25
Cawley, Deborah	05	Leary, Demetria	13	Heredia, Teresa	18	Leatherwood, Lessie	26
Daniels, Noreen F	05	Ransom, Brenda	13	Andrusio, Michele	20	Woods, Patricia A	26
Baxter, James W	07	Young, Leroy Jr.	13	Caine, Doris T	20	Rodriguez, Stephanie	29
Espposito, Deborah	08	Aiken, Elaine	15	Richards, Leona	20	Lovallo, Daniel J	30
Perez, Suhail	08	Majzel, Dale	15	Wise, Latoria	20		
Rivera, Frances	09	Vazquez, Irma R	15	Laney, Leslie	21		

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 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, phone (860) 560-5456.

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