Contents

Message from President 1
Message from Chairman 2

Featured Stories 3-14
Board of trustees 15-16
Financials 17
Donors 18-20

Funding Senior Meals 21
Recycling Bikes 22
Habitat Helps Families  23
Head Start Celebrates 24

national Arts Anniversary 25

2,460 families are taking Steps to Success through CRT’s holistic case management 3-4

Preschoolers thrive in an inclusion classroom – those with hearing impairment and their typical friends 5-6

Connecticut was the first state to achieve the goal of ending chronic homelessness for veterans 9-10

The 152 youth who graduated from Capital City YouthBuild are earning an average wage of $10.74 7-8

Project Horizon nurses have helped more than 8,000 McKinney Shelter guests in 27 years 15-14

Progress through Partnerships

Annu Al RePoRt 2015

Housing and Shelters
Affordable Housing
CHAP
Family Shelter
Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
Housing Counseling
Men’s Shelter
Supportive Housing
Security Deposit Voucher Program

Education and Youth
Infant/Toddler Day Care
Head Start and Preschool
Day Care Nutrition
Summer Food

Employment and Training
Capital City YouthBuild
Fatherhood
Middlesex Youth Development
SNAP Employment & Training
Summer Youth Employment

Senior Services
Gatekeeper
Meals on Wheels
Retreat Assisted Living
Retired and Senior Volunteers
Senior Affordable Housing
Senior Cafés

Veterans Programs
Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program
Supportive Services for Veteran Families
Veterans Housing
Veterans Landlords Assisted Living (coming soon)

Energy and Weatherization
Energy Assistance
Weatherization

Community Corrections
Fresh Start
Transitional Case Management

Community Renewal Team Programs & Services

Basic Needs
Resource Centers
Food Assistance

Money Management
Eviction & Foreclosure Prevention
IDA Savings Program
VITA Tax Filing
Your Money

Mental Health and Wellness
Asian Family Services
Behavioral Health Services
HIV Counseling Services
Homeless Outreach
Re-Entry Recovery Services

Mental Health and Wellness
Asian Family Services
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HIV Counseling Services
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Re-Entry Recovery Services

For more information go to crtct.org

2015 Annual Report Contributors:
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Money Management
Eviction & Foreclosure Prevention
IDA Savings Program
VITA Tax Filing
Your Money

For more information go to crtct.org
From my office I can hear construction on the floor below, as we renovate the Ritter Early Care and Education Center to welcome infants and toddlers. This winter, Community Renewal Team will be opening the first Early Head Start programs in Hartford and East Hartford, accommodating 100 children and their families.

Fifty years ago Community Action Agencies like CRT responded to the crisis in education by opening Head Start classrooms, taking a "two-generation approach" before that was a popular term. Head Start offered a preschool education, nutritious meals and health screenings for children, combined with social services and empowerment for their parents.

Early Head Start retains that full-family approach, combining services to pregnant moms with center-based care for children from six weeks to three years old, at no cost to parents. Our Community Needs Assessment and many other studies find a shortage of affordable child care, particularly for children under three. This is a barrier to parents' employment or schooling and deprives children of the stimulating environment that could help close Connecticut’s achievement gap.

Yet so many needs require more than a single season to address, such as our work to bring affordable assisted living to our low- and moderate-income older veterans. Those who have served our country deserve a setting that is comfortable and dignified in their senior years. We are determined to address this need in partnership with the US Department of Veterans Affairs and supporters like Connecticut’s American Legion.

CRt’s Capital City YouthBuild and Early Care and Education programs, these organizations renovated and refurnished the common areas. Hundreds of guests will benefit from the new children’s play area, comfortable lounge and a new dining room where families can enjoy meals together.

These are just two small examples of the power of partnerships. When there is a true convergence of values – when entities work together with dedication and integrity – great things can truly happen.

I have often expressed my admiration for both the staff and volunteers who pull together to ensure that CRT can identify needs and design programs that address them. Additionally, I want to thank the group with whom I work most closely – the Board of Trustees. These attentive and committed individuals keep the concerns of their neighbors at the center of their work, and serve as the agency’s ambassadors in the community.

This season we are saying goodbye to a very valuable ambassador, Dr. Conrad Mallett, who retires from our board after 27 years. We stand in awe of his lifetime of service to community action. And I’m also thinking of Habitat for Humanity and the east Hartford Rotary Club helping to build homes for families and entire communities. The work that can be accomplished together is always far greater than the sum of what we can do alone.

This year’s Annual Report gives us the opportunity to reflect on some of those partnerships, and thank the many organizations that have joined their strength with ours for the good of the region.

I’m thinking of Crown Market, PriceRite and Toyo Tires, businesses that stepped in when the Meals on Wheels program was squeezed between funding cuts and rising costs. The program delivers two healthy meals every day to more than 700 seniors who can no longer shop and cook for themselves. Another 3,200 sliders enjoy hot lunches served in their apartment complexes or at a nearby senior center. Many of our neighbors can remain in their homes only because of the nutritious meals from CRT.

I hope you will join us in this effort. Only by working together can we make an impact on the future of our region.

We Are Truly “Stronger Together”

Lena Rodriguez
President and CEO

Fernando Betancourt
Chair of CRT Board of Trustees
Stella Torres knew her husband could be violent and she often feared for her safety. Yet she never sought help until the fury threatened the grandson she was raising. When the crisis came, she turned to CRT’s East Hartford Shelter, where she had brought holiday gifts every year.

“At first I cried all the time,” she says. “I had never stayed in a shelter, I couldn’t believe what was happening.” But caring staff helped Torres draw on her own resilience to make a plan for the future.

They used CRT’s comprehensive case management approach called Steps to Success. It starts with an in-depth assessment of strengths and challenges across 20 areas including income, employment, housing, education, rating each from ‘In Crisis’ to ‘Thriving.’ Participants set goals and define the steps to reach them. For Torres, the top priorities were a stable home and a new job – preferably not in food service. The assessment and goals are incorporated into an Individual Service Plan (ISP) which becomes a road map for the future.

But routes often have detours. Torres and Elijah moved in with a relative whose drug addiction drove them out. After a second stay in East Hartford they went into transitional housing. Two years after leaving her husband, Torres was accepted into CRT Supportive Housing, which offers rental subsidies and wrap-around services to vulnerable families.

A home, a school, a job

With a stable address, she enrolled her grandson in CRT preschool, where she got involved in the Parent Committee and attended leadership training. A CRT Employment Specialist helped with a resume, job search and interview preparation. After many rejections, Torres landed a position that matches her grandson’s school hours.

As Torres moved from the shelter to supportive housing, her case moved smoothly to another case manager who could see data and notes in a software system that CRT has developed. It allows online collaboration within the CRT team, and provides participants with objective evidence of their incremental progress. Case managers celebrate successes with their customers, because small victories can go unnoticed when there are so many issues to address.

Torres’ next challenge is to secure permanent custody of Elijah; with that settled, she hopes to move into Generations, CRT’s community for grandfamilies. For now, she takes walks with Elijah around the nearby Trinity College campus. “I tell him, ‘Poppy, you’re going here someday. I have dreams for him.’”

From homeless dad to homeowner

Lashawn Dyson stood at a microphone at Connecticut’s Legislative Office Building in February and opened his remarks this way: “I’m a single dad who went from homeless to homeowner thanks to a few different programs offered by the Community Renewal Team.”

In Dyson’s testimony to the Appropriations Committee, he gave credit to the CRT Fatherhood Program and a semester of parenting classes, which helped when he first got custody of his daughter. He spoke about being unable to afford an apartment as a part-time cook – until Fatherhood referred him to supportive housing. He praised a program called the Individual Development Account, which helped him buy a three-family home through matched savings and extensive money management education.

And he thanked the CRT staff members who believed in the future he saw for himself: A stable income, comfortable home and a successful school career for his daughter.

Dyson experienced what Community Action Agencies call bundled service delivery. In a 2014 study, the National Association For State Community Services Programs says bundling “affords the family an opportunity to meet the targets they have set by providing support and access to a comprehensive range of services.” These services “address the multiple barriers a low income family may have to overcome to reach self-sufficiency.”

Today, the family has reached that stability and “graduated” from regular check-ins with a case manager. The house he bought near Keney Park is a big part of that stability. With his grandmother on the first floor and his mother on the second, there is always family to help with nine-year-old Nevaeh. CRT Weatherization has started scaling up the draughts and helped him cut the family’s water use. He applied for Energy Assistance to lower his heat bills.

“CRT calls their wrap-around case management the Steps to Success,” he told the legislative committee earlier this year. “And in my case, that really describes what happened.”
Learning Together

The sounds coming from Room 211 at Douglas Early Care and Education Center are just what you’d expect from any preschool classroom: children’s laughter, teachers’ conversation and everyone singing.

But those “normal sounds” are exactly what makes this room so special. Room 211 is an inclusion classroom, a partnership between Community Renewal Team and Hartford Public Schools, where children with significant hearing impairment and their typical peers are learning together.

The daily routine is identical to any of CRT’s 52 other preschool classrooms. Three- and four-year-olds make no distinction between friends who wear assistive hearing devices and those who don’t.

“The idea is to give all of the children as rich and as normal a preschool experience as possible,” explains Julie Morin, Director of Early Childhood Special Education for Hartford, who established this collaboration with CRT. “Our children with hearing impairment need typical role models, they need to see other children who are also learning to sit still for a story, share their toys, transition to the next activity.”

Educating children together

Years ago, children with special needs were often educated in self-contained classrooms. But Morin explains that the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) mandates that children be educated in the least restrictive environment possible. In many cases, this means an inclusion program, described by the Head Start Center for Inclusion as, “the full and active participation of young children with disabilities in programs with typically developing children.”

Hartford has ten preschool inclusion classes, but this is the first for children with hearing impairment, and the only one sited outside of a public school. “We approached CRT to host this because we have an absolutely wonderful relationship. We thought CRT was the right partner,” says Morin. “Three years later, it turns out that we were right!”

The class of 14 children has five full time staff: a lead teacher and two aides from CRT and a special education teacher and paraprofessional from the city. Additional specialists are on-site several times a week, working one-on-one or with groups of children.

There are just a few classroom modifications: Teachers wear a microphone which broadcasts into the children’s hearing aids and through a wall-mounted speaker. And acoustic panels absorb some of the background noise.

The concentration on language and communication helps all children. “When we’re speaking, we’re always telling the children ‘Look at me, watch my lips. It’s good for any child, hearing impaired or typical,” said special education teacher Meg Brundage.

In her third year as lead teacher, Rosa Nieves says she loves seeing the children make friends and help each other. “They’re all learning together about taking turns, making choices, cleaning up. No one cares who has a disability, they’re all just friends.”

I Couldn’t Believe My Ears

Christina Nieves is one of the program’s greatest supporters. Her son Jeffrey has profound hearing loss as well as other health issues – he had more than 20 operations before his third birthday.

He had received home-based services throughout his life, Nieves said. “But even with all the work he had tantrums, he threw things, and he didn’t speak. Not at all.”

Jeffrey has continued in the Douglas inclusion class for two years, and has now moved into kindergarten. Seeing his progress, his mom is determined to help other youngsters by entering the early childhood field herself. She has moved from a classroom volunteer to a paid teacher’s assistant, and will be starting college to study child development.

“I just couldn’t believe my ears, I broke down and started to cry!”

At CRT Jeffrey was around other children for the first time. “It didn’t take long and his attitude changed! He loved it! He wanted to do everything the other kids were doing,” his mom said. “Every morning he would be tugging me to get us out the door.”

The staff worked daily on language and speech skills. A few months later, as Jeffrey was playing in the living room, “I’m suddenly hearing him start to talk. I just couldn’t believe my ears, I broke down and started to cry!”

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“Jeffrey’s life and my life, they both completely changed thanks to CRT and this program,” Nieves says.
A young man with a troubled history sees YouthBuild as a way to change his life. He’s a quick study, eager to tackle construction problems. But other skills are more difficult: getting to work on time, communicating clearly, working in a team. Still he persists, and his efforts are rewarded: He represents Hartford at a Washington DC conference; lands an internship with a welding company; and is accepted into the Carpenter’s Union apprenticeship. A few months after graduation, he is sheet rocking on the 30th floor of a Hartford high rise – amazed at the change in his perspective in such a short time.

A young woman believes YouthBuild will help her reconnect to her dream: a career in health care. Her grandmother always said she had ‘healing hands.’ But she left college to raise two children alone, taking jobs that barely cover rent and childcare – much less her school loans. Now she feels her confidence returning as she starts classes at Capital Community College, earns her Nursing Assistant certificate and finds a full time job in a nursing home. Within the year she hopes to use her education stipend to start classes toward the next step on her career ladder.

Finding a way
Anthony Mendoza and Kyreema Hairston took very different paths to join the 2015 class of CRT’s Capital City YouthBuild. One had never held a job, the other has seven paid positions on her resume. One arrived with no career goals, the other chose a vocational path while still in middle school. Yet both overcame significant challenges and got their lives back on track, thanks to the opportunities provided by YouthBuild and its partners.

YouthBuild is a national youth and community development model that addresses several core issues facing low-income communities: housing, education, employment, crime prevention and leadership. Youth obtain the academic and employment skills necessary to achieve economic self-sufficiency; holistic case management and wrap-around services help the entire family; and youth develop leadership skills and a commitment to give back to their own communities.

Earn while you learn
Since 2009, CRT has offered this unique blend of schooling, career preparation, life skills and social services to Hartford youth ages 17-24, with funding from the US Department of Labor. Participants earn stipends while they pursue careers in construction, food service or health care and complete high school, earn a GED or begin their post-secondary education. Case managers connect participants with a wide range of services offered by CRT and other community organizations, such as eviction prevention, substance abuse counseling, child care, energy assistance and housing subsidies.

Participants also work to improve their hometowns. A partnership with AmeriCorps provides a community service coordinator and an education stipend of $1,415 for those who complete at least 450 hours of community service. Hartford youth have constructed or repaired homes, built gardens for the elderly, prepared food at several shelters and cleaned up storm damage in the Riverfront Parks – for which they won a High Impact Service Award.

The New England Regional Council of Carpenters has been a key partner from the beginning, providing the curriculum for construction training and access for qualified graduates like Anthony to enter the Apprenticeship Training Program. Other employers sit on the YouthBuild Oversight Committee, offer internships or share job leads with the staff – ensuring that 80% of students find work within six months of their graduation.

That ceremony – complete with caps, gowns and a family banquet – is often the very first graduation experience for YouthBuild participants. Each class develops its own pledge, which students recite for the audience. This year’s class not only wrote a pledge, but performed it as a multi-media rap number at graduation:

We proudly accept the challenges to transform our lives and to develop leadership skills to rebuild our community. Once we’ve changed ourselves we can change the world, one step at a time. We will strive for excellence so that we can be top achievers in our community. We know we will go through challenges but we will make a difference. We are on this journey together.
In August, Gov. Dannel Malloy announced that Connecticut had been designated by the federal government as the first state to end chronic homelessness among veterans. In this statement, he was talking about people like Angel Rodriguez.

For more than ten years this Navy veteran had no permanent address. He moved in with friends and family, slept in his car, stayed at several shelters and then secured a single room in a transitional residence. Rodriguez continued working most of that time. He’s certified to remove hazardous materials like asbestos and oil spills. As a younger man he did roofing and painting, then moved into landscaping and plowing. “Every job I’ve had, it’s always been physical,” said Rodriguez.

But that ended four years ago when he was hit by a car. Though he regained much of his mobility, he’s in constant pain, can’t stand for long and walks with a cane. The physical deterioration brought a sense of hopelessness. Sometimes he felt so badly, he wondered if he should just “make an end of it.”

Defining the goal
Connecticut was one of a handful of states chosen for the federal Zero:2016 challenge, which aims to end all chronic homelessness by the end of next year. As part of that initiative, the state set out an ambitious plan to house every chronically homeless veteran by the end of 2015.

At the same time, new resources became available to help veterans, including additional housing vouchers and increased assistance through a program called Support Services for Veteran Families (SSVF), which re-houses homeless families and stabilizes those about to lose their homes.

Veterans back on track
It was a case manager from SSVF who helped Rodriguez find his way from a transitional residence to his own sunny apartment in West Hartford. He was one of 147 veterans who moved into stable homes in the past year through CRT’s integrated veterans’ services; like Rodriguez, 52 of those were classified as chronically homeless. CRT’s intervention also prevented 62 at-risk veterans from becoming homeless.

SSVF staff helped Rodriguez re-establish a legal address and apply for a state housing voucher. Once that came through, CRT helped with the security deposit and the first month’s rent. But a household isn’t stable until the budget balances. To cover basic needs, Rodriguez was referred for SNAP (food stamps) and his application for disability support is in process.

“I feel like things are finally turning around,” Rodriguez told a friend, when they met at a weekly drop-in lunch for veterans. They’re held at South Park Inn, a shelter in Hartford where Rodriguez has stayed in the past. Rodriguez said he enjoys seeing his friends, and also hearing about services that are available to him and others like him. “But it’s an odd feeling to be here, and then go back to a nice apartment,” he said. “It doesn’t quite seem real.”

From Secretary McDonald
It will take continued work on the part of many to keep veterans like Rodriguez moving toward the stable lives they deserve. “This progress would not be possible without the partnerships that have been built here in Connecticut and across the nation, partnerships across the federal government, with state and local governments, with non-profit organizations and with the private sector,” said U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald, in August.

“This is not a static challenge; it is an ongoing challenge and we will keep at it because that is what the men and women who have served our nation have earned and deserve.”

For Those Who Served
Following the new protocol established by the Reaching Home Veterans Workgroup, homeless veterans are quickly identified at shelters like Stewart B. McKinney (top center) or at events like the weekly lunches held at South Park Inn (top left). Angel Rodriguez (opposite page) recently moved into his own apartment after 10 years without a permanent address.
Most birthday gifts go to the person blowing out the candles. But when Bob Warner turned 90, friends collected money for Community Renewal Team’s Meals on Wheels program, a cause that’s dear to Warner’s heart.

For 20 years, Warner has delivered meals to homebound seniors. Three days a week, this retired engineer picks up hot and cold meals at a church in Vernon and heads out to see his “customers.” He spends a little time chatting, offers a treat to their dogs, and heads home to call in his report about the people he’s seen.

Warner is one of 227 volunteers in CRT’s Elderly Nutrition Program, which serves more than 300,000 meals annually to seniors in 22 towns. About half of the volunteers are on the road, bringing food, conversation and a daily check-in to those who can’t get out. Others volunteer in Senior Cafés, usually located in senior centers and apartment complexes, where older adults socialize over a hot lunch. “I look forward to this every day,” Warner said. “Knowing that we’re providing food to people who can’t get it for themselves, that’s what makes it so great.”

Would he ever retire and turn in his coolers? Warner chuckles and says he’ll probably quit ... in about 10 years.

Bob Warner (left) has delivered Meals on Wheels for 20 years, cheering up each of his “customers.” RSVP Reads expanded to a corps of 202 trained coaches who work one-on-one with children (lower right). Volunteers used CRT’s free summer meals as the centerpiece of a day camp for children in their neighborhood.

Making a difference
From teens completing community service to retired adults finding a new calling, CRT volunteers contributed more than 123,000 hours in Central Connecticut last year. Leveraging this human resource is a key element of the Community Action movement: helping people invest time and talent in their own communities.

The largest group is in the Retired Senior & Volunteer Program, whose 102 volunteers are seen in hospitals, at Bradley Airport and – increasingly – in the public schools. RSVP Reads trains seniors to work one-on-one with students to improve their reading and build their confidence.

Thanks to a grant from Hartford Foundation for Public Giving’s H. Louise Rubbell Fund, the program is expanding from 55 to 202 volunteers, serving 15 schools in Manchester, Vernon and Portland.

“The weekly coaching helps children increase their skills, and then they really look forward to reading,” said Mary Lou Ruggiero, principal at Bowers School in Manchester, Vernon and Portland.

“With the help of CRT and the volunteers, we can really make a difference in these children’s lives,” Warner said. “They’re learning to read, but they’re learning to enjoy it.”

The management and residents wanted to go beyond serving healthy food. There are hundreds of children in our complex, explained David Roane, the resident services coordinator for SANA and several other Carabetta properties. “Wouldn’t it be great to have a meal that the kids could serve as the centerpiece for a full summer program.”

Roane and lead volunteer Jonathan Rodriguez recruited nine other residents to plan daily activities as well as serving both breakfast and lunch. They made camp tee shirts, printed leaflets and spread the word so effectively that more than 60 children were waiting when the doors opened.

By Labor Day, SANA had served 2,692 meals to nearly 100 children, who also enjoyed supervised activities. The volunteers started weekly family movie nights and raised funds for field trips — including a bus trip to the Bronx Zoo.

This was an exceptional example of a new partnership focusing on children’s nutrition and health. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (which funds affordable housing) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (sponsor of the summer meals) are working with regional anti-hunger groups to establish more meal sites within housing developments.

“These volunteers have taken the partnership to a level we could never imagine,” said Suzanne Piacentini, field office director for HUD. She spoke at a Summer Food Celebration at SANA that drew dignitaries including Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman and officials from several state and federal agencies.

But the organizers at SANA/Gateway Apartments weren’t about to coast on their success. Taking advantage of CRT’s new after school meal option, they designed a Homework Club that draws 40 children daily. Carabetta provided computers. Capital Workforce Partners sends teen-aged tutors and the volunteers manage meals and enrichment activities.

Rodriguez remains enthusiastic, as the SANA program grows. “I’m proud that we are working as a team to bring all of this together.”

Lunch & learn
A unique new partnership in Hartford is also concentrating on education and connections for children. When the SANA/Gateway Apartments signed on to become one of CRT’s summer meal sites, the management and residents wanted to go beyond serving healthy food.

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In addition to health screenings, Project Horizon nurses discuss wellness issues with McKinney residents. The paintings in each panel of the old firehouse garage doors (upper left) were done by residents as part of a Horizon arts project. The 2015 health fair (opposite page) was a great success.

Health for All

In 1988, a staff member at CRT’s Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Shelter phoned the University of Hartford’s nursing program, asking if any of the students could help provide health services and education at the Hartford emergency shelter. The 88-bed program accepts men who may be chronic users of drugs or alcohol, and who have a wide variety of health issues. Twenty-seven years after the nursing department first said yes, the university and CRT are still working together to improve health outcomes for homeless men. McKinney became the first site in what would grow into today’s Project Horizon, a multi-faceted service learning experience that addresses some of Hartford’s most pressing healthcare needs.

In two semesters, every Registered Nurse pursuing a bachelor’s degree at the University of Hartford spends at least four hours a week at a community placement: homeless shelters, transitional living residences, soup kitchens, neighborhood centers, senior centers, boys and girls clubs or urban schools.

Already employed in a variety of medical settings, these nurse-students can provide health assessments, nursing care and referrals for their partner organizations. At McKinney, for example, they administer flu shots, dress wounds, examine feet and monitor both blood sugar and blood pressure.

Promoting health

More important, however, is the opportunity to promote wellness and improve clients’ understanding of their own medical issues and risks. At the beginning of each school year the nurses, staff and residents meet to discuss the areas of greatest concern. Perennial topics at McKinney include smoking, stress and hypertension, as well as mental health, sexually transmitted diseases (STD) and diabetes.

The nurses find a variety of ways to address these concerns, including large after-dinner discussions, quiet one-on-one conversations, meetings that feature outside speakers and videos. Over the years, some classes have also introduced music, art therapy and even a little meditation to help McKinney residents relax, reduce cravings, and lower their stress and their blood pressure.

“The nurses are absolutely fantastic,” said Jose Vega, the longtime program manager at McKinney. “You wouldn’t believe the ways that they get through to our guys.”

Time for conversation

With a daytime and an evening team at the shelter for a total of eight hours each week, “our nurses have the time to sit with a group of three or four guys and talk with them about their health,” said Dr. Karen Breda, who directs both Project Horizon and the entire baccalaureate in nursing program.

A common area of confusion is prescription medicine. “Most people don’t understand the mechanics of their medications: what they do and how they work together,” Breda said. “Say you have a person on three or more meds, and they don’t know when they’ll get back to a doctor. So they alternate the pills to make them last longer.”

“Our students explain how the prescriptions work, how they can affect the quality and the length of their lives in either a positive or a very negative way. That’s an eye opener! Then we help them navigate within the health care system so they can see the doctor and get to the pharmacy, to maintain that appropriate supply.”

Students change attitudes

As they increase their understanding of the complex health and social issues faced in Hartford, the students are challenged to develop a capstone project that will break down stereotypes and help to reduce ethnic and racial health disparities. Several recent McKinney teams have created either photograph or video displays that put a compelling human face on the issues and statistics of homelessness.

The 2014-15 team chose a complex goal with a direct impact on the population they were serving. They put together a health fair that offered free exams, screenings, education and activities from 14 organizations. Closing the street beside the shelter allowed them to create a “fairground” with colorful tents, children’s crafts and a space for teaching Zumba and other aerobic activities.

With other nursing students from the university, they publicized the fair at all area shelters, soup kitchens and health clinics; McKinney staff helped them reach out to unsheltered individuals, including those staying under bridges and along the Connecticut River.

“This was about the most complicated thing I’ve ever helped organize,” said Darlene Dionne, one of the students. “But it was also one of the most rewarding.”

At the close of the day, there was talk about making the health fair an annual tradition. However, the final decision rests with the class that follows. “We will always react to the needs we see,” Breda said. “We have to respect the process.”
Whole Foods of West Hartford donated 5% of its July 2 revenue to Generations, CRT’s housing and services for senior citizens, raising their grand-children. The store donated $7,012, which helped to cover the summer programming for the 63 children who live there.

In July 2014, Commander Butch Hansen of the American Legion, Connecticut Department named CRT’s Veterans Landing to be the Commander’s Project for his year in office. American Legion posts around the state collected donations and held fundraisers for the project, which will be one of the country’s first affordable assisted living developments for veterans. By the end of the year, the American Legion had donated $17,378 to Veterans Landing, and many posts continue to collect additional funds.

We Thank the American Legion

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With volunteers and donations from Pepsico, PriceRite and Feed the Children, CRT provided more than a week’s worth of groceries to 800 families in one busy afternoon at the Xfinity Theatre.

The 14th annual Golf Classic to support Meals on Wheels was our most successful ever, bringing in over $75,000 in sponsorships and player fees. The fall foliage was gorgeous at Lake of Isles in North Stonington. Famed sportscaster and former NFL star Beasley Reece Jr. (above) was the day’s emcee.

When Meals on Wheels faced funding cuts, Toyo Tires, Crown Market and PriceRite stepped in to keep the program on the road. Toyo contributed $5,000 and a new set of truck tires; Crown brought $2,367 and PriceRite donated $10,000 from the company and its customers.

When three Hall High students held a bike drive for CRT, they started a ‘cycle of kindness.’ More than 140 bikes came in; they were reviewed and repaired by Center for Latino Progress; given to men at McKinney Shelter as reliable transportation for work; and brought to a bike rodeo for children living with their grandparents at the Generations campus.
The Habitat for Humanity ReStore took on a big decorating task: renovating and refurnishing our East Hartford Shelter to create a more homey and family-friendly environment! The lounge, dining room and study area got a makeover, with help from Boyles Furniture. Parents and children love the new look!

Teaming up with Habitat

A team from CRT led by CEO Lena Rodriguez, right, had a great time at Habitat for Humanity’s annual Women Build Week in Hartford. Who knew that our staff could spackle, paint and even hang wallboard!

Head Start celebrates a 50th year!

Every CRT preschool center celebrated the 50th anniversary of Head Start with roses, to honor the signing in the White House Rose Garden. The banner at right, created by children at Locust Street Center, was brought to the state celebration at the Capitol.
National Arts - Coming up on 25 years!

Don’t miss the 25th anniversary show of CRT’s National Arts/Local Color
Capitol Community College
950 Main Street, Hartford CT
From January 22 – February 8, 2016
For details go to crtct.org