

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

September 13, 2012

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Elizabeth Horton Sheff Awarded for Service at 10th Annual Grandparents Day *Longtime Community Organizer Honored for the Founding of Hartford's Grandparents Program*



Elizabeth Horton Sheff displays award at Bushnell Park for Grandparents Day Family Fair on Sept. 8.

HARTFORD—Long-time Hartford activist and Community Renewal Team's (CRT) Director of Community Services Elizabeth Horton Sheff received an appreciation award from the City of Hartford for her dedication and support for the city's Grandparents Program at the 10th annual Grandparents Day Family Fair at Bushnell Park on Sept. 8.

Horton Sheff was presented a plaque "in appreciated for many years of commitment and support" of the program she founded that aims to strengthen family relations and provide information on support services for grandparents who are raising their grandchildren. Sheff initiated the program in 2000 during her tenure on the Hartford City Council. The initiative also resulted in the construction of housing units to support these "grandfamilies."

CRT's Generations Campus, which is a vibrant housing community in Hartford's North End for grandparents raising grandchildren, was also awarded on Grandparents Day this year with a plaque of appreciation. Horton Sheff was instrumental in initiating the idea for Generations and was closely involved with planning the different social components of what Generations has become—which is an award-winning campus that empowers families through case management, educational opportunities, community projects and programs that enable the individuals to become mentors and leaders in life.

Horton Sheff has a long history of public service and has committed much of her professional life to the causes of disenfranchised groups, communities and families. She served several terms on the Hartford City Council during the period of 1995 – 2008 where she championed Hartford citizen

causes such as the “Campaign for Civic Pride,” that increased community participation in City Boards and Commissions; the “Keep Them Reading” literacy campaign; and she also hosted the “Community Council” public access TV show to engage residents on pressing matters being addressed at city hall.

She is perhaps best known for the successful landmark Supreme Court case *Sheff vs. O’Neill* (1996) that challenged the obvious disparities in educational opportunities available to children residing in Hartford when compared to the children in surrounding suburban school districts. Her son, Milo, was a fourth grader at the Annie Fisher Elementary School in 1989 when she worked with civil rights lawyers to file suit. As a result, Hartford students can now apply to more than 20 magnet schools throughout the greater Hartford region. This has provided give families educational options that were never available in the poorest and most isolated Hartford neighborhoods prior to the case.

The city’s Grandparents Program is designed to provide social support services—and links to them—for grandparents that gain permanent legal custody of their grandchildren. This includes help for those interested in subsidized housing, a grandparents support network, and educational activities focused on family development and other supports. Those interested in more information about the Grandparents Program can contact the City of Hartford Senior Services Division at (860) 757-4738.

For more information about the Community Renewal Team, please visit www.crtct.org or call (860) 560-5600.

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Community Renewal Team, Inc. is the designated Community Action Agency for Middlesex and Hartford Counties and is the largest non-profit provider of human services in Connecticut. The agency’s mission is Preparing Our Community to Meet Life’s Challenges. The mission is achieved each day by helping people and families become self-sufficient while making sure basic needs are met. CRT’s programs include Head Start, Meals on Wheels, energy assistance, supportive housing and shelters, and many others, serving people in more than 60 cities and towns in both our core catchment area and throughout Connecticut. www.crtct.org