

MEDIA RELEASE

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CRT and Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield's Foundation Team Up to Turn Hartford Green for Earth Day

Hundreds of Volunteers Cleanup Streets and Community Garden Before Block Party

HARTFORD – Some 200 volunteers sprang up at Community Renewal Team's (CRT) Generations Campus in Hartford's North End on April 27 to spruce up surrounding blocks by planting trees, cleaning streets and beautifying a community garden. The sixth annual collaborative effort recognized Earth Day, Global Youth Service Day and Anthem's Community Service Day. The event concluded with a community-wide cookout and block party.

Lead sponsor and CRT partner Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield played a big role, by providing the cleanup tools, 40 volunteers and a Zumba instructor. Their volunteers also conducted health screenings on site. Other groups pitching in included UConn Husky Sport, Knox Parks, Salvation Army, Hartford Police Explorers, The Village for Families and Children, Nutmeg Big Brothers Big Sisters the motorcycle club Capitol City Ryders.

"This collaborative effort has blossomed into a major event that families look forward to each year, and it's so important that the young people from this area are so involved," said Theresa Nicholson, CRT's Vice President of Clinical and Support Services. "It's our collective goal to make a positive difference in the physical landscape of our neighborhoods and to have fun doing it."

The Knox Parks Foundation provided the trees and shrubs planted on Generations grounds and Knox volunteers discussed proper planting and pruning methods with volunteers young and old. Youth decorated signs that now adorn the fencing around the community garden on the grounds of the nearby John C. Clark Elementary School. Eligible youth received community service credits for their efforts that brought many smiles to participants that walked away with certificates.

The Hartford Fire Department's mobile Safety Smoke House was on hand to provide demonstrations on fire safety. MDC, Greater Hartford's municipal water supplier, provided a water truck to keep volunteers hydrated throughout the day.

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The highlight of the day may have been the block party that followed the cleanup efforts. A group from the Capitol City Ryders motorcycle club fired up the grill for lunch and the West African drumming group Curtis Greenridge and Friends got people dancing right away. A stilt walker danced with the crowd and transfixed children's faces on her every move.

CRT Generations is an affordable housing campus for grandparents raising grandchildren as well as other seniors. Generations staff have organized the Earth Day cleanup effort for the past six years and recruited many corporate and nonprofit sponsors that have turned it into the success it is today. For more information about Generations and other CRT programs, please visit www.crtct.org.

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In its 50th anniversary year, 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 change their lives and create their own opportunities in becoming self-reliant 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. Visit the NEW www.crtct.org. CRT invites the community to celebrate 50 years of changing lives at the Hartford Marriott Downtown on May 15, 2013. Details on sponsorships and tickets available on the CRT website.