

Hands On Hartford, in partnership with others, strengthens community in Hartford by responding faithfully to people in need through programs that change lives and renew human possibility.

MLK Day 2018: A Day of Reflection

On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, a group of engaged citizens gathered for a day of reflection in an event sponsored by True Colors and Hands On Hartford (including Hartford Thrive! AmeriCorps VISTA members Serika Walker and Tyrell Cooper). The event started with a great dance performance by Studio 860. Then participants rotated through three discussion breakout sessions: "Resistance and Resilience," led by Sarana Biek; "We've Come a Long Way, We Got a Long Way to Go," led by Kamora Herrington; and "10 Ways to Dream," led by Abdul-Rahmaan I. Muhammad. After lunch and a reflection, participants enjoyed a dramatic reading performance by Journey Writers, Inc. Special thanks to South Congregational Church in Hartford for hosting this event.



Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau's new Speaker

We're delighted to share the good news that Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau has a new speaker. Shanta Wiley spoke alongside Ralph Gagliardo at an event sponsored by the UConn School of Social Work recently. There were two sessions with about 175 audience members each, made up of students, faculty, staff and some folks from the Hartford Public Library as well.

After the event, Shanta shared with us this heartfelt reaction:

I just wanted to thank everyone for allowing me to be a part of the Faces of Homelessness Speaker's Bureau. I really enjoyed sharing my story and giving advice to those who will work with the homeless population in the future.

Now that the shame of having experienced gray area homelessness is diminished and my ability to maintain resiliency is at a high, I would like to continue to go down this journey of helping others. The struggle wasn't in vain, now I know my purpose.

Once again, thank you.

Shanta Wiley



Shanta Wiley, Faces of Homelessness Speaker

Faith In Action

Many thanks to our friends at First Church Simsbury for joining us once again at our New Year's Day community meal! In addition to decorating, helping in the kitchen and serving, they donated desserts, pies, treats and cookies, and played bingo with the guests. In the words of Chef Kim Bunton, *"Thank you everyone for sharing New Years Day with our folks and helping them start the New Year with lots of warmth and compassion ... they are so very grateful!"* And of course, we are grateful too!



We were honored to participate in Westminster Presbyterian Church's mission fair. After attending services with the congregation, Hands On Hartford's Molly Reynolds and Abbie Kelly shared information about our agency's programs and volunteer opportunities. They also got to see the congregation (young and old) in action as they made sandwiches to donate for the benefit of Hartford's homeless and working poor folks. We are happy to share information about our services and plans with faith groups, either at your outreach/mission days, or here at our Center for Community. For more information, contact bshaw@handsonhartford.org.



Welcome Abbie Kelly!

Our new Director of Program Services and Evaluations joined us this month and she has settled in very quickly! Abbie brings with her a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to serving our Hartford neighbors. For the past 8 years she managed various housing programs, working with folks living with HIV/AIDS, Veterans, and families who were homeless or at risk of homelessness. She has also worked with at-risk teenage girls, managed a volunteer program and sat on various statewide committees and task forces. We welcome all our friends to stop by and say hello! Abbie can be reached at akelly@handsonhartford.org.



We're hiring!

There are currently three open positions here at Hands On Hartford: (1) **Café Assistant** (part time), (2) **Volunteer Coordinator** (part time), and (3) **Community Kitchen Programs Manager** (full time exempt). Find out more at <http://handsonhartford.org/about/job-opportunities/> or email pfitzgerald@handsonhartford.org.

We all have our hands on Hartford!



Many thanks to Whole Foods Markets (West Hartford and Glastonbury) and their shoppers for a generous \$2,325.98 donation for the MANNA Community Pantry from last fall's Feed 4 More initiative. We're grateful for the help in keeping our pantry shelves stocked.



HOH Board Member Lisa Cameron (front) and her colleagues from The Hartford made a generous donation of 250 festive bags with toiletries and gifts of warmth for the guests at our Christmas Day community meal. The children who joined us also received gifts thanks in part to the generosity of the Alec and Karen Wyman Fund. Thank you all for making Christmas brighter for our guests.



Stefanie Wade and colleagues from the UConn Internal Medicine Program adopted two families for the holidays—gifts were very gratefully received just before Christmas. Others who adopted families were Virtus Investment Partners, Lincoln Financial Group, Insurity, Jessica Fritz-Peters and Pilates Defined, Sandra Nichols, Amenta Emma Architects and Hannah Hughes and Trevor Ngo.



We were so happy to have Regions Commercial, LLC visit and assemble fun snow kits for our Backpack Nutrition Program kids! Thank you all for your time and generosity.



Be sure to visit the Café at Fifty-Five and check out our **new menu**, including an expanded selection of breakfast items available all day.

Did you know we also have a **full catering menu**, which includes a broad selection of breakfast, lunch, dinner and snack items with an emphasis on

our ability to customize our selections to fit groups from a handful to hundreds, and accommodate your budget. Catering is available on-site in our renovated historic space, or we can deliver anywhere in the greater Hartford area.

For more information about catering your event, contact Molly Reynolds, 860-706-1537, or mreynolds@handsonhartford.org.

Café at Fifty-Five Volunteer Opportunity: Seeking volunteers Tuesday through Friday, 11:30am—3:30pm, to help prep food and keep our kitchen and café sparkling clean and sanitized. For more information, contact Wanda Guzman, wguzman@handsonhartford.org or 860-706-1507.

Hands On Hartford Programs

- **MANNA Food Programs:** Community Meals, Community Pantry, and Backpack Nutrition Program
- **HOH Neighborhood Services:** homelessness prevention, Operation Fuel, economic stability and health & nutrition services
- **HOH Housing:** supportive housing services
- **Faces of Homelessness** Speakers' Bureau
- **Community Engagement:** volunteer placement, customized community service projects and immersions.

For information about volunteering and customized service projects, contact Wanda at wguzman@handsonhartford.org, 860-706-1507.

For more information about our programs, financial and in-kind support, contact Kate at kshafer@handsonhartford.org, 860-706-1505.

Community Meals Dinner Group

Volunteers Needed: Ideal for a group of 8-12 people, Mondays and Tuesdays from 4-7pm. Donate, prepare and serve a meal to 100-120 guests. We can help with recipe ideas and instructions and we can help pool resources of smaller groups. For information about available dates, contact Wanda Guzman, 860-706-1507 or wguzman@handsonhartford.org.



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