

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.

Shared Use Kitchen News

Hands On Hartford's 1,700 square foot commercial kitchen is used to support operations at The Café at Fifty-Five, to prepare our holiday meals for the community, and for our Kitchen-to-Pantry initiative. **Did you know** the kitchen also serves as a shared use kitchen, allowing small food businesses and entrepreneurs to become members and use the space as they need it. Highlighted here are three of our shared kitchen users.

Loafing Around LLC

Jen Acuna of Loafing Around LLC was the first member of our shared use kitchen and has been a member since March of 2017. Jen bakes a delicious array of breads, cookies and other baked goods. In Jen's words, "Cooking and baking has always been an art form for me. It is a vehicle I use to express myself to those I love. The kitchen is my blank canvas and the ingredients are my paints." For more information about her products, visit www.loafingaroundllc.com or her Facebook page, @LoafingAroundLLC.

KNOX farmers

In a great collaboration, farmers from KNOX are using the kitchen to prepare value added products for sale at local farmers' markets. For example, Lorenza takes hot peppers which would normally sell for \$2 per pint, and creates hot pepper jelly that sells for \$8 per pint. It's also a great way to create product with a longer shelf life, and to continue to have product available for sale during the winter which is a slow harvest season. To learn more about KNOX's farm program, visit <https://www.knoxhartford.org/>.

Chef Ernest and his Curbside Chefs food truck

One of our newest shared kitchen users is Chef Ernest, who operates a food truck called Curbside Chefs. Rumor on the street is that his CT cheesesteaks are better than the world famous Philly cheesesteaks! Also, a must try item is his unique fried Mac and cheese. Other popular items are loaded tater tots with chili and cheese or bacon and cheese. You can find him at local breweries—check his Facebook page ([curbsidechefsct](https://www.facebook.com/curbsidechefsct)) for details—with more locations to come in the spring.



For more information about our shared use kitchen, including how to become a member, contact Molly Reynolds at mreynolds@handsonhartford.org, or 860-706-1523.

Faith In Action

At the end of January, we attended **First Church Simsbury's** annual mission fair and had a great opportunity to visit with members of the congregation and share some our plans and programs. First Church sponsors our annual Toy Shoppe Celebration and support (with donations and lots of volunteer time) the New Year's Day Community Meal. They also join us every year in the Walk Against Hunger. But they do so much more! We were impressed at the broad variety of good work the church and its members are engaged in, both locally and around the world. It was a real honor to be included in the mission fair, and wonderful to see what a difference the congregation makes in so many different ways.



Art in the Café

In honor of Black History Month, we're happy to report that we have our first art installation in The Café at Fifty-Five. We hope you'll stop by to see these two pieces, "Can't Ignore this Matter" and "El Espiritu" by Sadejah Blake. And stay tuned for more artwork coming soon!



Fond Farewells

In January, we said so long to two Hands On Hartford team members. Michelle Jarvis (top photo, center, with the pink lei) has been at Hands On Hartford for the past 6 1/2 years and has worked closely with everyone in every area of the agency, as well as supporting the Board of Directors. Be sure to take a look at our recent blog post to see Michelle's heartfelt farewell letter. (<http://handsonhartford.org/a-bittersweet-farewell/>). We wish Michelle all of the best as she sets out to start her new family.



Lykisha Royes (bottom photo) worked with the Neighborhood Services team greeting families visiting our food pantry, helping clients shop, making appointments, and helping with connections and resources. Lykisha has a big heart and we'll miss seeing her in the MANNA Community Pantry.



We all have our hands on Hartford!



Long-time volunteer Andrew May and friends from First Presbyterian Church in Hartford load up a donation of over 2,500 pounds of food collected during First Presbyterian's annual "Souper Bowl."



Aetna's Achieving Business eXcellence (ABX)) group donated 420 pounds of PB&J for the MANNA Community Pantry. They'll be making a ton of kids (and some grown-ups too) very happy!



Looks like a bunch of friends from the West Hartford area are getting fit and making a difference! Anytime Fitness brought us the results of their food drive at the beginning of February.



We were delighted to welcome the Latino Leadership Academy and Senator Chris Murphy to the Hands On Hartford Center for Community. Senator Murphy also took some time for a brief tour of the Center with HOH Team Member Molly Reynolds. In recent days, we have had visits from State Representative Russ Morin, Deputy Speaker of the House, and from State Representative Matt Ritter, House Majority Leader with Franklin Perry, his Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs.



Some of the hearty soups and other food donated by Aero-Med—a perfect gift for the chilly winter weather!



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.

Data Entry Volunteer

Seeking a data entry volunteer. Longer term commitment preferred; approximately 5 hours per week; flexible schedule. For more information, contact Wanda Guzman, wguzman@handsonhartford.org or 860-706-1507.



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