

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.

Hands On Hartford's Community Kitchen: Three Years In

When Hands On Hartford moved into our Center for Community on Bartholomew Avenue in Hartford, **we had a vision** for the kitchen and café space here in Parkville. Our vision involved the intersection of **servicing neighbors in need** and **strengthening and engaging with community**, especially in the Parkville neighborhood. At the same time, we were given some valuable advice by a respected food business consultant, Karen Karp & Partners, whose services were funded by Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC): **we needed to develop a source of earned income** to supplement the charitable donations that support all of our basic needs services. And thus, Hands On Hartford's Community Kitchen and Café at Fifty-Five were born.

Three years later, our Community Kitchen is a hustling, bustling hub of activity with something interesting going on every day.

- **The Café at Fifty-Five** is open Tuesday-Friday, 7:30am-2:30pm, and serves breakfast, lunch and snacks prepared in the kitchen. **Chef Marcel Touponse heads up a great team of staff and volunteers.** Chris Nshimye cooks, Kathleen Reynolds and Daryl Granville are Lead Assistants responsible for front of house, food prep and catering. In addition, volunteers help out both in the kitchen and café every day.
- In addition to a great place for breakfast or lunch, folks enjoy the café as a place to hold a small team meeting, catch up with old friends, or **a comfortable place** to bring a laptop and do a little work away from the office.
- **Caterers Who Care** provides both **on-site and off-site catering** 7 days a week, with a full breakfast, lunch, dinner, dessert and appetizers menu. Catering orders are prepared by staff and a team of volunteers, many of whom have food service backgrounds.
- We've gotten **great feedback** from our catering customers, large and small. A sample from one of our larger events: *"I had three different executives comment on how delicious [the food] was...That NEVER happens...Thank you for another great couple of days of catering!"*
- Stay tuned to a future edition of this newsletter to read about our **Shared Use Kitchen Members**, who use the kitchen to support their small and/or start-up culinary businesses.
- Proceeds from The Café at Fifty-Five, Caterers Who Care, and the Shared Use Kitchen **support Hands On Hartford's basic needs programs**, including our MANNA food programs.

Hands On Hartford's Community Kitchen serves our neighbors with food, catering options, volunteer opportunities, a community space and above all, a warm and welcoming atmosphere where **folks from all walks of life can connect to build a stronger Hartford community.**

For volunteers: 860-706-1522, volunteering@handsonhartford.org

For catering: 860-706-1519, mtouponse@handsonhartford.org



Chef Marcel Touponse at work



Kathleen, Daryl, Chris and Marcel - a welcoming team!

Faith In Action

On the last Sunday in April, Executive Director Barbara Shaw had the opportunity to attend services at First Presbyterian Church in Hartford, as they said farewell to Pastors Jan and Thomas Hawkins who have served as pastors for the past three years. We also saw many friends from First Presbyterian Church, one of our founding congregations, the Saturday day before this at the Walk Against Hunger!



We were honored to participate in Asylum Hill Congregational Church's partnership Sunday. It was great to be able to share about the services and programs we provide to the community with the support of Asylum Hill Congregational Church, and also to see the other good work that the church supports throughout the year. There's a serious amount of "faith in action" going on at Asylum Hill Congregational Church!

Foodshare's 2019 Walk Against Hunger

A great time was had by all at this year's Walk Against Hunger. Thousands of folks came together to raise awareness and funds to fight hunger and food insecurity. We are so grateful to all the walkers and teams who chose to support Hands On Hartford's MANNA food programs in the Walk this year—your support makes all the difference to the families and children we serve.



Did you know it's not too late to join this effort!?! Foodshare will be accepting walk donations until at noon on May 24. You can make your donation to a Hands On Hartford walker by going to www.foodsharewalk.org, search for "Hands On Hartford Friends and Family" and click on the name of a walker.

Be sure to check out our Facebook page for more photos from Walk Day!

50th Anniversary Celebration News

We're very excited to announce that Hands On Hartford's October 24, 2019 50th Anniversary Celebration will feature remarks by local celebrity chef **Tyler Anderson**, will be emceed by **Chion Wolf** of WNPR fame, with a live auction conducted by our close (and very entertaining) friend **John Merz**, Executive Director of AIDS Connecticut. The program will start with a performance by dancers from **Spectrum in Motion** dance company, dedicated to people of color and the American Experience. Tickets will be available soon—keep an eye on our website for more information!



We all have our hands on Hartford!



A shout out to our friends at Webster Bank's Hartford branches! Branch Manager Thomas Wrenn delivered almost 200 pounds of food for the Community Pantry.



This April we received some great support from the Hartford Wolf Pack. This gift will provide fresh fruit to Hartford kids through our Backpack Nutrition Program - we're so appreciative of this generosity.



Thank you to Backpack Angel, Adah Chapter No. 22, Order of the Eastern Star, who donated over 300 pounds of soup for the Backpack Nutrition Program.



Here's a great group of kids, from Mandell JCC of Greater Hartford, who really care about their community. We're so grateful for their hard work cooking a nutritious meal for guests at our Community Meals program.



We were thrilled to receive the Hartford Community Food Security Award for a non-profit from Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy - and especially proud to receive this recognition in our special 50th anniversary year!



Easter Sunday at Hands On Hartford is always fun, with Easter Baskets for all the kids, and a delicious meal created by Chef Kim Bunton and served by a team of generous and dedicated volunteers.

Seeking Memorial Day Volunteers

Share your Memorial Day, Monday, May 27, with neighbors in Hartford. Seeking volunteers to help set up, prepare and serve a meal, visit with guests, and help with clean-up. Hours are 9:00 am through 2:30pm, and the location is our Center for Community at 55 Bartholomew Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106.

Contact Edith or Katie at 860-706-1522 or volunteering@handsonhartford.org.



Other Volunteer Opportunities

We have volunteer opportunities for individuals and adults, most days of the week, one-time and regular daily, weekly or monthly schedules. Just visit our website, www.handsonhartford.org, click on “Get Involved” and “Find An Opportunity” to find out more! Put your **hands** on Hartford!



Hands On Hartford Programs

- **MANNA Food Programs:** Community Meals, Community Pantry, and Backpack Nutrition Program
- **HOH Neighborhood Services:** homelessness prevention, Operation Fuel, 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](mailto:wgzman@handsonhartford.org), 860-706-1507.

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

The Café at Fifty-Five is open Tuesday-Friday, 7:30am-2:30pm, here at 55 Bartholomew Avenue in Hartford.



Caterers Who Care provides on-site and off-site catering, including 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. **Check out our new catering menu at our website!**

Our **Community Kitchen** also operates as a shared use kitchen, where members use the kitchen and all of its equipment on an hourly basis—ideal for small culinary businesses, start-ups, and food trucks/carts.

The Café, Caterers Who Care and Shared Use Kitchen all support Hands On Hartford direct service programs.

For more information contact Molly Reynolds at 860-706-1537 or mreynolds@handsonhartford.org.



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Check out Amazon Smile – for all Amazon.com shoppers, start your shopping at smile.amazon.com. Select Hands On Hartford as your charity, and you're off and running! .5% of eligible purchases will go to Hands On Hartford.



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