

## May 2021 News

---

### Backpack Nutrition Program - An Impactful School Year

8 Hartford schools and 237 students served each week - another successful school year of our Backpack Nutrition Program is coming to a close. With the pandemic impacting school schedules, the backpack program has been making deliveries of backpacks full of food to schools twice a week for the last year.



Britt'ny Bettis-Allen, the HOH coordinator of the backpack program, stated that "the pandemic created a lot of challenges for this program, but for us to be able to still have served as many families as we did throughout the school year has been amazing!"

The students have shown their appreciation for the program by telling their teachers and school backpack coordinators how helpful the program has been for their families. The students at one school even show their excitement for "backpack day" by placing sticky notes on their school coordinator's door each week to tell them how excited they are for their backpacks.

Not only are the students and their families appreciative of this program, but the schools are as well, continuously expressing their gratitude for the difference the Backpack Nutrition Program has made for their students.

The week of June 7th will be the final week of the school year for the backpack program, and will wrap up a challenging but highly impactful year. We are so grateful for all of the incredible volunteers whose hard work made this possible!



## Story from the "Simple Sunday Supper" Group

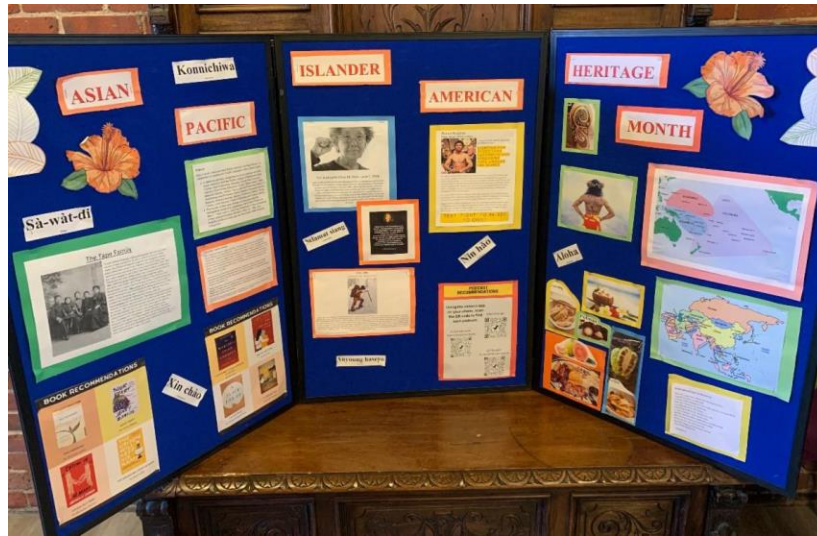
Jane Lennox, a member of the Friends of Hands On Hartford Group, made a donation towards a van for our new Homeless Outreach Program and shared how this donation came about. For the last 40 years, 4 couples have had a dinner group known as "SSS"- Simple Sunday Supper, where each couple takes turns hosting. Each time the couples gather, they put money into the "SSS Fund" and when enough has been accumulated, they typically go out to a nice restaurant.

Last fall, the Fund had reached the "going out" point but the pandemic was at the "staying home" point, so the group decided to use the money to bid on a catered dinner in Hands On Hartford's Hands & Hearts Together Auction. They won a dinner catered by Chef Meghan Montana, but decided to wait until everyone was vaccinated to get together, which happened in April. That night, Jane shared about the outreach program, the hygiene kits, and the need for a van and it was unanimously agreed that the SSS Fund should go toward the van.



We are so grateful for their support of Hands On Hartford and the folks served by our new Homeless Outreach Program.

## Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month



Did you know that May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month? The Hands On Hartford Team created a traveling exhibit highlighting history, culture, and a few individuals and families who have made an impact. There are book and podcast recommendations on the board as well! The exhibit traveled around the agency throughout the month, engaging with staff, clients, volunteers, and guests at our community meals program.

## Faith In Action

Thank you to **Rocky Hill Congregational** for their wonderful donation of Dunkin Donuts gift cards to our Homeless Outreach Program.

In addition, **Rocky Hill Congregational** donates Monday dessert for our Community Meals guests every other month. Thank you for all of your support - we are so grateful for all that you do for our Hartford neighbors!



## Shared Use Kitchen Spotlight

Meet Shared Kitchen member **Chris Penta** of **A Saucey Chef**. Chris says, "Take a moment, have a meal. I provide home catering for any and all interested; from individuals who hate to cook to working households that just don't have the time to put a home cooked meal on the table." Inquire through [ASauceyChef39@gmail.com](mailto:ASauceyChef39@gmail.com) to pre-order a home cooked dinner.



## Welcome!

We are delighted to welcome **Shirrell Jackson** as our new Administrative and Human Resources Coordinator. We are so glad to have her on the team!



**Kimberly Jeorg's** first year students at **University of Saint Joseph** are amazing - here are the 257 pounds of food they brought us for the Backpack Program in their recent food drive! HOH Team Members Jackie, Tabatha and Jose (and all of us) thank you!

If you are interested in hosting a food drive and would like more information, contact Jackie Kasinskas at [volunteering@handsonhartford.org](mailto:volunteering@handsonhartford.org)

## Special Thanks for Gifts of Food and More

**Alec Bernstein** (age 13!) took his stock market winnings and donated 80 Dunkin' Donuts gift cards, 80 Dollar Tree gift cards, and 34 cans of bug spray - all of which our Homeless Outreach Team really needed to serve our neighbors in need. Thank you Alec for this amazing donation!



Many thanks to **Paige Stawasz**, University of Hartford Class of 2021. Paige used the balance in her Dining Dollars account and purchased items for the pantry. Thank you Paige!



These energetic **Nassau** volunteers helped to clean, organize, and stock our pantry shelves! Nassau has been volunteering with us all year in a variety of ways and are such great members of the extended HOH family.



**Ebony** and her team at **Coach at Westfarms Mall** stepped up to collect food to support our community pantry. Each donation we receive makes a huge impact and we are so grateful for this gift!



## Interested in Volunteering?

Now seeking volunteers for our upcoming Fourth of July Holiday Meal! For more information on this volunteer opportunity or other upcoming opportunities, contact Jackie Kasinskas at [volunteering@handsonhartford.org](mailto:volunteering@handsonhartford.org) or call 860-706-1522



## About Hands On Hartford

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.

We are committed to increasing food security and nutrition, improving health and providing housing while we engage volunteers and connect communities.



## How Can I Help?

**Go shopping!** If you're an online amazon shopper, be sure to start your shopping at [smile.amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com) and select Hands On Hartford as your charity. That way .5% of eligible purchases will automatically go to Hands On Hartford.

Or use the Amazon app and follow the instructions below!

1. Open the Amazon app on your phone
2. Select the main menu (=)
3. Tap on "AmazonSmile" within Programs & Features
4. Select "Hands On Hartford" as your charity
5. Follow the on-screen instructions to activate AmazonSmile

**Make a donation!** You will be part of a network of donors, volunteers and staff who work together to provide food, housing and related services for families who are struggling to make ends meet. To make a financial donation, go to our website and click "Make a donation now" or mail your check to Hands On Hartford, 55 Bartholomew Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106. Our in-kind donation wish-list is also on our website – click "Get Involved."

Or contact Kate Shafer at [kshafer@handsonhartford.org](mailto:kshafer@handsonhartford.org) for more in-kind donation ideas.

**Request a matching donation** from your employer! Many employers will match all or part of your donation - a great way to double your impact.

**Add us to your estate plans.** Contact Executive Director Barbara Shaw to explore planned giving ideas and to join our Legacy Society. [bshaw@handsonhartford.org](mailto:bshaw@handsonhartford.org) or 860-706-1502.

***We are grateful for our community and the love, caring, compassion and support we see every day.***



Hands On Hartford | 55 Bartholomew Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106  
[www.handsonhartford.org](http://www.handsonhartford.org)  
860-728-3201