

June 2021 News

“You say you need an outreach van? Let’s do it!”

The Friends of Hands On Hartford, a group dedicated to supporting the work of HOH and the people we serve through special projects and initiatives, are doing great things to support our Hartford Community. With the kickoff of our new Homeless Outreach Program, the Friends decided to focus their efforts this year on the work we’re doing around housing and homelessness, and though we’re only halfway through the year, their impact has been great!



They started the year attending a virtual Faces of Homelessness speaking event, hearing from **Ralph Gagliardo** whose story (like those of all of our speakers) is moving and very close to home, and who engages with his audiences with courage, honesty, and great insight. Next they attended another virtual event where they heard from **Janet Bermudez** and **Stephanie Boyce** about our outreach program – connecting one person at a time with folks living unsheltered outdoors to help them get the assistance they need to move toward permanent housing.

The big question the Friends asked at that meeting was: “What do you need to be as effective as possible?” The three answers had to do with safety (a handful of reflective vests so that team members can be more easily identified as outreach workers there to help), trust (toiletries, snacks, Dunkin gift cards, and other much-appreciated items put together in outreach kits to help establish a trusting relationship with folks they encounter), and one last big request: an outreach van so that team members can travel together, and be able to respond immediately if any of the folks they meet are ready to come in from the cold (or heat) at a moment’s notice.

Wow, did we get a response! Right away, one of the members called a friend who donated 15 outreach vests. Many of the Friends signed up to put together outreach kits (stay tuned for next month’s newsletter to hear about an amazing

giving circle organized around this project) and are scheduled to continue to deliver them throughout the whole year. And, not only did they take on the van request, they raised the funds to pay for the van and a year's expenses in a matter of weeks!

What's next for this group? They are planning a fall Faces of Homelessness speaking event where they can invite friends and colleagues to help spread the word about the challenge of homelessness in this area. Stay tuned as we announce the date of that event. In the meantime, we are grateful every day for having the ongoing support of the Friends of Hands On Hartford.

Our Resident Green Thumb



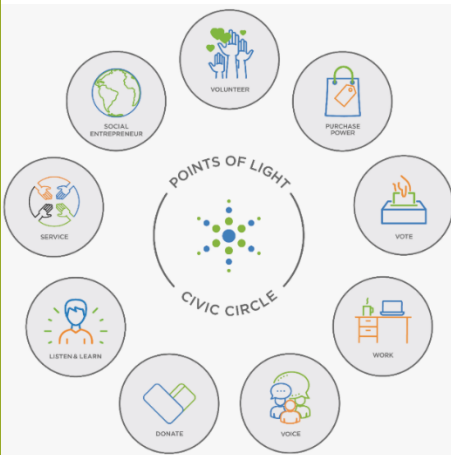
Did you know that Hands On Hartford has a garden where we grow food for our community? Here is our amazing gardener **Luis**, holding radishes that he harvested this month. Our garden also has green and red lettuce, basil, oregano, chard, cabbage, baby broccoli, and spectacular roses!

Pride Month



Hands On Hartford celebrated Pride Month throughout June. We would like to wish all in our community a happy pride month!

Points of Light Civic Circle



Did you know that Hands On Hartford is a **Points of Light** affiliate? Part of Point's of Light's Civic Circle is "social entrepreneurship." Have you ever heard of or worked with a social entrepreneur? Or do you strive to be one? Social entrepreneurs are individuals or groups who identify a need that has not been met by traditional structures around them. They develop creative solutions to make a positive social impact, and they're critical to solving society's toughest challenges. Learn more about the role they play in Points of Light's digital magazine, Civic Life Today. www.pointsoflight.org/civiclifetoday/

Faith In Action



A wonderful group from **Vox Church** had a cookout with our housing tenants this month. They brought food, games, and plenty of fun! This was the first of many gatherings that Vox Church will be hosting with our tenants here at 55 Bartholomew. Pictured here is a service project that Vox Church did with Hands On Hartford a few months ago. We are so appreciative of their continued support!

We are so lucky to have all this fresh lettuce for our pantry families from the **Gutt Family Farm**, thanks to our friends at the **Congregational Church in South Glastonbury**. We are so grateful for all that these amazing folks do for our community!

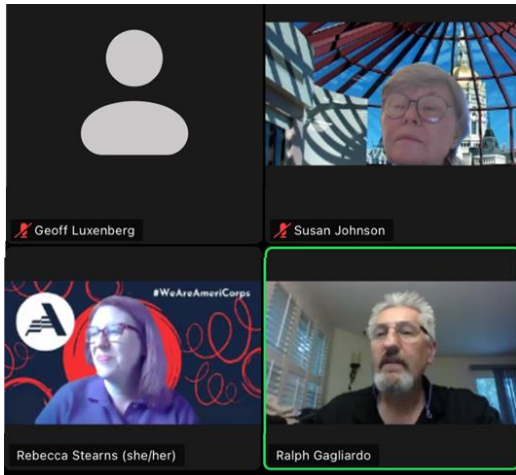


Shared Kitchen Business Spotlight

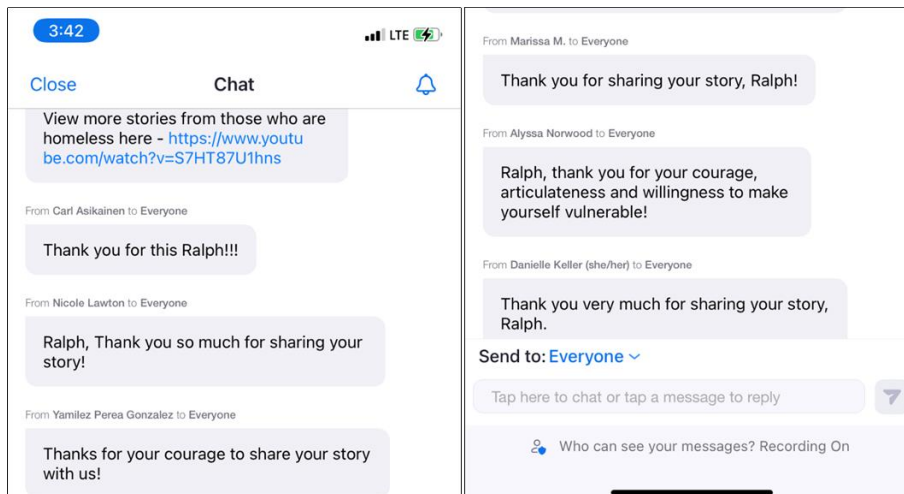
Here are kitchen members **Chris Rue** and **Malcolm Beckwith** from **The Dads Kitchen**. Chris shared that "The Dad's Kitchen is a small business created out of the need of wanting to explore our love for food and cocktails. We wanted our families to be inspired by the dishes we made and shared with the world through our social media platforms. We live by simply spreading love." To learn more about their delicious food contact Chris at 347-886-6740.



Faces of Homelessness



At a special June event, Hands on Hartford's **Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau** reached an audience of over 70 advocates - nonprofit leaders, policy makers, and **Americorps** members, via Zoom. Here's Ralph with **State Representative Susan Johnson** of Windham and **Rebecca Stearns** the organizer of the event! As usual, speaker **Ralph Gagliardo** inspired the audience (read the comments!)



Yoga in Our City



Looking for a safe way to exercise and de-stress from a long day? **ConnectiCare** has a solution for you! Check out **Yoga In Our City** for free yoga classes being taught by local yoga teachers at parks across Connecticut. This summertime wellness program recently launched its 2021 season for Connecticut residents to stay in shape and achieve peace of mind this summer.

Visit www.yogainourcity.com for more info and schedules.

Special Thanks for Gifts of Food and More

These three AmeriCorps service members from **Health360** brought a donation of dental kits and toothbrushes - thank you for supporting great dental health in Hartford!



A creative way to gather, connect, and do good! We're so grateful to **Priam Vineyards** - they hosted an event for wedding professionals recently and donated the registration fees to Hands On Hartford!



The generous folks from **Church of Saint Peter Claver** in West Hartford, brought us 884 pounds of food for the pantry including lots of fresh and delicious looking produce! We are feeling blessed by our community.



Interested in Volunteering?

For information on volunteer opportunities, contact Jackie Kasinskas at 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, mail your check to Hands On Hartford, 55 Bartholomew Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106. Or contact Kate Shafer at 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 or 860-706-1502.

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