

April 2022 News

Planting Seeds of Kindness: Volunteers Help our Community Bloom

As a **Points of Light** affiliate, Hands On Hartford celebrated National Volunteer Week from April 17th-23rd with other affiliates across the country. We love our volunteers and we know that they help our community to bloom. Each of our volunteers helps the folks we serve in vital ways. From our individual MANNA volunteers and our Board members, to our Friends of Hands On Hartford, to everyone who supports our agency in every way, we are so grateful for all those who are committed to serving our community.

We are pleased to announce that the annual **R. Regner and Carolyn S. Arvidson Exemplary Volunteer Award** recipient was the wonderful **Bobbi Schmidt** (shown here on "hat day.")! From serving as a member of our Board of Directors and as the Chair of our Governance Committee, to volunteering regularly in our food pantry and community meals program, Bobbi goes above-and-beyond to create genuine and gracious connections with our community and provides exemplary leadership for our organization. She is also the Board liaison to our Friends of Hands On Hartford group, has been a member of our Hands & Hearts Together planning committee, and is an amazing ambassador for Hands On Hartford.



Other Volunteer Award winners this year are **The Friends of Hands On Hartford** (Civic Group), **The Muslim Coalition of Connecticut** (Faith Group), **Nassau Financial Group** (Corporate Group), **University of Saint Joseph** (School Group), **Eamonn Kilmartin and Marcia Lada** (Super-Heroes), and **The Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau** (Family Group – and they truly are a family).

We are honored and deeply appreciative of the work volunteers do every day to keep our community strong. Take a look at our Facebook page for more photos of our volunteers, and to watch our Volunteer Appreciation Video, go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JoatcTL_0gE

For more information about volunteering at Hands On Hartford, email volunteering@handsonhartford.org.

Save the Date - please mark your calendars today!

The **CT Foodshare Walk Against Hunger** is coming soon - **Saturday, May 21 at 10:00am**, and we would love to see you there. Check out our Hands On Hartford Friends and Family page:

<https://p2p.onecause.com/ctfoodsharewalk/team/hands-on-hartford-friends-and-family>. You can

make a donation to sponsor our team, join our team, or form your own team. Your support in the Walk helps ensure that folks can continue to benefit from all of our MANNA Food programs. And it's so much fun to join with the whole community to fight hunger and food insecurity right here in Hartford. For more information contact Jackie Kasinskas at

jkasinskas@handsonhartford.org.



Faith In Action

Our caring friends at **Church of Saint Peter Claver in West Hartford, CT** donated these generously filled bags containing everything needed for a fantastic Easter supper with ham, green beans, potatoes, dessert and plenty more. This was a special treat for our housing program tenants and others as well.

Thank you all for making this Easter special for so many!



It was a such pleasure having **Rev. Nicole Grant Yonkman**, who is also one of Hands On Hartford's very dedicated and newest Board members, pay a visit to us last month on behalf of her church, **First Church in Windsor**.

She dropped off 206 pounds of food for our MANNA food pantry, which added to the 318 pounds the caring members of her church already collected in just the past 2 months, not to mention the generous financial contributions the church has provided over past decades. This is truly faith in action. We are ever grateful for First Church in Windsor's loyal support over the years.



New Staff Spotlight

Juan Acevedo, *Tenant Assistant*

As our newest **Tenant Assistant**, **Juan** is a member of the housing team, providing tenants of 55 Bartholomew Avenue with a safe and secure environment, as well as providing all HOH housing program participants with needed support to maintain their health and housing. We are so glad to welcome him to Hands On Hartford.



Special Thanks for Gifts and More



Though we don't normally collect clothing, after **Sheldon Freeman**, owner of **T-Shirts Period** in New Britain, met our Executive Director in line at Target while she was purchasing toys for last year's Toy Shoppe event, he felt called to donate some awesome new sneakers and a cool sweatshirt so some of our pantry clients could have a special gift when they came to pick up their food. Big thanks and props to Sheldon for believing in our mission and being a great example of generosity on the fly.

We love it, period!



We were so glad to welcome our friends from **Hartbeat Track Club** for a visit. They partnered with **The Fundraising Co** and **Fleet Feet West Hartford** to collect shoes to raise over \$1,000 to support the folks we serve.

We're more than grateful for this generous donation

Many thanks to **Sonja Williams**, who donated food for our Backpack Nutrition Program, inspired by a recent drive hosted by her civic organization, **The Greater Hartford Chapter of Jack & Jill**. Jack & Jill has an incredible history of support for Hands On Hartford and decades of leadership in the Hartford community.

According to their website, "The Greater Hartford Chapter of Jack & Jill of America, Inc. was founded in 1958 by a small group of mothers who wanted to expand the social, cultural, and extracurricular opportunities for their children in The Greater Hartford community...Our current community service thrust is to support organizations that seek to solve the problem [of] food insecurity at home and [abroad], and to increase the early literacy skills of black and brown children in the Greater Hartford Community..."

Visit their website at <https://www.greaterhartfordjackandjill.org/community-impact> to see some highlights of their service to Hands On Hartford and the Hartford community over the years. **We're so grateful for this connection!**



Meet **Paulette Dwyer**, Business Office Manager for **Roggi's Auto Service**, a third generation, family-owned business who hosted a month-long peanut butter drive for our MANNA food pantry, collecting 153 lbs, in addition to collecting generous cash donations.

Roggi's was innovative in their fundraising; they gave away free wiper blades to customers who brought in donations for the pantry, which helped get the word out about Hands On Hartford and stock our shelves. **We love to see local businesses thinking outside the box to both help their customers and support our Hartford neighbors**

Strength in Differences at Hands On Hartford



HOH staff participated in a fun, educational and delicious multicultural potluck with a theme of "Strength in Differences", coordinated by our hard-working Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee.

Staff were encouraged to select a song to be played, and bring a dish, that represents their cultural upbringing and then share about it during the meal. The food was diverse: from Hispanic cuisine to Jamaican to German to Polish to Mexican to Italian and more; everything was distinctive and delicious.

HOH staff also decorated puzzle pieces that were combined to make a collage display, representing our connectedness in our diversity. Board members **Christopher Brechlin** and **Harry Amadasun Jr.** surprised us with a visit and added their wonderful energy, while we closed the celebration in typical HOH style - a quick "Cha Cha Slide" dance party.

We know that our greatest strengths lie in our differences!

We're Hiring!

We have some great job opportunities available to join the team here at Hands On Hartford - and a few more positions will be opening up soon. You can check out job openings at our website:

<https://handsonhartford.org/about/jobopportunities>

Here are the job openings we have now - see if there's something here for you or someone you know:

Grant Writer/Coordinator (part-time)
Head Chef (full time)

And coming soon (keep an eye on our website for details):

Neighborhood Services/Homeless Prevention Coordinator
Cafe Associate - Gather55
Line Cook - Gather55
Chef/Food Service Coordinator - Gather55

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 and select Hands On Hartford as your charity. That way .5% of eligible purchases will automatically go to Hands On Hartford.

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, visit our website at www.handsonhartford.org and click “Make a Donation Now,” or 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.

Leave a legacy. Ensure your long term impact on this community by including us in your estate plan, making qualified charitable distributions from your IRA, gifts of appreciated stock, or include us as a contingent beneficiary of your life insurance. 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.