

## May 2022 News

### Deepest Thanks to Hands On Hartford Walk Supporters

We are filled with gratitude, and deeply moved, by the **amazing support** this generous community provided through the **CT Foodshare Walk Against Hunger** this year. Thank you, thank you, thank you to everyone who responded to our call for action, not only to help us cross the \$20,000 fundraising hurdle, but to get us far beyond that! So many individuals and groups supported and walked with us - too many to list here but we know who you are and we love you!



Please know that all of these donations will directly support our Hartford neighbors struggling with hunger and food insecurity. Hot meals for all, groceries in our pantry, weekend meals and snacks for kids - your support makes all of this possible.

**You are heroes and we are so grateful to you!**

Please take a look at our [Facebook Page](#) or [Instagram](#) for photos from Walk Day - it was so great to see everyone who attended. And if you have friends or family who didn't get a chance to donate, the online portal will be open until June 10 - visit it [HERE](#).

### Free Vision Clinic Held at Hands On Hartford

Health support is so important to the folks we serve here at Hands On Hartford - and the cost of eye exams and glasses make good eyesight out of reach for too many. Happily, earlier in May we hosted a free vision clinic held by **Vision Health International** in partnership with local eye doctors. Free eye exams, readers, sunglasses and prescription glasses were all provided; what a great gift to the



community! Special thanks to HOH team members Tabatha Cosme, Jose Santiago, RaShane Sands and Stephanie Plateroti for helping host, translate, and clean up!

## Faith In Action

**Allen Chapel AME Church** of Hartford is a community-minded, caring faith group. You see them here at this year's Walk Against Hunger, showing up strong (with a great banner). We also see them at our Monday evening Community Meals Program, where they donate, cook and serve their signature (and much-loved) pasta dinners. They are a true example of putting "faith into action" and we are so lucky to have them on the team!



Speaking of Community Meals, you may have heard about our newest venture, **Gather55**, a pay-as-you can restaurant here at HOH. We'll be making an official announcement about an opening date soon. In the meantime, two things to keep in mind are (a) we will be looking for more volunteers to help with breakfast and lunch, Mondays-Thursdays, and (b) our free meals for the community on Monday evenings will continue to operate as they have for decades, with group volunteer opportunities to help make that happen. For more information on volunteering, contact the team at [volunteering@handsonhartford.org](mailto:volunteering@handsonhartford.org).

## New Staff Spotlight



### **Chelsey Logan,** *Program Coordinator for Community Engagement*

Please welcome Chelsey, our new Program Coordinator for Community Engagement who will be coordinating volunteers and broadening our community engagement. Our current coordinator, Jackie Kasinskas, is heading off to graduate school at the end of June and Chelsey will be taking over her position. We are so excited to have her on the team and look forward to introducing her to everyone in person.



**Jeremy Williams**  
*Head Chef*

Jeremy is the newest member of our team and has already settled into the kitchen as our new Head Chef. He will be leading the team in providing delicious breakfasts and lunches for our Community Meals Day Program (those meals will soon be a part of our new restaurant, Gather55 – stay tuned for more info coming soon) and will be the chef in charge of dinner service at Gather55 starting in October. Welcome Jeremy!



**Abby Charamut,**  
*Backpack and Pantry Liaison*

Much to the relief of our hard-working basic needs staff, Abby joins us in filling a long-vacant position supporting both the MANNA Community Pantry, and working with the Hartford Schools and volunteers to keep our Backpack Nutrition Program impacting as many children as possible and running smoothly. Her fluency in Spanish is a huge asset and we are delighted to have her join our team!



## A Fond Farewell

Earlier this month, we bid farewell to Chef and Food Service Coordinator, Kim Bunton. For the past 10 years, Kim lent both her culinary skills and her caring heart to providing delicious and nourishing meals for our Hartford neighbors in our Community Meals program. At her farewell party Kim spoke from the heart, sharing her gratitude and love for her colleagues, and for those she has served over the years. Kim's next professional plans are to work directly with those in recovery as a support specialist. Kim made such an impact on our HOH team and she will be truly missed here.

## Special Thanks for Gifts and More

HOH staff met virtually with 3rd Grade teacher **Mr. Toussaint Careathers**, along with 5 enthusiastic **CREC Academy of International Studies Elementary School** students from **Ms. Heather Dennis' class**, who had chosen to write about the topic of homelessness for a report. After a very interactive Q & A session with HOH staff, these bright young minds created their very own HOH brochure to help motivate adults, and their own peers, to support services for those experiencing homelessness, asking for donations and educating the public about HOH services.



We are so touched by these young leaders' big hearts and are SO IMPRESSED by how successful they were too - collecting a whopping 224lbs of food and 47 toiletry items! Having our community's youth **FEEL CALLED** to get involved, and **TAKE ACTION** in supporting our Hartford neighbors in need, brings **HOPE** to us for a brighter future to come. **Thank you to these CREC student superstars!**



Last month we posted on our social media pages that our grill had been stolen and we were in desperate need of a replacement so we could still host a BBQ picnic for our HOH tenants.

Our plea was answered by our new friend, **Jamie "Bear" McDonald** of **Bear's Smokehouse**, who we also learned spent time volunteering in the Ukraine, feeding refugees streaming across the Polish-Ukrainian border. He got right in touch with us, ensuring we had brand new grill in time for our event. Pictured here is Case Manager Trevonn Coleman, cooking up a storm for our tenants' BBQ. Thank you to Jamie for this wonderful gift!

**The Zeta Beta Chapter of OADN Nursing Honors Society at Capital Community College** recently donated an impressive 222 snack bags (in honor of their graduating class year of 2022) and 76 outreach kits!

The students held a collection drive and then came together to pack all of the bags as a team.

**We are so grateful to all who made this project happen!**



Meet **Rohan, Marley, and Danielle!** This amazing family spent time gathering supplies, recruiting friends, and packing both snack bags and hygiene kits to support our community members. Marley and Rohan's friends gathered at their house to pack the bags after their parents had collected money to buy the supplies. Everyone came together one weekend to assemble the bags.

**This is what "Caring in Action" looks like!**

We recently partnered up with **Officer Jim Barrett, Hartford HealthCare** and **Footwear With Care** to provide new sneakers to folks experiencing homelessness.

What a great and caring community we have!





**Camille**, a very special 3rd Grader in **Mrs. Ursitti's class at the Pleasant Valley School in South Windsor**, opted to, in lieu of gifts for her birthday, instead hosted a donation drive for HOH. We were delighted when we read her adorable card to us delivered with the food. And she should be proud, having collected 80lbs of canned goods, several toiletry items, and even a \$25 Target gift card. Thank you to Camille and classmates for a very generous gift, in honor of such a very special "gift to this world", Camille!

T-shirt bags! So cool! These are easily some of the most innovative and hip donations we've ever received! These crafty and eco-friendly bags were designed and created by **TALK- Truth in Action with Love & Kindness**, a non-partisan group of people who foster dialog about social and political issues and educate themselves about those same issues, while also fighting injustice and protecting the basic rights, for all people, through truth, compassion and nonviolence. <https://talk-action.org/>



## We're Hiring!

We have some great job opportunities available to join the team here at Hands On Hartford. You can check out job openings at our website at <https://handsonhartford.org/about/job-opportunities/>

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

- Chef/Food Services Coordinator (Full Time)
- Café Associate (Part Time)
- Basic Needs Neighborhood Services Coordinator (Full Time)
- Tenant Assistant (Part Time)
- Homeless Outreach Case Manager (Full Time)
- Peacekeeper/Janitor (Part Time)

## 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.

**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](http://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](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.

**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](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.***



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