

June 2023 News

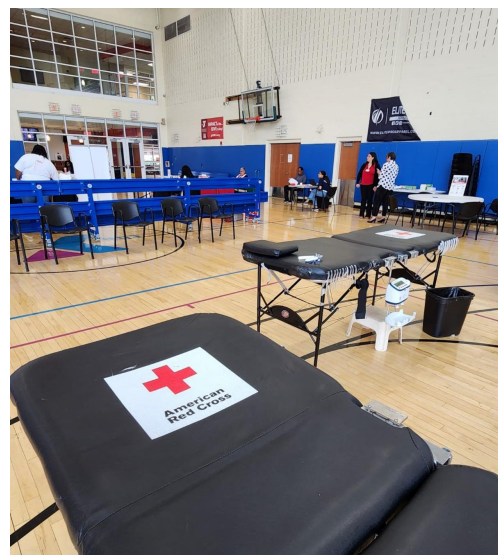
Make your gift today

Celebrating PRIDE Month & Juneteenth!

On behalf of our diverse and inclusive team here at Hands On Hartford, we hope everyone had a **HAPPY PRIDE MONTH!**
We are proud to welcome ALL here!



We were honored to be invited to share info about our services at the **Wilson-Gray YMCA's Juneteenth Blood Drive with the American Red Cross**, who were also raising awareness about **Sickle Cell Disease**, which you can find out more about [HERE](#).



HOH Staff member Kelly Dougherty also enjoyed learning about all of the amazing services the Wilson-Gray YMCA is offering to their members and residents of the North End, from fitness classes to enrichment activities, leadership and educational events, to free aeroponic produce, an amazing Best Buy Teen Tech Center with 3D printers, a recording studio, sneaker design program and so much more! **We're proud to know our nonprofit neighbors in the North End are providing so many resources to the community.** Check them out!



It was also great bumping into one of our **dedicated Board members, LaToya Tyson**, who was tabling for her wonderful nonprofit, **Health Equity Solutions**, whose vision is for every CT resident to attain optimal health regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status and whose mission is to advance health equity through anti-racist policies and practices.



You Helped Us to Exceed Our Expectations!

HOH again participated in this year's **Travelers' Championship "Birdies for Charity"** in which gifts made through their designated website, up through June 25, received a 15% match from Webster Bank – making those donations go even farther! **We're proud to announce that we received over \$20,000 through this initiative, which will give us an extra \$3,000 in funds that we can use to support our programs!** To break that down, every \$100 can cover the cost of milk, eggs and fresh produce for 5 families visiting the pantry so every dollar surely will go a long way!



Faith In Action

First Church in Windsor has been a dear friend for over two decades, providing generous financial and in-kind support for many of our programs over the years.

Members of the church have also volunteered faithfully each and every Wednesday in our Gather55 restaurant, thanks to the leadership of their Pastor, Rev. Nicole Grant Yonkman (who is also a wonderful HOH Board member and is pictured below accepting an award). Pictured here are 2 of their members, **Shawn Gale** and **Bonnie Hoddinott**, who energetically lend a helping hand to our restaurant. Shawn shared he enjoys volunteering in Gather55 because of the "**wonderful camaraderie, clients, workers and volunteers**" who are a part of Gather55 & Hands On Hartford and that he enjoys "giving back to the community to those who need help".



Recognizing Our Lifesavers, Our Volunteers

What fun we all had at this year's annual **Volunteer Recognition Event** in June. It was such a joy to see all the chatting, laughing and connecting here at Hands On Hartford. Our hearts were filled as we reflected on the many contributions our volunteers provide to our community and the passion and energy they bring to our work; they are truly our lifesavers.



This year's honorees were, pictured right, **Bea Srms** (R. Regner and Carolyn S. Arvidson Exemplary Volunteer Award); and pictured below, from left to right: **Willie Mann** (Participant Volunteer Award); **Jaida Foster, Alison Scherer, and Tyler Anderson** (Superstar Volunteer Awards); **The Gengras Center** (School Group Volunteer Award); **First Church in Windsor** (Faith Group Award); and, unable to attend, **CGI** (Corporate Group Award).



Guests enjoyed light bites, mingling and beautiful singing from award recipient Willie Mann. **Congratulations to all of our award-recipients and THANK YOU to all of our volunteers for a truly impactful year!**



Gather55 - Daytime Highlight

While we love to talk about our amazing Gather55 dinner prix-fixe dining experience, we would be remiss not to mention our popular daytime experience as well!

Have you joined us yet for breakfast or lunch (Monday through Thursday from 9am-2pm)? If not, you're missing out on a truly enriching experience dining in a casual-and-lively environment, bustling with people from all walks of life enjoying a variety of dishes, from giant pancakes, eggs, and breakfast sandwiches, to BBQ roast pork loin, burgers, baked chicken and pastas, to soups, rice bowls, smoothies, sandwiches, wraps, avocado toast and so much more!

Our daytime menu changes biweekly and can be found at www.gather55.com. **(Check out some photos from some of the many dishes we've featured on our daytime menu over the past year).**

As always, guests who cannot afford to pay the full price can either contribute at least \$2 toward their meal or volunteer for 30 minutes instead. Folks working with our Day Program may also receive on-the-house meal vouchers.

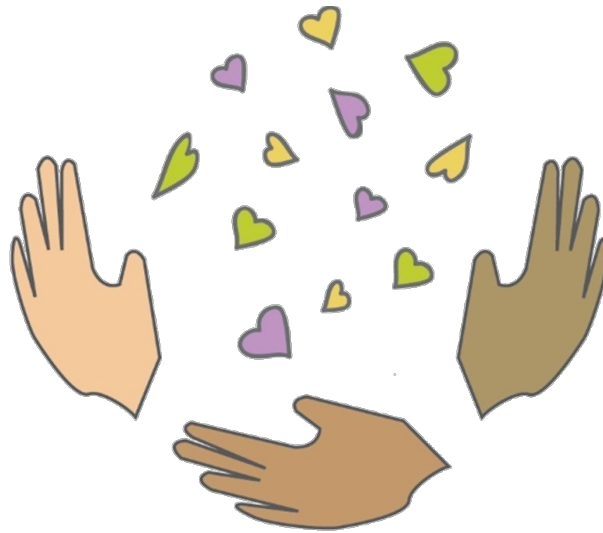


All amounts paid help keep our restaurant running, and those paid-in-full (or more) help supplement the free/discounted meals we provide.

We were thrilled to welcome **City of Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin** back for lunch this month, pictured here with **Community Engagement Coordinator Nicole Bornhorst**. He's enjoyed his experience each time and we know that you will too! Everyone is welcome here!



Save the Date for Our Annual Gala!



HANDS & HEARTS
together creating connections,
changing lives

Thursday, September 21, 2023

5:00-9:00pm

Hartford Marriott Downtown

**Reception, Hors D'Oeuvres, Dinner, Live Entertainment,
Online Silent Auction & Live Auction, Engaging Speakers & more**

Sponsorships & Program Ad Opportunities are available-
Reach out to Kate at kshafer@handsonhartford.org if interested in learning more!

More details and tickets available for purchase soon- stay tuned!

Providing Resources in Challenging Times

When the air quality in CT was recently at dangerous levels, heavily polluted with fine particles from the Canadian wildfires and ran the risk of causing lung irritation, or more long-term effects to those who have chronic respiratory issues, **our dedicated Homeless Outreach Team canvassed the streets of Hartford distributing free KN95 masks** to our neighbors experiencing homelessness (along with "blessing bags" filled with toiletries and snacks, as they always do).

Distributing these vital masks at such a critical time is just one of many ways we take care of our Hartford neighbors living without shelter and exposed to health risks.



25 Years of Joyful Dedication!



On June 30, we celebrated the retirement of the beloved **Debbie Maddox**, who has been with Hands On Hartford for 25 years! In that time, Debbie has held positions in many of our programs and most recently as a Tenant Assistant in our Supportive Housing Program. She has impacted the lives of hundreds of individuals in our community, and her sense of humor, joyful energy, compassion, and great dance moves will be missed by all. Debbie has promised to come back and visit often, and we were all glad to celebrate the joy of her retirement with her.



Bidding a Fond Farewell

In early June, we bid a fond farewell to **Geoff Luxenberg, our Program Manager of Community Engagement**. Geoff started with us about 3.5 years ago, at the start of the pandemic and has been an incredible asset to the Hands On Hartford team ever since. He jumped right in with new and creative ideas to support HOH in light of the impact of COVID-19 on our work and volunteers. Geoff took lead on our annual Walk Against Hunger and Toy Shoppe events, initiating strong relationships with corporate sponsors and donors, coordinating valuable service projects with area businesses, faith groups and community organizations, and helping our Faces of Homelessness Speakers' Bureau soar! We wish Geoff the best on the next step in his career path and will truly miss him, though we know he'll continue to stay in touch, and serve the community, in so many ways.



Amazing Gifts and New Introductions

We are thrilled to announce that **Travelers Insurance**, in partnership with **Caliber Collision**, donated a beautiful cargo van, complete with our logos, that we can use to deliver kids' backpacks full of food and so much more! And as a special surprise, they packed the van to the roof with food for our backpack nutrition program! All of us are absolutely blown away – Travelers is such a huge supporter of both this agency and the community; we are just filled with the utmost gratitude!



We're excited to announce that we received a \$40,000 grant to fund exterior improvements to Gather55 from the **Backing Historic Small Restaurants Grant Program presented by National Trust for Historic Preservation and American Express**. This year, \$1 million in funding was awarded to 25 historic small restaurants across the country and we were one of them! You can learn more about the Backing Historic Small Restaurants Grant Program, and this year's grant recipients, [HERE!!](#) You can also check out the great video that American Express put together to highlight us [HERE!](#)



Earlier in June, we had the great fortune to be a part of a huge Parkville neighborhood service project organized by **our nonprofit friends, The RiseUP Group, with over 150 volunteers from Deloitte**. Volunteers painted murals, participated in a park cleanup and beautification, and made art therapy kits for Connecticut Children's Medical Center, among other projects.

Here at Hands On Hartford, Deloitte employees transformed our entrance and parking lot landscaping by mulching and planting beautiful flowers. They also assembled six new picnic tables to enhance our program participants' enjoyment of our outdoor space. What an amazing day full of hard work, teamwork and collaboration! Thank you to Deloitte and The RiseUP Group for making



an impact that matters!

Ps. Check out more photos from the project, including beautiful after-photos, on our Facebook page [HERE!](#)



We just adore **Hartford Healthcare's Neighborhood Health Team**, who provide free health clinics twice a month (the 1st and 3rd Wednesday's) here at Hands On Hartford. The team also loves to support HOH through grabbing lunch at Gather55 and donating, or encouraging their partners to donate, much-needed nonperishables and toiletries for our community pantry, day center and homeless outreach. Just this past month they brought 290lbs of food from **Cummins-Jacobs Vehicle Systems** in Bloomfield. We are so grateful for all they do to support our community!



Happy June birthday month to our very kind-hearted, hard-working and BRAND NEW volunteer, **Marsha**, who reached out to us in the hopes of **spending her birthday right here at Hands On Hartford, giving back to her community!** We were honored to have her choose to spend her special day with us, helping in our Gather55 restaurant. She shared with us how much she enjoyed her experience, so much so that she's been volunteering in Gather55 regularly now!

Thank you, Marsha! We're so happy to have you join the HOH volunteer team!



Garden Volunteers Desperately Needed!

Join our friend, Bea, and the rest of the wonderful volunteer team for a few (or more!) hours a week weeding and/or watering our beautiful community garden! **No experience is needed!** If you'd like to contribute even more, feel free to



let us know and we'll welcome any other garden help as well! Feel good knowing you are helping a wonderful cause - **we donate what we grow to our community pantry, on-site tenants, and Gather55 restaurant!**

Contact Nat at 860-706-1531 or nwyse@handsonhartford.org. And please help us spread the word!

Hands On Hartford is Hiring!

Hands On Hartford staff are dedicated, caring, and hardworking people who like to have fun while making a difference in our community. With great benefits, staff recognition and support, we value teamwork, compassion and community.

Check out these open positions and help us spread the word:

- **Tenant Assistant (Part Time Days)**
- **Program Support Specialist (Full Time)**
- **Program Manager-Community Engagement (Full Time)**
- **Community Engagement Program Specialist (Part Time)**
- **Gather55 Front of House Server (Per Diem)**



Find out more about these positions and how to apply [HERE](#).

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?

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, at bshaw@handsonhartford.org or 860- 706-1502, to explore planned giving ideas and to join our Legacy Society.

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



Visit our website



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