

## January 2025 News

Make your gift today

### Welcoming in a New Year!

Thanks to the incredible generosity of **First Church of Christ Simsbury** and our fantastic volunteers, we were able to serve **247 meals** to our Hartford neighbors during our New Year's Day holiday meal, ensuring no one started the year hungry or alone.

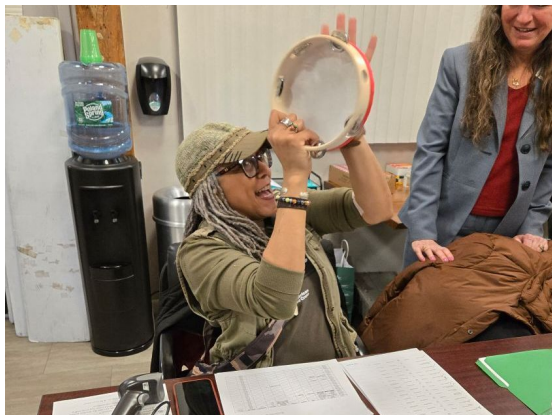
Adults who joined us also received gifts of warmth to keep cozy, courtesy of **Dollar Tree in Windsor**, and kids went home with beautiful brand new books to enjoy in the year ahead, courtesy of **University of Saint Joseph and RTRC**.

Here's to a year of continued community, kindness, and connection!

Check out more great photos [HERE!](#)



### Celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day





What an honor for Hands On Hartford to be the chosen location and community partner for **The Greater Hartford Chapter of Jack and Jill, Inc's** annual **MLK Jr. Day Blood Drive**, in partnership with our friends at the **American Red Cross Connecticut**. The group also further supported HOH by hosting a nonperishable food and winter-item collection that same day, in conjunction with a "day ON" of volunteering!

It was an awesome turn out, **with dozens of people showing up to give blood, 19 families donating to our MANNA Community Pantry and kids' weekend Backpack Nutrition Program, and 35 people helping to check, sort, and stock the 312 pounds of food and 42 winter items they collected.** Amazing!

We are so grateful for these wonderful partnerships and to honor such an important day! Thank you, GHJ&J families and the American Red Cross, for all of your hard work, great energy, and generosity to help strengthen our community! Dr. King would be proud! Check out more great photos from the day [HERE!](#)



## Making an Impact!





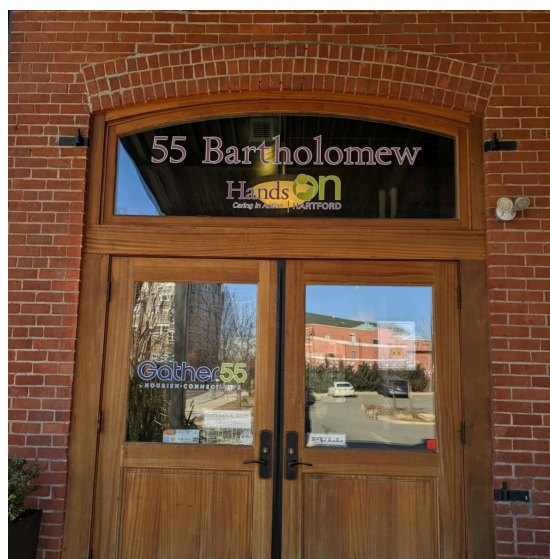
Our Housing Program made a meaningful impact in 2024, providing vital supportive services to **over 100 clients in the Greater Hartford and surrounding areas**.

The Housing team kicked off 2025 with excitement and energy at their annual New Year's celebration. The team is motivated to continue serving our community with dedication and care this year!

## A Warm Respite

Need somewhere warm to spend the day (or know someone else who does)? Stop by our **Day Center** at 55 Bartholomew Ave in Hartford, CT **Monday through Thursday between 9am and 2pm.**

While you're here, be sure to connect with staff if you're in need of any navigation services like help with employment searches, ID recovery, applying for state benefits, etc. Also, enjoy a warm meal from Gather55 (options include contributing a minimum of \$3/\$5, volunteering for 30 minutes, or paying the posted menu prices). You can also grab a book from our lending library to enjoy!



## Still In Need of Sponsors for 2025 Holiday Meals!

We are still have a few **meal sponsors** slots left for our 2025 community holiday meals, held on most major holidays! This



is truly such a rewarding, and heartwarming way, to support our community on a larger scale. **Sponsors also get some perks**, like social media and newsletter mentions and a few volunteer spots reserved just for their group at their sponsored holiday meal!

Sponsorship costs vary based upon the dishes selected by our Chefs and number of guests we estimate to serve.

Please reach out to **Kelly Dougherty** at [kdougherty@handsonhartford.org](mailto:kdougherty@handsonhartford.org) if interested in finding out more information!

## Faith in Action



What an AMAZING winter collection effort from our dear partners, **First Church of Christ Congregational 1652 in Farmington!** Spearheaded by **Jane and Jerry Hikel from the church's Witness (Outreach) Committee**, they contacted us to see what kinds of items we were most in need of. They then rallied their group and, with a lofty goal, set out to "Fill the Backpacks with Warmth" in support of our kids' Backpack Nutrition Program.

We were originally hoping for at least one winter item to place in each backpack, but this group decided to go ABOVE AND BEYOND, gathering instead **over 230 of each item suggested, which included quality winter hats, gloves, and socks** (many of which also had fun cartoons and themes on them) as our monthly enhancement! This means that every single kid in our backpack program, when they picked up their bag full of healthy, easy-to-prepare food, also opened it to see an adorable winter hat, gloves and socks to keep them toasty (and styling) at the bus stop, during pick-up, or for their walk home (and for playing in the snow of course)!

What a heartwarming way for these children to start their weekend, thanks to the generosity of First Church of Christ Congregational 1652. We are also so grateful for FCCC's longtime partnership and generous financial support over the years and look forward to, once again, hosting a **Faces of Homelessness speaking event** at their "Sleep Out" supporting homelessness efforts next month! What a partnership!



We are still in need of backpack enhancement sponsors! Please reach out to Kelly at [kdougherty@handsonhartford.org](mailto:kdougherty@handsonhartford.org) if interested in finding out more!

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## Save These Dates!



Connecticut Foodshare  
**Walk Against Hunger**

**Save the date:**  
**Sat., April 26, 2025**

Email Kelly at  
[kdougherty@handsonhartford.org](mailto:kdougherty@handsonhartford.org)  
if interested in joining the  
Hands On Hartford Friends & Family team  
or forming your own!

*More info coming soon!*



Hands On Hartford (HOH) has been selected again as a nonprofit partner in the Stop & Shop “Bloomin’ 4 Good Program”.

HOH will receive \$1.00 for each specially-marked \$10.99 Bloomin’ 4 Good bouquet sold during the month of February 2025 at:

150 New Park Avenue, Hartford CT

## Gather55 Dinner Updates



**FEBRUARY GUEST CHEF:  
CHEF ROI GRABER  
GVEENAH MEDITERRANEAN FUSION KITCHEN,  
WEST HARTFORD**

*Mozzarella & Tomato Salad   Branzino a la Plancha   Crème Brûlée*

*Treat your Sweetie to something  
savory and something sweet!  
Join us all month for some wonderful new dishes from our February Guest Chef,  
Chef Roi Graber!  
♥  
(Reservations are filling fast! Make yours today!)*

[Click here to MAKE A  
RESERVATION](#)

[Click here to ORDER DELIVERY or PICK-UP](#)

Follow our Gather55 Facebook page [HERE](#) and our IG page [HERE](#).



## Positive Projects and Partnerships

Huge thanks to **the Hartford Wolf Pack** for hosting their very fun **player-created ornament auction, which raised \$736.00** to benefit Hands On Hartford! The creativity and time put into each ornament made it event more special. It's wonderful to see a professional team so invested in **making a difference** for our community.



Also, so fabulous news:

**The Wolf Pack are also hosting a food collection at their home game versus the Providence Bruins at the XL Center on Saturday, February 22!**



Last year, their collection brought in **1,149lbs** of nonperishable food for our MANNA Community Pantry & kids' Backpack Nutrition Program. We can't wait and hope to see you there with food donations in hand!



Get your tickets [HERE!](#)

We recently had the opportunity to learn how to "Stop The Bleed", thanks to this awesome group of students from **University of Saint Joseph's Physician Assistant Studies program**. These dedicated individuals taught staff, volunteers, and guests in our Day Center how to stop hemorrhages in an emergency.



Thank you USJ's PA program for joining us and helping us to empower our staff and community with information that can save lives.

Wow! We were SO HONORED to get a surprise call from **Colleen Boccaccio, from American Eagle Financial Credit Union**, who reached out to us to say she had a second surprise donation for us (they had recently presented us a check for \$500 along with a bunch of food and toiletries).

When she arrived, we got a little emotional as we learned that Hands On Hartford was **specially selected for this \$2,500 "Hope for the Holidays" gift by their staff**, most

notably because of the incredible time they all had volunteering with us during a large project (sharing how well-organized, fun and impactful the event was for everyone), in addition to resonating with our mission.

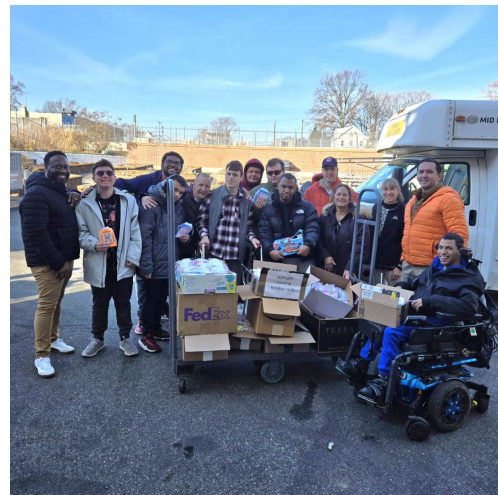
We are so grateful for this recognition from a fellow nonprofit doing great things for our community!



A heartfelt thank you to the **Gengras Center** for their generous donation of fun and delicious hot cocoa kits this past holiday season!

This thoughtful group assembled **450 kits** to be distributed at our Christmas Day Meal and **230 kits** for our Backpack Nutrition Program. What a dedicated effort!

Their kindness helped us spread warmth and joy to our community during such a special season. Thank you, Gengras Center friends!



We're overjoyed to have met our new friend and supporter, **Stephanie Anton Bernard**, after she reached out to us looking to host her first food drive for our community pantry. Inspired by her fellow high school student, Jaida Foster, who has hosted several food drives in the past, and her older brother Daniel, who helped with communications and cheering her on, Stephanie collected an impressive **248 lbs of nonperishable food**, which will go far in helping our neighbors experiencing food insecurity. Thank you, Stephanie (and family), for your wonderful efforts and leadership!



**Welcome to Our New Staff!**





**Lloyda Hernandez**  
*Neighborhood Services  
Senior Case Manager*



**Mack Cosgrove**  
*Senior Outreach  
Case Manager*



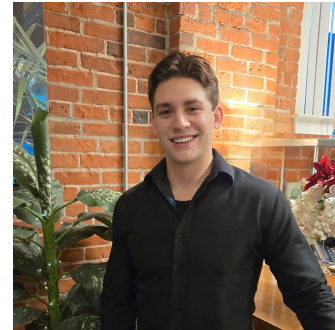
**Jacyn Green**  
*Tenant Assistant*



**Lindell Lee**  
*Gather55 Server/Host  
(per diem)*



**Colleen Dumas**  
*Gather55 Server/Host  
(per diem)*



**Lorenzo Garcia**  
*Gather55 Server  
(evening)*

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## 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 - Weekends - Part Time
- Peer Support Specialist - Part Time

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

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## 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](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 Donna Colliton at [dcolliton@handsonhartford.org](mailto:dcolliton@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 Director of Partnerships & Support, Donna Colliton, at [dcolliton@handsonhartford.org](mailto:dcolliton@handsonhartford.org) or 860-706-1528, 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.***



PROUD AFFILIATE

**POINTS  
OF LIGHT**  
GLOBAL NETWORK



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