

Christian Community Action

Norwalk, Inc.

98 So. Main Street, South Norwalk, CT 06854

www.ccanorwalk.org

(203) 899-2485

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NEWS

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CCA Receives a Bounty of Fresh Produce



Volunteers Jeanne Galvin (left) and Maureen Moore (right) display some of the produce that will be given out to CCA clients.

Over the last few years CCA has been supplementing the canned fruits and vegetables that we provide to our clients with a marvelous array of fresh produce. From potatoes to collard greens, apples to bananas, and much more, we have been able to provide our clients with the freshest vegetables. This has been accomplished by various pantry volunteers and CCA board members who have tapped into a number of community resources.

Weston residents Susan Scher and Jeanne Galvin are CCA volunteers who originally arranged for Peter's Market in Weston to donate fresh fruits and vegetables for the pantry every Tuesday. Today, CCA clients have come to expect that Tuesday is "produce day," and there is always a waiting line of clients. Because of their service in this area, James McGee, owner of the market, and Steve Estes, produce manager, were both recently named "Unsung Heroes" by the American Red Cross for their continuing generosity to CCA clients.

Another source of fresh vegetables has been Greg Palmer the owner of Palmer's Market in Darien, who has also donated their surplus produce for a period of time during 2006, which supplemented the diets of CCA clients.

Finally, a recently formed organic co-operative in Wilton has been donating fresh vegetables to the pantry. The Wilton co-op is actually a Community Supported Agriculture Group (CSA) started by board member, Lorraine Larkin. The CSA is supplied by a regional farm. Members purchase shares of the farm's seasonal harvest, which is delivered weekly over a 24-week season, from mid June to November. At the end of each distribution, the surplus is gathered up and delivered to the pantry by one of CCA's board members.

All of this fresh produce has been especially helpful to clients who are on medically restricted diets for hypertension or diabetes and to client families who try to provide their children with a wide array of healthy foods. CCA is most thankful for all these donations, which fill the pantry and help feed our clients!

CCA Facts and Figures for 2005-2006

Service	Items Provided	Families Helped
Meals	214,407	4,622
Holiday Gifts	2,226	341
Furniture	1,930	575
Financial Support	\$9,600	57
New Mattresses	27	18
Children's Books	6,000	2,000
Kitchen Wares	1,050	250

CCA Launches Web Site

At the start of 2007, Christian Community Action will launch their first-ever web site. The new URL address is www.ccanorwalk.org and will feature the new CCA art logo designed by graphic designer Carol Royce of Danbury, CT.



The new art logo emphasizes CCA's commitment to feeding the hungry.

This web site will provide CCA with an important internet presence and will provide a great resource for those seeking information on the agency for grant purposes and for those wanting information for their own use.

The web site presents a clear and thorough picture of CCA and features the different services we provide along with many photographs of volunteers, events, and other areas of interest.

In addition to explaining all of CCA's services—the Food Pantry, Furniture Program, Gift of Giving, and Financial Assistance Program—other related topics are presented, including a section on *How to Help CCA*, which discusses volunteer opportunities and types of donations accepted by the agency.

The web master of the CCA web site is Bill Sweeney of Norwalk, CT, who will also oversee any updates and changes.



Don Roth (left) and Jim Ullrich (right) are the new CCA Co-chairmen for the 2006–2007 year.

The main focus of CCA is providing emergency food for our clients. CCA receives food from two major community food drives. Every October we participate in the “Make a Difference Day” food drive, which is sponsored by the *Norwalk Hour*. This year CCA was one of three Norwalk agencies receiving food from this drive. Each agency received over 2,000 pounds of non-perishable food.

The other major food drive, from which CCA received over 2,000 pounds of food, was sponsored by the US Postal Service Letter Carriers in May. Both of these food drives provide much needed food for our clients. In addition, we receive gifts of food from individuals, churches and civic organizations.

An important source of food continues to be the Food Bank of Lower Fairfield County located in Stamford, CT. Their van makes deliveries to CCA every other week. On the alternate weeks, we have volunteers who make a food run with their truck. These weekly food runs supply between 1,500 to 2,000 pounds of food per week.

We are grateful for the local churches, organizations and individuals who throughout the year make generous donations of food. Even with all these resources for food CCA needs to purchase food in order to keep a supply of all the basic necessities.

—Don Roth & Jim Ullrich

Program Updates

CCA English Classes *Increase in Size*

In the spring of 2004, CCA expanded their services to include conversational English classes taught by volunteer Francie Mansager of Norwalk. On the first day, there were only two students who came to the class.

Today, there are about a dozen students in the class. Because of the increase in students of varying levels, this fall Francie split the classes into two sessions—one for beginners and one for students who have some knowledge of English. Half the students are men who work in restaurants and have mornings free. The women are mothers who hope to help their children to be successful in school; some of them find a friend to baby-sit while they attend classes to improve their English.

The students represent many of the countries in Central America: Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Mexico. There are also immigrants from Haiti who attend the classes. Many students are very dedicated and have a real desire to learn to speak English. There is a gentleman from Haiti who is in his eighties. He has hardly missed a class since he started over a year ago. His special interest has been to learn to write, and he spends most of the class copying words and sentences from the board. He takes the bus from Senior Court, rain or shine.

Dictionaries are always requested for class. If you would like to donate new or used dictionaries, please call the office at (203) 899-2485.



Volunteer teacher Francie Mansager works with her students during a conversational English class.

Furniture *for Medical Reasons*

Often times, clients make requests for specific furniture items because of extenuating medical conditions. In July, the CCA Furniture Program acquired recliners for an asthmatic client and another client on dialysis. That same month a sobbing mother begged for a new couch. Her son had been shot on the street, stumbled into her living room, and fell on her couch, leaving the couch stained with blood. Her son recovered and CCA replaced her blood-stained couch.

More Space *for Food Storage Room*



New pallets in the storage room provide additional space for storing pantry food.

This past summer, the CCA food storage room was given a mini renovation. Handyman Jose Garcia removed the free-standing shelves that were situated in the middle of the room and installed wooden pallets along the walls and down the center of the room. By using the pallets, the extra food that is stored in this room is now kept off the floor.

The center pallets also increased the amount of storage space so that more food can now be acquired as inventory. The goal is to keep this storage room filled to capacity so that the pantry can be easily replenished each day.

CCA Clients Enjoy

the Stepping Stones Museum for Children

This past summer the Stepping Stones Museum for Children offered Christian Community Action the use of two museum passes that CCA clients can use to get into the museum free of charge. Each pass allows as many as five children and three adults per visit. The regular entrance fee is \$8.00 per person, so these passes provide a great opportunity for CCA clients and their children to visit an educational and fun museum for children.

The free pass is part of the Museum's Open Arms accessibility program that provides financial support for children and school groups who otherwise would not be able to visit the museum. This initiative provides funds for free evenings, financial assistance for families and schools, reduced-fee or free group programs, community pass programs and more.

When CCA received the passes in June, Mio Galarza, CCA's Client Services Coordinator, laminated them and attached each to a neck lanyard so it would be difficult for clients to misplace them. Each client who borrows the pass leaves a \$5 deposit and is allowed to keep the pass for one week. When the pass is returned, the deposit is also returned to the client. This procedure has worked well and clients have been very responsible in returning the passes on time. Feedback from the clients has been very positive. They tell us that their children enjoyed their time at the museum.

The passes are good until June 2007 and will provide dozens of families the chance to visit Norwalk's Stepping Stones Museum for Children. Many thanks to the museum for providing this opportunity to our clients!

Help Comes from Unexpected Places

Christian Community Action often receives aids and grants from churches and corporations. But sometimes, help comes from individuals or small groups who band together to try to make a difference in their own way.

One such group is the Tuesday volunteer pantry team—specifically, Gerry Roth, Jeanne Galvin, Maureen Moore, Nancy Lau, and Susan Scher. They wanted to do something special for CCA's New Mattress program, so they organized a fund-raising luncheon, which they called "Once Upon a Mattress." They each invited their friends to an elegant buffet that was prepared by the ladies. The response was overwhelming. The event garnered more than \$5,000 for the New Mattress program.

Another act of kindness and selflessness was demonstrated by two teens from St. Jerome Church in Norwalk. Maggie Mellott and Mallory Silliere both share a common birth date and both girls became teenagers this year. Rather than have all their friends bring traditional gifts to their joint party, the girls requested that their guests bring food for the CCA pantry. After the festivities, three dozen bags of food containing hundreds of the most needed pantry items were delivered to CCA.



Madeline and Caroline Gray are shown with CCA Board Members Rose Jordan and Jim Ullrich, who acknowledged the generous donation from their art show. Missing is Kate Koster.

Even at the youngest age, children can contribute their energy and talents to a good cause. In Westport, three very young girls from Saugatuck Congregational Church decided to raise money for a charity. Together, Madeline and Caroline Gray and Kate Koster organized an art show, selling their own original artwork. They raised about \$11 and decided they wanted to help "hungry people." So, they sent the donation to CCA's food pantry.

The New Faces of CCA



Mio Galarza is the new Client Services Coordinator of CCA.

Miozotis Galarza is the new Client Services Coordinator for CCA. She came to CCA eleven months ago and started during the week of the Gift of Giving Program.

Born and raised in Puerto Rico, Mio attended the University of Puerto Rico and received a masters degree in Social-Community Psychology. Prior to coming to CCA, Mio was a part of the Interfaith AIDS Ministry in Danbury, a nonprofit organization that helps with AIDS education.

Mio works with our clients on a one-to-one basis to determine their food needs and also helps them with personal matters. She uses her counseling skills and maintains her list of local resources for client referrals. "I like the fact that I get to meet the people and that I make a difference in their lives. I receive them with a smile and treat them with respect as they still need to maintain their dignity. Sometimes it's just a matter of listening to them."

Mio lives in Danbury with her husband, Alex Quiles, an auditor with Altria, and their two children: 12-year-old daughter, Genesis and 10-year-old son, Cristian.



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December 2006

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Lorraine Larkin

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Christ & Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Westport

Gerry Roth

United Methodist Church, Westport

Ray Rumer

First United Methodist Church, Norwalk

Trevor Viechweg

St. Paul's on the Green Church, Norwalk

STAFF

Miozotis Galarza, Client Services Coordinator

Kathy Jacobs, Furniture Coordinator

Susan Hoe, Administrative Assistant

*The good you do
today may be quickly
forgotten, but the
impact of what you
do will never
disappear.*

—Anonymous

Yes... I want to help CCA and its programs!

- Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution.
\$30____ \$60____ \$120____ \$240____ Other_____
- I would like to volunteer to work in the CCA Food Pantry (M-F a.m.) to serve clients or move cartons and stock shelves.
- I can help with furniture donation pick ups and deliveries.
- I can organize a food drive at my church or school.
- I can organize a children's book drive or collect housewares for CCA at my church or school.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip_____

Phone _____

E-mail: _____

Please use the enclosed, self-addressed envelope or mail to:

Christian Community Action, Norwalk, Inc., 98 So. Main St., South Norwalk, CT 06854