

We are critically challenged to fund our programs, and your help is needed now...
more than ever!

We are so very thankful for our angels and heroes who support our work at FISH NWCT, and to the generous Foundations aiding us where we have needs and demands beyond operations.

Our lives at FISH/Friends in Service to Humanity of Northwestern Connecticut have been filled with excitement and positivity, embracing opportunities, and all at a hectic pace in recent months.



ANNUAL YEAR-END "REPORT CARD"

TO SHARE WITH "FRIENDS OF FISH" - DECEMBER 2023

332 South Main Street, Torrington, CT 06790 (860) 482-7300

www.fishnwct.org | facebook.com/fishnwct

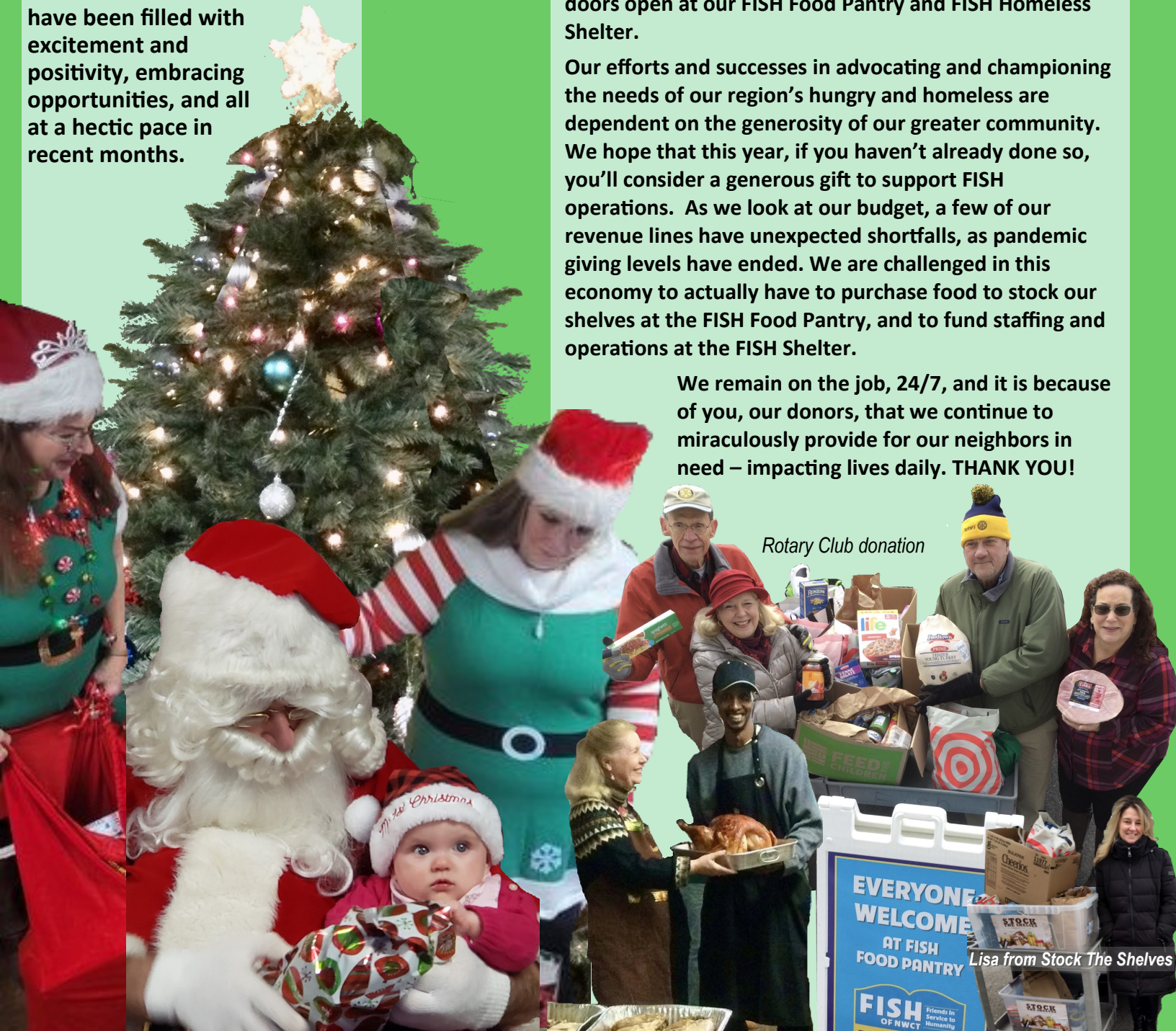
Providing the most basic of human needs...
food, shelter & hope

'Tis the season to be grateful, and we at FISH NWCT recognize that you, and your generosity, make it possible for us to focus on our mission, and keep our doors open at our FISH Food Pantry and FISH Homeless Shelter.

Our efforts and successes in advocating and championing the needs of our region's hungry and homeless are dependent on the generosity of our greater community. We hope that this year, if you haven't already done so, you'll consider a generous gift to support FISH operations. As we look at our budget, a few of our revenue lines have unexpected shortfalls, as pandemic giving levels have ended. We are challenged in this economy to actually have to purchase food to stock our shelves at the FISH Food Pantry, and to fund staffing and operations at the FISH Shelter.

We remain on the job, 24/7, and it is because of you, our donors, that we continue to miraculously provide for our neighbors in need – impacting lives daily. **THANK YOU!**

Rotary Club donation



Lisa from Stock The Shelves



**Produce RX Program
CHH & Community Health & Wellness
Hartford HealthCare
Charlotte Hungerford Hospital**



Helen Waldron & Deirdre



Dan, Deirdre, Guy Rovezzi & Lisa Conti



**Thanksgiving — Dan,
Donna Puzacke & Deirdre**



**Center Congregational Church Fall Festival
Dan, Deb Pokrinchak, Karen Roberts,
Deirdre & Tim VanDeusen**



**Coats!
Deirdre, Ken Yancey & Deb Pokrinchak**



BLN Golf Tournament



**Rally and coat sorting day: Father Carlos, Father Fadi,
David Carroll, Brian Ohler, Deirdre, John Capobianco & Jeff Geddes**



Allan Borghesi, Steve Caruso & Deirdre



Deirdre & Christina Emery of Prime Time House



Volunteers Diane and Bill Foster



Deirdre & Dale Jones from WZBG



Lori Kibbe & Dan



Deirdre & volunteer Doreen Cellerino



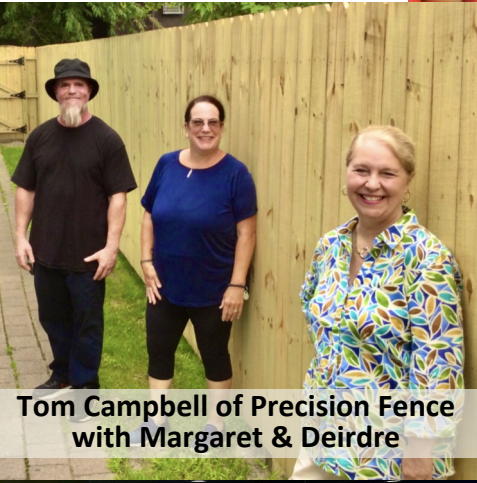
**Fred Rosa of CHH/HHC delivers a
donation of 88 warm jackets**



**Gerri Griswold & Deirdre
White Memorial's Snow Queen Event**



**Coat Pick-up Day
Adam & Todd Bailey from M&T Bank**



Tom Campbell of Precision Fence with Margaret & Deirdre



Kristen Skulte of CT Foodshare & Margaret



Deirdre with Richard Dabrowski of The Valley Collector Car Club



State Police Cadets "raising" turkeys



Michael Yuchnas & Phil Dzurnak of The Torrington Lions Club with Deirdre & Diane McMahon



Todd Bailey of M&T Bank with Margaret, Tom, and Daryl raising food at Stop & Shop



Heroes Larry & Patty Cassella have donated food weekly since March 2020



Katie Sullivan's annual visit from Litchfield Intermediate School with handmade cards for our FISH veterans, with Adam

FISH FACTS IN 2022-2023

We at FISH NWCT...

See daily the very human, social welfare challenges for families, individuals and veterans facing life crisis. We strive to restore the confidence and self-worth of those who are the most vulnerable and seek our help.

FISH Food Pantry

- *180,000 meals distributed (year ending 9/30)
- *684 families enrolled to receive food, representing 1,700 individuals

FISH Emergency Homeless Shelter

- *35 beds provided — 5 designated for veterans
- *Total Served: 56 adults, 12 veterans, 17 children
- Total = 85 residents
- *Our goal is to provide permanent supportive housing for our residents

One individual with a great idea and motivation can positively change and impact lives for the better.

Your help is needed year round, and we truly need your help more than ever... to house the homeless, and to purchase food to keep up with the demand needed at the FISH Food Pantry (which grew by 600 this summer).

Please know, we recognize the courage it takes to come forward and humbly ask for help. Every homeless person is an individual facing tough economic times; and every hungry family has their own unique story.

SAVE THE DATE!

Mark your calendars

6th "A Tasteful Event"

May 22, 2024 - Wednesday

A delicious gala featuring our area's restaurants, caterers, bakers & even food trucks!

Please plan to join us.

Watch for details!



Founded in 1972, FISH originally provided free transportation to patients, particularly cancer patients, to their appointments. Today, FISH NWCT has evolved into the area's largest emergency homeless shelter (35 beds) and free food pantry. The programs and social services at FISH/Friends in Service to Humanity of NWCT are critical to some for their survival and well-being.

Programs provided by FISH NWCT:

Shelter — for families, veterans and individuals (35 beds, 5 of which are designated for vets) which last year had

85 residents (56 adults, 12 veterans, 17 children – there were 9 families).

We serve infants - seniors. Our goal is to help find permanent supportive housing for our residents. The challenges have been great, yet we have been resilient.

Case Management – what makes FISH extra special is that we have a Case Manager dedicated to overseeing the resources, medical and mental health needs, employment opportunities, and housing possibilities to lead to one's independent, stable living future.

Food Pantry – FISH distributed enough food to provide nearly 180,000 meals to 684 area families/over 1,700 individuals in need last year. In the past 6 months, 600 new clients have registered. We are finding the need has increased as people's federal pandemic subsidies were cut or ended. The FISH Food Pantry depends on the generosity of the community for year-round contributions. Currently, our distribution operation remains located outside on our loading dock. Every day we serve more than double our usual numbers. Food is flying off our shelves.

GED high school accreditation classes are offered to shelter residents and neighbors in the community by EdAdvance.

Northwestern CT Community College/NCCC offers the opportunity for vocational training certifications and job placements.

FISH is a satellite office for the area's energy assistance program.

FISH provides both medical and mental health services, on site, to shelter residents.

FQHC – Community Health and Wellness is our weekly provider on-site.

FISH makes possible in-house group and family counseling. Job counseling, resume writing and coaching is made available.

Homeless Outreach – in coordination with other area providers, is routine; as well as our annual awareness event for the community "Rally Day to End Hunger and Homelessness." The 9th annual rally held at St. Peter's Hall, welcomed over **600 people** – focused on the **coat giveaway (over 1400+ donated)**, and a bag lunch and grocery gift card were distributed, as well as info on area providers.

The 10th Rally will take place November 23, 2024.

"Life for Vets" program – multiple providers work with our Case Manager to assist our shelter's veterans. We are pleased to be selected by the VA to serve as a Vets Shelter.

Life Skills workshops – FISH NWCT offered in collaboration with area providers.

All we provide is through the generosity of you donors, and collaborations with numerous organizations, churches and institutions, such as Stock the Shelves, Food Rescue, and the Rotary Club, and local businesses.

We are unique in the community that we serve – helping the hungry and the homeless.



*Heartfelt thanks for being a friend, advocate, and supporter of FISH NWCT...
Deirdre & Steve*



FISH Board of Directors

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Vice President

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Food Pantry Manager

Margaret Franzi

Executive Assistant

Dan Santorso

Residential Monitors

Russ Brown

Daryl Fleming

Jeremy Kincaid

Fred Petteway

Please understand we could not manage without the cheerful support of our volunteers, donors and food contributors.

We are the champions for the hungry and the homeless of Northwestern Connecticut, yet know that it takes the generous support of you, our community and neighbors, who care to join us in partnering in our humanitarian efforts.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!





The Producer's Cut Premiere of
"Divine Renovation, Destination: New England"
 will be at our Warner Theatre
 on June 20th, 2024.

FISH NWCT is the subject of an entire episode!

Check out the Warner's website at
Warnertheatre.org/events for tickets to attend this
 very special one-time-only, sneak peek event.
 See Torrington, your neighbors and businesses shine
 on the big screen!

Surprises to be announced.
 Erik Estrada will be appearing live on stage, and lots
 of festive fun is planned!



Republican American
 FRIDAY, MAY 12, 2023 ALL EDITIONS \$3.50
 REP-AM.COM

'DIVINE RENOVATION' IN TORRINGTON



Docuseries with
 Erik Estrada
 films upcoming
 episode at
 FISH shelter

BY SARAH BREWSTER
 REPUBLICAN AMERICAN

TORRINGTON — Eighth-grader Josette Ruiz had no clue who Erik Estrada was before filming a scene with the former "CHiPs" star for season 2 of the faith-based docuseries, "Divine Renovation."

After a day on set Thursday, she said she was going to look him up.

Ruiz, who attends St. John



THE REGISTER CITIZEN
 REGISTERCITIZEN.COM • FRIDAY, MAY 19, 2023 • VOL. 131, NO. 20 • \$3.00



Television show "Divine Renovation," its host, actor Erik Estrada, and a film crew spent the week at FISH of Northwest CT shelter and food pantry, providing repairs to the building and a new flagpole on the lawn. The week culminated with an outdoor picnic May 11, with local officials and guests. Estrada, left, is with Lori Kibbe-Lindenmuth, center, and FISH Executive Director Deirdre DiCara.

Torrington shelter gets celebrity boost

Erik Estrada, 'Divine Renovation' films work at FISH, cop fundraiser

By Emily M. Olson
 STAFF WRITER

volunteers were busy on the shelter lawn, setting up a picnic lunch for their guests.
 Estrada was released with the week's filming, and his





From "Mission Impact" Kara, Robin, Dana & Katelynn with Deirdre



FISH friends Cara Blazier & Dr. Frank Vanoni with Deirdre



Deb & Bill Casey making deliveries for Deborah's Dance Workshop and Center Church



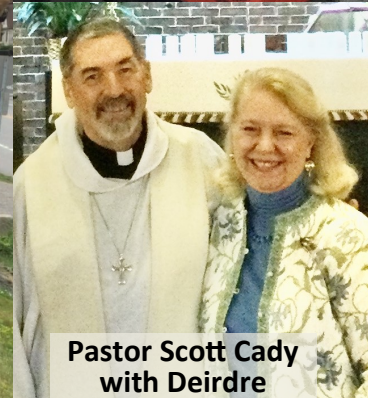
Volunteer Lisa Northup with our great group from Our Lady of Hope Church



Deirdre & Monsignor Robert Tucker, St. Maron's Church



We at FISH are so grateful to all of our volunteers and supporters!!



Pastor Scott Cady with Deirdre



Robin King — Our Christmas Elf



Kristen Skulte of CT Foodshare with Robin & Margaret



Deb Pokrinchak, Deirdre & Rev. Averill Blackburn, of Center Congregational Church



FISH
Friends In Service to Humanity
OF NORTHWESTERN CONNECTICUT
FOUNDED 1972

**In Service To
Humanity Of
Northwestern
Connecticut**

Volunteer Crew Thanksgiving 2023



Adam & Franco Barbacci, Food Rescue volunteer



St. Paul's Lutheran pick-up with Deirdre, Rachel Hannon Harrel, Pastor Scott Cady & Adam

COAT GIVEAWAY FOR THOSE IN NEED
SPONSORED BY FISH - SAT. NOV 18 10 - 2
ST PETERS HALL 107 EAST MAIN ST

Thank you!
More than 1400 coats were donated and
600 neighbors-in-need lined up for coats!



Deirdre & Michelle Anderson



Jeannine Frink & Deirdre



Blanket donation from The Frederick Gunn School

9th Rally to End Hunger & Homelessness Coat sorting day volunteers



Father Emmanuel, Deirdre & Father Fadi



Our fabulous "bag lunch" sandwich makers



Michael & Stephanie Fowler



Team from St. Maron's



Super volunteers!

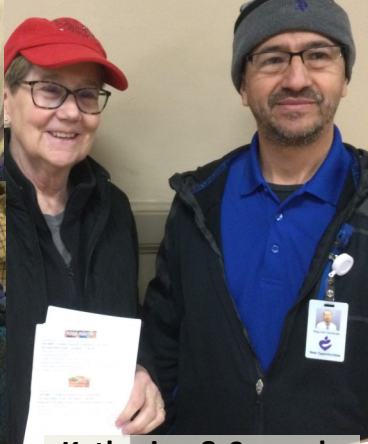
Thank you New Opportunities!



Pat Kelly, NCCC Criminal Justice students and advisor Michael Emanuel with handmade hats, mittens, scarves, & sweaters.



Loads of donations arrive at the Open Door!



Katherine & Segundo



Girl Scouts forever- Mary, Deirdre & Katherine

2023 — A Year in Review



Helping Hands 2023



In Litchfield County it truly does take a village...and in each village there are organizations that do a wonderful job helping people and animals in our community. These nonprofits need our help in a range of ways. Of course, there are numerous food pantries, land trusts, schools, arts organizations, pet shelters, and libraries that also need a helping hand. Reach out to your favorites to see how you can help.

FISH/Friends in Service to Humanity of NWCT

'Tis the season, yet FISH serves our region's homeless at the FISH Shelter (35 beds—families, individuals, and vets) and meets the need for...



RepublicanAmerican

DiCara, leader of FISH, says demand for food, shelter growing sharply

BY KURT MOFFETT REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN November 23, 2023



Deirdre DiCara is executive director of the FISH shelter and food pantry in Torrington.

Jim Shannon Republican-American

FRONT COVER!!

Cold weather shelter needs are growing



Winsted officials, state leaders meet at health center

Havens for the homeless pushed

RepublicanAmerican

Giveaway of 1,400 coats slated in Torrington

BY SLOAN BREWSTER REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN November 17, 2023

Volunteers sort winter items for Saturday event

BY SLOAN BREWSTER REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

TORRINGTON — Volunteers spent most of Wednesday sorting about 1,400 donated coats for a giveaway Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at St. Peter's Church hall, 107 East Main St.



field, who is studying interior design in college, has been helping out at the shelter for years. On Wednesday, she carefully folded and arranged a table of hand-knit and crocheted hats, scarves and mittens that will be paired with coats during the giveaway. "We have wonderful angels," DiCara said, referring to the Knitting and Crocheting Outreach Ministry at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Harwinton.



RALLY TO END HOMELESSNESS & HUNGER IN NWCT

THE REGISTER CITIZEN

'We are imploring the public'

FRONT COVER!!

THE REGISTER CITIZEN FRONT PAGE!

At Torrington roundtable, agencies call for action on homelessness

Emily M. Olson, Staff Writer Nov. 17, 2023

Torrington needs winter overnight shelter for homeless

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2023 Homelessness - Homeless Shelters By Emily M. Olson STAFF WRITER



TORRINGTON — Nancy Cannavo, director of the Gathering Place, a drop-in center for people experiencing homelessness, was hopeful last week that the city ha...

RepublicanAmerican

'Avalanche into homelessness': Torrington forum addresses crisis as winter months loom

BY SLOAN BREWSTER REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN November 12, 2023

