



ANNUAL YEAR-END "REPORT CARD"

TO SHARE WITH "FRIENDS OF FISH" - DECEMBER 2018

FISH/Friends in Service to Humanity of Northwestern Connecticut
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/Friends in Service to Humanity of NWCT recognize that you, and your generosity, make it possible for us to focus on our mission of providing the most basic of human needs – food, shelter and hope at the FISH Food Pantry and FISH Homeless Shelter.

Your donations directly impact those neighbors in our communities in economic crisis and desperate need. Please know how much we appreciate your financial contributions, food item donations and support of our special events.

Amazing things are happening daily under our roof at FISH NWCT, which we now share with you in our 2017 – 2018 Year-End "Report Card."

With the generous support of our greater community, staff and volunteers at the FISH NWCT Food Pantry and Homeless Shelter – we do our best to provide some cheer, joy and hope to families in need during the holiday season.

In the past 5 years...



...At our "Rally Day to End Hunger and Homelessness in NWCT" – over 2,300 coats have been collected and distributed, with over 700 participating.

...Holiday meals at Thanksgiving and Christmas have been distributed to over 1,200 families; and toys to over 1,500 children.

...At our FISH Homeless Shelter, with current and former residents invited, we have celebrated two holidays, Thanksgiving and our "Cocoa and Cookies" Party with Santa – with at least 450 residents.



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.

Year-End Highlights

Amazing things have been happening under our roof at FISH NWCT. Recognizing five years of positive accomplishments led by Deirdre Houlihan DiCara, Executive Director and Steven Caruso, President -

- CONNECTICUT Magazine, January 2018, featured FISH NWCT and our work with the hungry and the homeless.

2015 "Quality of Life" Award recipient from the NWCT Chamber of Commerce - 2016 recipient of the Diane Randall Leadership Award for our work to house chronically homeless Veterans

- Deirdre has been recognized as the Register Citizen Newspaper's 2015 "Person of the Year"; as one of the County's "most influential people" by Litchfield Magazine; and with an Alumni Award from The Gilbert School.

- FISH NWCT provides a low barrier Shelter, with the goal of moving homeless residents into permanent supportive housing.
- Selected by the VA to be a low demand homeless shelter for Vets.

Focused on funding operations, we have received nearly fifty grants to improve our services. We are thankful for each and every one, yet in particular should recognize the Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation, CHEFA and the United Way of NWCT. Awards have ranged from a generator, to both a walk-in freezer and cooler, to flooring and building repairs and improvements, at both the Shelter and Food Pantry.

- We've organized four annual "Rally Days to End Hunger and Homelessness in NWCT." Held in November - featuring an open house tour of FISH NWCT, a luncheon and coat giveaway (over 2,300), and a cardboard box sleep out.
- Deirdre presents at state/national conferences and webinars.

- Fund raisers held annually to support the FISH Food Pantry and Homeless Shelter - "A Tasteful Event" (ATE), and "Deck the Halls", as well as some sponsored by others, such as the Center Congregational Church, Lakeridge community, and numerous food drives - for which we are very grateful.

We at FISH NWCT see daily the very human, social welfare challenges of 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 FACTS IN 2017-2018

FISH Food Pantry

- Total meals distributed (year ending 9/30) = 116,569
- No. of families enrolled to receive assistance = 516 - representing 1,779 individuals

FISH Emergency Homeless Shelter (35 beds)

- Total # of bed nights = 11,714
- Permanent housing was found for 41 shelter residents
- Served: 85 adults, 11 veterans, 6 children = 102 Total Residents

MAY DAY! NEW SPRING DATE...

A Gala Celebrating Food, Wine and the Spirit of Giving to a Great Cause!

4TH ANNUAL A Tasteful Event

Wednesday, May 1, 2019
TORRINGTON ELKS CLUB
TORRINGTON, CT

A spectacular food and wine tasting, with a silent auction and entertainment.

5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

TICKETS \$30/person

www.fishnwct.org
or at FISH NWCT



DECK THE HALLS MARTINI TASTING PARTY

**A Special Thank You
to our 2018
Martini Sponsors**



Nancy and Tim Strini

Cara and Ken Blazier

Susan and Tim Cook
Cook Funeral Home

Community Health & Wellness
of Greater Torrington, Inc.

Carmody Torrance Sandak
& Hennessey LLP

OTHER WAYS TO HELP FISH

Shop at AmazonSmile and have 0.5% of your purchase price donated to your chosen charity.

Consider making a legacy gift of support.

Create a FaceBook "Birthday Donation" Link

Find your own personal way to assist the hungry and the homeless.

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.

Outline of current programs provided by FISH NWCT,
where we always seem to be at full speed, aided by the generosity of donors:

Shelter for families, veterans and individuals (35 beds, 5 of which are designated for vets) which last year had 11,714 bed nights used, and of 102 residents, we helped find permanent supportive housing for 41 people/33 households. This past year 2018, FISH had 6 children seeking shelter, which included a baby born into the shelter. Our school age children are enrolled in local schools, and in the summer attend camp programs. We have high behavioral expectations in our shelter to keep our residents safe and secure as they await housing. Our diversity is age - infants to seniors. We provide meals to the shelter residents.

Case Management - what makes FISH extra special is that we have two Case Managers 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 116,569 meals to 516 area families/or 1,779 individuals in need last year. The FISH Food Pantry depends on the generosity of the community for contributions, as we are purchasing food 11 months of the year to fill our shelves. Donors please know that frozen and refrigerated foods are now accepted - thanks to our walk-in freezer and walk-in cooler!

GED classes are offered on site to shelter residents and neighbors in the community by EdAdvance, with our new semester beginning in January.

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 a weekly provider.

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" in November.

"Life for Vets" program - multiple providers work with our Case Managers 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 offers in collaboration with area providers - cooking, nutrition, budgeting, and managing well on one's SNAP food dollars.

Our hope is to have shelter residents participating in the communities that they will be living in once they receive their housing.

Our residents are extremely appreciative and hugs are a reality. All we provide is through the generosity of you donors, and collaborations with numerous organizations and institutions. We are unique in the community that we serve - helping the hungry and the homeless.

Please give Deirdre a call to schedule your "grand tour."



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



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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.

It takes your generous support as community neighbors, those of you who care to join us, to partner in our humanitarian efforts.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

