



MID-YEAR "REPORT CARD"

TO SHARE WITH "FRIENDS OF FISH" - JULY 2017

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

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**. We are the champions for the hungry and the homeless of NWCT.

Amazing things happen daily under our roof at FISH NWCT, which we share in this mid-year "report card" 2016 – 2017.

FISH NWCT is dependent on the generosity of donors, and with recent governmental budget cuts of \$25,000, we are critically challenged to fund our programs and shelter.

Your help is needed more than ever...

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,

AS A RECENTLY ACCEPTED RESIDENT TO THE FISH SHELTER, I WOULD LIKE TO SAY WHAT A POSITIVE WAY MY LIFE IS IMPROVING. AS A U.S. NAVY VETERAN, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT I FEEL RESPECT FOR MY SERVICE.

THE STAFF HERE OPENED UP MY EYES AND INTRODUCED ME TO PROGRAMS AND PEOPLE WHO MAKE MYSELF PROUD OF MY TIME IN THE MILITARY. BEING HOMELESS FOR THE PAST SEVEN (7) YEARS, I CAME TO BELIEVE THAT MOST PEOPLE DIDN'T CARE OR COMPREHEND. NOT MANY PEOPLE GAVE A THOUGHT TO WHAT IT'S LIKE TO SERVE PROUDLY AND NOT GETTING ACKNOWLEDGMENT TO OUR SACRIFICE IT TAKES TO DO WHAT WE'VE DONE.

THE RESPECT THAT THE STAFF AT FISH GIVES TO THE VETS IS LIKE NOTHING I'VE EVER FELT BEFORE. MAKES ME PROUD, MAKES ME WANT TO IMPROVE MY LIFE, AND THEY'RE THERE TO HELP ME WHERE NO ONE HAS SINCE MY DISCHARGE.

THIS PROGRAM AT FISH IS GREAT; I'VE GOT GOALS THAT FISH HAS GOTTEN ME TO FOCUS ON. I FEEL UPBEAT, POSITIVE AND HEALTHY, NOT LIKE I WAS BEFORE COMING HERE. THEY'RE AWESOME AND I KNOW MY FUTURE WILL BE GREAT BECAUSE OF FISH.

SINCERELY,
MICHAEL Z.



Honoring FISH Volunteer Jack McGrane, WWII and Korea, with FISH Veterans



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.



Mid-Year Highlights

Amazing things are happening under our roof at FISH NWCT!

- **Save the Date - 10/22/2017 - Michael E. Walsh Memorial 5K Run at Riverside Park, Hartford. Register at www.michaelwalsh5k.org**
- **The "Rally to End Hunger and Homelessness in NWCT," co-sponsored by the United Way of NWCT - featuring the Rally Kick-off, tours of The Gathering Place and FISH NWCT, a free pasta luncheon and coat giveaway, and a cardboard box sleep out. 11/18/17, Save the Date!**
- **Praised inspections by the Department of Housing and VA**
- **2017 recipient of a certificate of appreciation from the Connecticut Disabled American Veterans to Vera Halilaj, Veterans Case Manager**
- **Presenters at state and national conferences - Deirdre DiCara and Earl Gibson**
- **FISH did our part to end chronic homelessness in Connecticut**



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 2015-2016

FISH Food Pantry

- Total meals distributed (year ending 9/30) = 115,109
- No. of families enrolled to receive assistance = 541 - representing 2,027 individuals

FISH Emergency Homeless Shelter (35 beds)

- Total # of bed nights = 11,695
- No. of adult bed nights = 7,891
- No. of children = 2,167
- No. of veterans = 1,637
- This represented 112 unduplicated individuals - 80 adults, 14 children, and 18 veterans (*found housing for 74*)

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

3RD ANNUAL *A Tasteful* Event

Wednesday, October 4, 2017
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



Join our festive and very merry...

DECK THE HALLS MARTINI TASTING PARTY

Wednesday, December 6th, 5:30-7:30pm

Ritz Crystal Room at Remember When
111 Main Street, Torrington, CT

ADVANCED
TICKETS \$25
AT THE DOOR
TICKETS \$30

In-Person

Remember When - 111 Main St.
FISHNWCT - 332 South Main St.

Online

<http://www.fishnwct.org>



HOSTED BY KAREN & RIT O'DONNELL TO BENEFIT
FISH / FRIENDS IN SERVICE TO HUMANITY OF NWCT'S
FOOD PANTRY AND HOMELESS SHELTER



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 throttle, 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 11,695 bed nights used, and have found permanent housing for over 70 people. As this goes to press, FISH has 7 children seeking shelter, with school age children enrolled in local schools. We can hear the sounds of kids jumping in a wading pool and out riding their bikes. And do know that we have high behavioral expectations in our shelter to keep our residents safe and secure as they await housing. Our diversity is age - babies to seniors. We provide breakfast and dinner 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 115,109 meals to 541 area families/2027 individuals in 2016. The FISH Food Pantry depends on the generosity of the community for contributions. *Donors please know that frozen and refrigerated foods are now accepted - thanks to our walk-in freezer and new walk-in cooler!*

GED training programs on site are offered to shelter residents and neighbors in the community by EdAdvance.

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 to End Hunger and Homelessness." *Save the Date, the 3rd annual rally is this November 18th.*

"Life for Vets" program - multiple providers work with our Case Managers to assist our shelter's veterans.

Life Skills workshops - FISH NWCT offers in collaboration with area providers - cooking, nutrition, couponing, budgeting, and managing well on one's 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."



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



FISH Board of Directors:

Steven Caruso, President
Alan Eckstrand, Vice President
Donna Puzacke, Secretary
Katharine Briggs, Treasurer
Deirdre DiCara, Executive Director
Mark Berns
Robert Milano
Lisa Soliani
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FISH Staff:

Deirdre Houlihan DiCara, Executive Director
Earl Gibson, Case Manager for Families & Individuals
Vera Halilaj, Case Manager for Veterans & Individuals
Robin King, Shelter and Office Manager
Margaret Franzi, Food Pantry Manager
Tracy Estremera, Residential Monitor
Daryl Fleming, Residential Monitor
Jeremy Nelson, Residential Monitor
Fred Petteway, Residential Monitor

*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, and due to governmental
budget cuts...*

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

