

**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.

**At the best of times - programs provided by FISH NWCT - Shelter** for families, veterans and individuals (35 beds, 5 of which are designated for vets) which last year had 7703 bed nights used, and of the 103 residents (70 adults, 17 veterans, 16 children), we helped find permanent supportive housing for 53 households.

As this goes to press, FISH remains decompressed for the tenth month - only serving half of our capacity due to the COVID - 19 virus. We moved shelter residents to a hotel if they were aged 60+, or suffering from high risk health issues - out of our communal setting for the first three months. Nearly all were placed into supportive housing, or they returned to Shelter in May. The challenges have been great, yet thankfully the Coronavirus has yet to enter the FISH House.

**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 91,197 meals to 643 area families/1509 individuals in need last year. 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 walk-in cooler! Know that our doors have been welcoming to newcomers in need due to the Coronavirus. Our distribution operation is located outside on our loading dock.

**GED** high school accreditation classes on site (temporarily remotely) 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 has been weekly provider. (Currently telehealth)

**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 6th annual rally on November 20th and 21st - focused only on the coat giveaway (over 600+ donated), and we partnered with Joseph's House.

**"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. Now "on hold."

**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.**



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



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Robin King

### Food Pantry Manager

Margaret Franz

### Residential Monitors

Eimie Estevez

Daryl Fleming

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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, yet know that it takes the generous support of you, our community neighbors, who care to join us in partnering in our humanitarian efforts.

## WE NEED YOUR HELP!



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



# ANNUAL YEAR-END "REPORT CARD"

TO SHARE WITH "FRIENDS OF FISH" - DECEMBER 2020

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www.fishnwct.org | facebook.com/fishnwct

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

*As 2020 dawned, the theme of the Tournament of Roses parade was "The Power of Hope."*

Many of the floats focused on the need to address homelessness and hunger. And possibly not since the election of Pope Francis in 2013, has the world message of helping our most vulnerable been so significant to an international audience.

And yet now in retrospect, "The Power of Hope" theme seems prophetic in this year of 2020 and the Coronavirus.

And we at FISH/Friends in Service to Humanity of Northwestern Connecticut have gone through the stages of fear, stress and anxiety - to what has evolved to become cautious routine safety protocols and hopeful resilience as we serve the hungry and the homeless of our Northwest Connecticut corner.

We have been on the job 24/7, and it is because of you, our community donors - angels and heroes - we have miraculously managed to provide to our neighbors in need.

Thank you.

*Litchfield Montessori Students*

