

**FISH continues to provide the most basic of human needs...food, shelter & hope**

**We need your help!!**

**FISH needs**

**Christmas in July!!!**

Until July 28th, FISH NWCT is joining nonprofits throughout the Northwest Corner in raising funds for operational needs.

This is an opportunity to make donations — large or small — to help us continue providing aid to the homeless, and food to those in need. Northwest Corner Gives is an online giving platform created generously by the Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation to help organizations build awareness and raise matching funds.

FISH is raising funds for our \$40,000 goal. The Foundation will match all gifts made on a dollar-for-dollar basis up to \$20,000 for FISH!

Know that amazing things continue to happen under our roof at FISH NWCT. We serve on the frontline, 24/7, at the FISH NWCT Homeless Shelter and Food Pantry. Fundraising has been a challenge. Most foundation gifts we receive are restricted. We need operational funding.

The Pantry depends on community donations and the Shelter receives only 2/3 of the funds needed to operate from the DOH/Department of Housing.

We had depended on \$45,000-\$55,000 from the United Way's campaign for operations—yet since the COVID pandemic they have not run their campaign. This leaves a gap in our annual fundraising budget.

Special thanks already to the Lakeridge community for your huge effort to help us make our goal. There have been so many of you—shining in your goodness and generosity. We are thankful year round for your support when you step up to give us a helping hand in our service work with our homeless and food insecure neighbors in need.



## **ANNUAL MID-YEAR “REPORT CARD”**

**TO SHARE WITH “FRIENDS OF FISH” - July 2024**

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

[www.fishnwct.org](http://www.fishnwct.org) | [facebook.com/fishnwct](https://facebook.com/fishnwct)



**We truly need your help to celebrate Christmas in July!**

**Please join during this very generous 2024 “Northwest Corner Gives” Matching Campaign with a gift to FISH by July 28th.**

**Every dollar donated will be matched, \$ for \$, when you donate at the below link:**

**[www.northwestcornergives.org/donations/fish](http://www.northwestcornergives.org/donations/fish)**

**Please type “FISH” in the comments**

**for your donations to be properly directed to us.**

*Thank you for giving,  
and Thank You  
Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation!*



**FISH NWCT has been thrilled to play a role in the filming of “Divine Renovation, Season 2 — New England,”**

**that premiered at the Warner Theatre on June 20<sup>th</sup>.**

**To watch our episode and the rest of the season, tune into Amazon Prime and other streaming channels — starting September 19th.**

**We believe you’ll be very moved by each local story-line!**



**Our 2024 “A Tasteful Event” Award Winners!**



**“Best Sweet Treat” — Red Horse Bakery**



**“Best Presentation” — Noujaim’s Bistro**



**“Best Savory” AND “People’s Choice Award”  
Cleveland’s Country Store**

# A Tasteful Event 2024 Sponsors

**Title**

Torrington Savings Bank

**Platinum Title**

Northwest Community Bank

**Platinum**

Dunkin – Torrington/Harwinton  
Thomaston Savings Bank

**Gold**

Aflac of Litchfield County  
Gleeson-Ryan Funeral Home  
The Law Offices of Conti, Levy,  
Salerno & Antonio, LLC

O&G Industries, Inc  
Thomaston Comfort Control  
Wall, Wall & Frauenhofer, LLP  
Ken and Rose Yancey

**Silver**

Adams Samartino, CPAs  
Alan Eckstrand CLU, ChFC, CRPC  
All-Star Storage, Torrington  
Barry Cone’s Heating,  
Air-Conditioning & Plumbing  
Borla & Associates Real Estate  
C&G HVAC Heating & Air  
Conditioning  
Hartford HealthCare  
Doyle’s Medical Supply  
Eastside Electric  
Edward Jones Investments  
Fire Equipment Headquarters

Gerald H. Michalowski, CPA  
Mel Brickman, HealthMarkets  
IAAB, Brenda DiCarlo  
Keystone Place  
at Newbury Brook  
Maletta Pfeiffer  
Physical Therapy  
Northwest CT Realty  
Root, Borajkiewicz, Lucarelli  
Wealth Advisors  
Soundworks and Security  
Torrington Downtown Partners  
UCE Fine Builders, Inc.  
William P. Ryan DMD LLC

**Bronze**

Dick Cooper TV,  
Appliances & Bedding  
G. John Gargiulo, D.D.S.  
Howd, Lavieri & Finch, LLP  
My Office LLC  
The Nicholas Law Firm, LLC

Northwest Corner Dental  
Partners  
Northwest Hills Credit Union  
Target Enterprises  
The Washington Agency  
Real Estate

**Cuisine & Libations**

Catered by Gia  
Ciesco Catering  
Cleveland’s Country Store  
Kaylan’s Kitchen

Love It Vegan  
Noujaim’s Bistro  
The Nutmeg Fudge Company  
The Red Horse Bakery

Vera Roma Grille & Bar

**Silent Auction Donors**

Alfredo’s Italian Eatery & Café  
Bella Luna Gifts CT  
The Boat House  
Brian Mattiello  
The Community Table  
Lisa Conti  
Dairy Queen  
Deirdre Houlihan DiCara  
Energy Health & Fitness  
KidsPlay Museum

Litchfield Distillery  
Love It Vegan  
The Nutmeg Fudge Company  
Margo O’Connor  
Saybrook Fish House  
Ski Sundown  
Stateline Wine & Spirits  
The Store Bar & Grill  
Nancy Strini  
Helen H. Waldron

The Winchester Restaurant

## 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 Residents Served: 85 residents  
56 adults, 12 veterans, 17 children
- \*Our goal is to provide permanent supportive housing for our residents

**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 9<sup>th</sup> 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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.**



**FISH Board of Directors**

<b>President</b>	Steven Caruso
<b>Vice President</b>	Alan Eckstrand
<b>Secretary</b>	Donna Puzacke
<b>Treasurer</b>	Katharine Briggs
<b>Executive Director</b>	Deirdre DiCara
<b>Members at Large:</b>	Melissa Antonio
Mark Berns	Deb Pokrinchak
David Carroll	Christopher Ryan
Lisa Conti	Helen Waldron
Maura Malo	Ken Yancey

**FISH Staff**

<b>Executive Director</b>	Deirdre Houlihan DiCara
<b>Case Manager</b>	Adam Pitts
<b>Shelter and Office Manager</b>	Robin King
<b>Food Pantry Manager</b>	Margaret Franzi
<b>Executive Assistant</b>	Dan Santorso
<b>Residential Monitors</b>	Russ Brown
Daryl Fleming	Jeremy Kincaid
Keith Guinyard	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 partner with our humanitarian efforts. WE NEED YOUR HELP!**



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



# WARNER

CASANOVA REMODELING PRESENTS  
THE PREMIERE OF DIVINE RENOVATION

The Summer Street Fair before the Premiere!





# DIVINE RENOVATION

DESTINATION: NEW ENGLAND





May 22, 2024

6th Annual  
*Tasteful*  
Event

A great party!  
Thank you for your support!





# FISH'S 6TH ANNUAL TASTEFUL EVENT FOOD & WINE CELEBRATION OF GIVING WED, MAY 22 @ 5PM AT ELKS LODGE



# Divine Renovation keeps on giving...

We at FISH made new friends, thanks to the Divine Renovation Premiere on June 20<sup>th</sup>. Show sponsor John Casanova of Casanova Remodeling and Cleveland's Country Store surprised us with an SUV-full of food for the FISH Food Pantry and FISH shelter! Also — Lu and Christina of ECAD (Educated Canines Assisting with Disabilities) brought us puppies to play with. Joyful!



## Spend one hour to watch this episode on CPTV: "Fighting for Home: How Housing Policy keeps Connecticut Segregated."



The film follows several people from across the state who each have their own powerful stories about a housing system that has failed them. A segment is filmed at the FISH NWCT Shelter — with a mom and her 5-year old daughter, and with Executive Director Deirdre DiCara.



The video can be watched at the below site:

[www.ctpublic.org/watch/local-programming/fighting-for-home](http://www.ctpublic.org/watch/local-programming/fighting-for-home)



The episode had many airings on CPTV and CPTV Spirit including the times listed below:  
6:00 PM July 7, 2024  
12:30 AM July 10, 2024  
3:30 PM July 10, 2024  
9:00 PM July 11, 2024



Northwest Corner Gives 2024 will run from July 8th to July 28th, offering a vital opportunity for community members to support a diverse array of local causes.

NCCF matches donations to nonprofit campaigns dollar-for-dollar up to campaign goals through NCCF's giving platform:

[www.northwestcornergives.org/donations/fish](http://www.northwestcornergives.org/donations/fish)

Visit [www.northwestcornergives.org](http://www.northwestcornergives.org) during this time to view nonprofit campaigns and double the impact of your donations! Please donate directly to this campaign to support FISH programs for the homeless and the food insecure.

*Thank you for your support — always!*

Please note — If you have a retirement investment fund, you may send a check directly to NCCF at PO Box 1144, Torrington, CT 06790. \*Make sure your donation includes the memo "for FISH" and arrives by July 28<sup>th</sup>.

## To the staff of FISH:

As I am about to return to the journey we call life, I would like to take this opportunity to tell you all what FISH Shelter has meant to me. FISH Shelter is so much more than just a shelter.

It is an oasis in a desert of misinformation, slammed doors, and rejection called homelessness. It sheltered me from stress, the elements, starvation and the impossibilities of meeting just your basic needs.

Entering the door at FISH Shelter solves all of these stresses so that you can focus on your main goal, to return to a place called your own home.

I must say I found so much more than all of that here. I found a staff whose entire focus and dedication to end homelessness is truly amazing. You all truly eased the burdens I was carrying and helped me strive to be the person that had been missing inside me for so long. I can never thank you enough for that.

Much to my surprise, I also met a group of people I called friends at first, but now call family. They picked me up, dusted me off, listened to me, encouraged me and pushed me at a time in my life when I needed that the most.

These residents are amazing people, a support system I hope to have in my life forever.

Who knew you had to be homeless to be truly rich.

Robin, thank you for welcoming me with open arms and the wisdom to know I needed to do this alone. Deirdre, your passion for the shelter and pantry inspires me. If you ever need me for anything I am a phone call away. I will find a way to be involved in ending homelessness. Adam, thanks for being tough but not too tough on priorities and those trips to the principal's office. Daryl, thanks for keeping me fed, sparring with me and keeping me on track whenever I drifted. Fred, thanks for being a stand-up guy and watching basketball games with me. Sharing is definitely caring. Russ, I owe you so many thanks I don't know where to start.

You put up with me when I was at my lowest. You counseled and encouraged me but most of all you saw something in me that had long gone and you helped bring it back. Frame this because I will never say this again to you, "You are truly a gift to humanity and FISH. Your sense of humor and true caring promotes a calm environment for all. You are a blessing." Jeremy, thanks for being the voice of reason. You also possess a calm that makes people feel safe.

If I had to be homeless, I consider myself one of the lucky ones to have landed here. I will never forget any of you and I will be successful thanks to all of you.

Sincerely, *Tina K.*

## At FISH, we honor our veterans and continually support compassionate solutions

