

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



ANNUAL MID-YEAR "REPORT CARD"

TO SHARE WITH "FRIENDS OF FISH"- SEPTEMBER 2023

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

www.fishnwct.org

facebook.com/fishnwct

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

*** We are so very grateful to our angels and heroes who support our work at FISH, and to the generous foundations aiding us where we have needs beyond operations.**

Join us on December 1st
for the

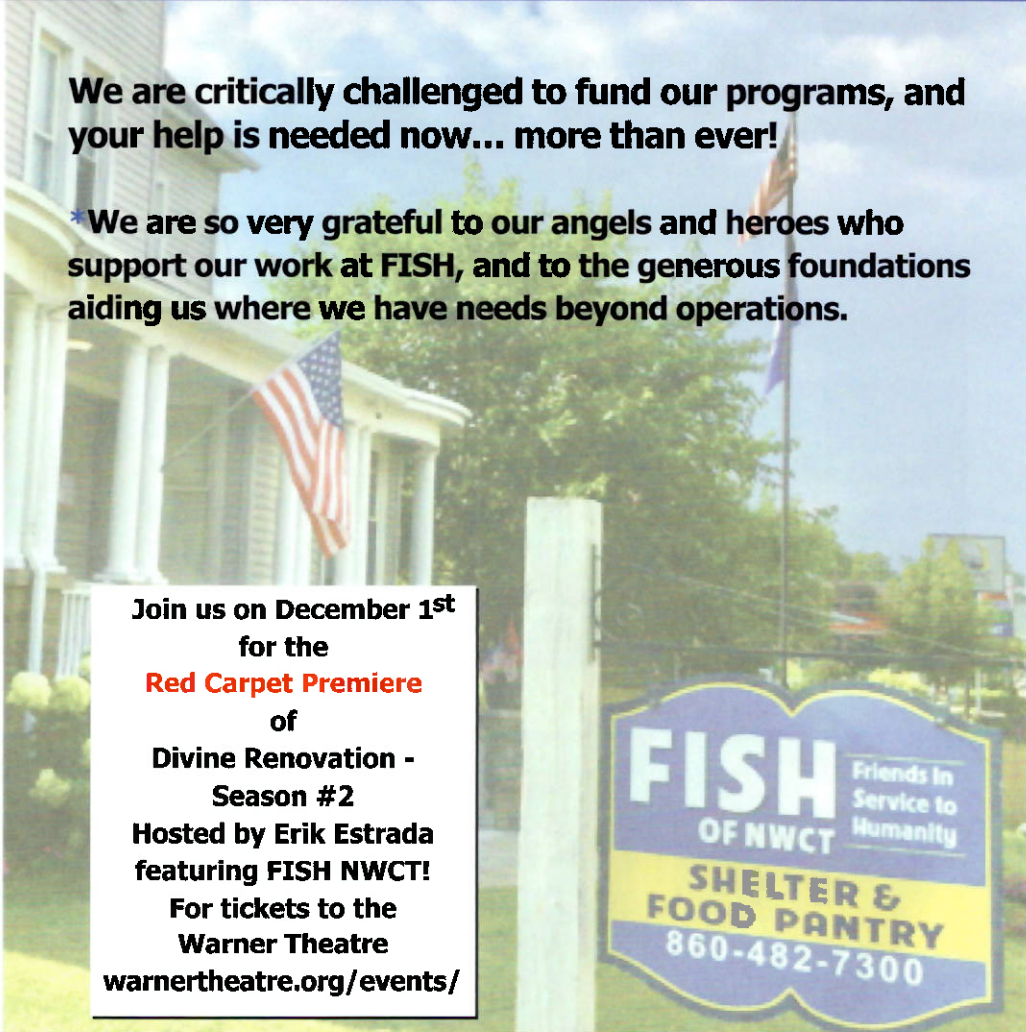
Red Carpet Premiere
of

**Divine Renovation -
Season #2**

**Hosted by Erik Estrada
featuring FISH NWCT!**

**For tickets to the
Warner Theatre**

warnertheatre.org/events/



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.



***We spent numerous hours promoting proposed Bill #6554 to Rescue the Homeless Response System for CT. We have grave concern to fund cold weather emergency shelters, and for funding underfunded homeless programs – including shelters and front-line workers who have courageously served at shelters throughout the pandemic at minimum wage.**

* Great thanks to J McLaughlin, in Litchfield, who recently welcomed us at their "Sip, Shop & Toast Summer" event to benefit FISH. We received a portion of the sales. So great!



We at FISH NWCT...

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

FISH FACTS in 2022

FISH Food Pantry

109,450 meals distributed (to date in 2023 = 170,000+)

594 families enrolled to receive food, representing 1200 individuals

FISH Emergency Homeless Shelter (35 beds)

Total # of bed nights = 7121

Total Served: 53 adults, 14 veterans, 10 children = 77 Total 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 7121 bed nights used by 77 residents (53 adults, 14 veterans, 10 children). We serve infants-seniors. Our goal is to help find permanent supportive housing for our residents. The challenges have been great, yet we successfully followed our "Team Stay Healthy" protocols for Covid-19.

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 109,450 (170,000 + in 2023) meals to 594 area families/over 1,200 individuals in need last year. We are finding the need increasing as people's federal pandemic subsidies are cut or ended. The FISH Food Pantry depends on the generosity of the community for year-round contributions. 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 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 are 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 8th annual rally held at St. Peter's Hall, welcomed over 250 people – focused on the coat giveaway (over 1200 + donated), and a bag lunch and grocery gift card were distributed, as well as info on area providers and Corona virus vaccines. The 9th Rally will take place November 18, 2023.

"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 offers in collaboration with area providers.

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

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



FISH BOARD OF DIRECTORS OFFICERS:

STEVEN CARUSO - PRESIDENT
ALAN J. ECKSTRAND - VICE PRESIDENT
KATHARINE BRIGGS - TREASURER
DONNA PUZACKE - SECRETARY
DEIRDRE DICARA - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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STAFF:

DEIRDRE HOULIHAN DICARA	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ADAM PITTS	CASE MANAGER - FAMILIES, INDIVIDUALS & VETERANS
ROBIN KING	FACILITIES - PROGRAM MANAGER
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FRED PETTEWAY	SHELTER MONITOR
DARYL FLEMING	SHELTER MONITOR
RUSS BROWN	SHELTER MONITOR
JEREMY KINCAID	SHELTER 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, 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 FINANCIAL HELP, PLEASE!



Deirdre & Steve

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

***HUGE NEWS - The new show "Divine Renovation" – hosted by Erik Estrada – filmed their second season – as "Divine Renovation – Destination - New England" - in NWCT during the month of May – and our FISH is a featured storyline!**

* Besides interviews, the projects they managed at FISH – flooring in the Shelter Kitchen, planting, painting porches, work on our ramp and rebuilding our back porch, bike rack, a new pantry freezer and a 25 foot flag pole for our shelter vets. * Our wonderful friends at O&G Industries generously took ten days to complete the projects. Also Vern Pesce at Iffland Lumber donated all the wood for the porch construction. * The shelter residents were quite incredible as they pitched in spic-and-spanning FISH, and seemed to enjoy the excitement. ** Join us for the December 1st premiere at the Warner Theatre. *** What is so great is the awareness factor – as the episodes are shown nationwide – that a rural area in affluent America needs help to service the homeless and food insecure – our neighbors in need. **** For tickets - warnertheatre.org/events/









"A Tasteful Event" - May 17, 2023

*So thrilled our "A Tasteful Event" is back after a 3-year hiatus. Tremendous appreciation to all who attended our gala at Five Points Art Center, on the hill, and our sponsors, restaurants/caterers/bakers, and silent auction donors. We are grateful to our volunteers and to Jacque Williams Entertainment. Even with the wintery cold, yet sunny weather and winds, the event was a super success, with over 150 Friends of FISH attending.







TRADITIONAL	\$8
AMERICAN	\$10
VEGETARIAN	\$12
MEXICAN	\$15
BILLY BUENOS	\$15
POKE	\$12
SHOPIERS PR	\$12

Proceeds to
[illegible]

FURDHAM
UNIVERSITY

**So very grateful to – Five Points Art Center –
for their warm welcome of our “A Tasteful Event”**

So thankful for – ATE 2023 Sponsors – Three Cheers!

Title

Northwest Community Bank

Platinum

- Arbella Insurance
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- Dymax Corporation
- Dunkin’
- Thomaston Savings Bank
- Torrington Savings Bank

Gold

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- Rosemary and Kenneth Yancey
- Steve Caruso - Aflac of Litchfield County
- The Law Offices of Conti, Levy, Salerno & Antonio
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Silver

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- Lisa Conti
- My Office, LLC
- Romano Outdoor Services
- Sound Works and Security
- Target Enterprises
- Tru-Hitch

**Tremendous thanks to our
ATE 2023 Silent Auction Donors**

Great appreciation to our ATE 2023

Restaurants / Caterers / Bakers / Beverage Purveyors

- @ The Corner
- Café 38
- Catering by Gia
- Ciesco Catering
- da Capo Ristorante Italiano
- Johnny Potato Food Truck
- Litchfield Distillery
- Love It Vegan
- Noujaim's Bistro
- Nutmeg Fudge Company



Heartwarming for you. Life changing for them.

Please contribute to our 9th annual community

COAT DRIVE

Through Wed. - NOV 15, 2023

Torrington

DROP-OFF LOCATIONS

St Paul's Lutheran Church - 837 Charles St.

Leave outside of doors in plastic bags

St. John Paul the Great Parish

St. Francis Church Rectory - 160 Main St.

Leave on back porch

Gleeson-Ryan Funeral Home - 258 Prospect St.

Leave in enclosed front entrance

All are welcome to

Join With Us

And help raise awareness

Of the need to...

**End Hunger
& Homelessness
in NWCT**

Sponsored By



COAT GIVEAWAY

FOR THOSE IN NEED

Saturday, Nov. 18th, 10 am-2 PM

St Peter's Church Hall

107 East Main Street, Torrington, CT

