



Sign up to ride!

THE CONNECTICUT AIDS BIKE TOUR is still signing up participants for its annual ride throughout the state Sept. 17-21. Participants raise funds to benefit New Haven Home Recovery and other agencies that provide services to people living with HIV/AIDS. For information, visit www.ctaidsbiketour.org, call (860) 761-6699 or e-mail shawn@ctaidscoalition.org.



Groundbreaking at Treadwell Commons

NHHR "broke ground" recently on renovations for Treadwell Commons, our supportive housing project in Hamden. Lifting their shovels to mark the occasion were (l-r): Kevin Loveland, Department of Social Services; Kellyann Day, NHHR executive director; John Dunne, Corporation for Supportive Housing; Terry Nash, Connecticut Housing Finance Authority; Craig Henrici, Mayor of Hamden; and Raquel Santiago Martinez, Greater New Haven Community Loan Fund.



NHHR hails three graduates

CARMEN BROWN, M.S.W. and **MADLINE TORRES-BAIRD, M.S.W.**, both NHHR social workers, recently graduated from the University of Connecticut School of Social Work. NHHR intern **MELANIE CAMERATO** who also graduated from the program, is not pictured. We congratulate them on a job well done!

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NEWS *from* HOME



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TZEDAKAH HOUSE DONATIONS HIT A HIGH MARK

Steve Greenberg launched Tzedakah House, LLC, an insurance agency, in 2004, with the generous intention of giving 10 percent of commissions to charity – and earmarking half of that for New Haven Home Recovery. Four years later, Tzedakah House is a major supporter, with donations now hitting the \$100,000 mark.

That doesn't count the hours that Greenberg, who is also president of NHHR's board of directors, has put into renovating the third floor of the Martha's Place shelter, creating libraries for both Martha's Place and the Careways shelters, organizing dinners for residents, working on fundraisers and drives, and collecting items for The Furniture Co-op, often with the help of his wife and children, and Tzedakah House staff. Stop by his offices at 8 Lunar Drive in Woodbridge, and you're likely to see small appliances, pots and pans, or clothing that people have dropped off for NHHR's two homeless shelters.

For Greenberg, combining a career with a cause was a clear choice. "The profit world needs to take stock and help the nonprofits," he said. "With recent cuts in government funding, we're going to see nonprofits fumbling and stumbling and going by the wayside. Clothing drives are always very helpful, but money is crucial, because if the city and state don't give us more funding for our operating costs and other expenses, we need to raise private dollars to cover the deficits."


Greenberg had spent 23 years in the insurance field, working for Metropolitan and Travelers, and creating another independent agency called Insurance Concepts of CT, Inc., before retiring in 2003. NHHR Executive Director Kellyann Day invited him to a shelter luncheon

where he met a resident who defied the stereotype of homelessness. Brought up in Madison, she had attended private schools and college, married and had a baby. She'd also been drinking since the age of 14, and her addiction ruined her marriage. Without financial support from her husband, she had ended up on the streets of New Haven, addicted to crack.

"She was someone who needed a break, and NHHR gave it to her," Greenberg said. When she was finally ready to move into supportive housing, he helped her move and gave her a box spring, a mattress and a lamp, which turned out to be just about all she had. "It was sad – happy and sad at the same time," he said.

Greenberg quickly became a dedicated volunteer. One day he found himself raising money for NHHR at a tag sale where the money was trickling in. "That was like the epiphany," he said. "I realized there had to be a more intelligent way to make money for NHHR."

He named his agency Tzedakah after a biblical term for charitable giving. Four years later, he has more than 100 clients, and many have become NHHR donors as well.

Greenberg gives his clients a voice in half of his charitable giving, which ranges in donations to such charities as Make a Wish Foundation, Ronald McDonald House and the Boy Scouts. The results have been gratifying. "This venture has given me a very good appreciation for what I have, and it's sending a clear message to my kids and people we know that we should all be grateful for our successes and share what we have with others," Greenberg said. 



Standing outside Tzedakah House are (l-r): Steve Greenberg and his employees, Benjamin Klein, Georgia Pandajis and Mary Center.

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Cuts are going to make a tough time worse

A Letter From Kellyann Day, Executive Director



Every single day, our phones ring off the hook with calls from women desperately seeking shelter. A teenager tells us her family reacted to her pregnancy by kicking her out of the house. A woman says her husband walked out and left her with three children and took every penny. Another was diagnosed with AIDS, and the illness has her feeling alienated from friends and family, depressed, broke and homeless.

The worst part is that no matter how hard we work at it, we can't help them all. There is simply not enough room at the inn. Last year our CareWays Shelter had no choice but to decline 400 requests for shelter. Martha's Place could not accommodate 1,200 requests. Many of these women had children or were practically children themselves.

Now the outlook is dire for a city that has become the largest provider of homeless services in the state, providing shelter for people from many surrounding towns.

Now a bad situation is about to get worse – much worse. New Haven's budget for the fiscal year that began on July 1 includes a \$350,000 cut in homeless services. That eliminates most of the funding for the city's winter overflow shelters and includes 9 percent reductions in operating shelter budgets.

There is little relief in the state budget – Connecticut froze its already low funding for homeless services in New Haven years ago. Now the outlook is dire for a city that has become the largest provider of homeless services in the state, providing shelter for people from many surrounding towns.

These cuts are coming just in time for a new wave of homelessness. Gas and food prices are rising, and foreclosures are hitting people who never dreamed they'd lose their homes. CNN reported on scores of single middle class women living on the streets in California after losing high paying jobs in the mortgage loan business. One was living in her SUV with her dogs, while her 19-year-old daughter had gone to live with friends. This could happen in Connecticut.

We know tough economic times are hitting you too, but we urge you to continue to work with us. We still need your generous donations and participation in our events. We also want to urge you to write to the people in government who are holding the purse strings and let them know how important our services are.

Send your letters and e-mails to: Gov. Jodi Rell, Executive Office of the Governor, State Capitol, 210 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut 06106 or Governor.Rell@ct.gov; and to Mayor John DeStefano, City Hall, 165 Church St., New Haven, CT 06510, or MayorDeStefano@newhavenct.net.

This is a time when we need to be loud and clear.

Sincerely,

Kellyann Day, MSW
Executive Director





Bethany Watkins spends time with a friend at a wine tasting to benefit NHHR.

Board profile: *Bethany Watkins*

BETHANY WATKINS, who joined the NHHR board of directors last

dedicated to bringing economic progress and improved quality of life to urban neighborhoods of New Haven County. In her free time, she directs the soup kitchen at Immanuel Baptist Church, where she has been a member for 23 years.

Watkins joined the board at the invitation of Steve Greenberg. Since becoming an active member, she has brought in at least 15 volunteers, including individuals and families from her church. She developed a financial literacy program with an intern from abroad. She has brought together organizations and individuals to tackle projects from cleaning and landscaping NHHR properties to serving meals to shelter residents.

When people ask how she juggles volunteer work with parenthood and a full-time career, she answers, "I don't know. But my faith and religion and God's presence are a huge part of who I am, and they guide me. I believe everything is possible with God's help." 🙏

year, decided a long time ago that she was going to be proactive in her community. Her dream was to be a shining role model for her two children, teaching them to never complain about an issue, but to figure out what their individual gifts are and use them to create change.

"It's about putting your best foot forward," she said.

Watkins herself has many gifts to offer, having worked for nonprofits her whole career. An associate philanthropic officer at the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, she currently oversees a scholarship program that gave \$449,000 last year to applicants in a 20-town region. She was previously project manager for the Hill Development Corporation, which is



SUPPORT FROM THREE WHO'VE BEEN THERE

LLynda knows what it's like to hit bottom because of an alcohol addiction. She navigated her own personal healthcare maze after being hit

with an HIV diagnosis. Now a grandmother in her 60s, she eventually turned her life around and will soon mark 21 years in recovery. She spends some of her free time working with groups such as the Mayor's Task Force on AIDS and People Against Injustice.

When an NHHR caseworker suggested she volunteer as peer counselor at Martha's Place, she knew they'd found the right person. "I love working with other people, especially those that others see as downtrodden," she said. "I see them trying to elevate themselves, and I want to be part of that."

Melanie Camerato, an intern from the University of Connecticut School of Social Work, created the peer counseling program as a school project with the help of Kara Benedetto, M.S.W., wellness counselor, and Corrie Morse, M.S.W., clinical coordinator. They launched the program at Martha's Place in the spring, inviting three former clients to serve a seven-week stint. First, the three participated in an orientation, where they covered such topics as communications skills, better listening, problem solving and recognizing a crisis. Then they began visiting the shelter once a week. They take on tasks such as helping a client set up an e-mail account for a job search, or they sit and talk – and listen a lot.

"The program takes the weight off of the case managers and gives people like me a chance to give back what they've gotten," said Lynda. Meanwhile, word is spreading about the program, and Benedetto and Morse have already signed up enough peer counselors to last through the fall. 🙏

Many thanks to...



The Women & Girls Fund for a grant of \$3,500 for transportation for women living in our shelters.



North Madison Congregational Church for their donation of more than \$1,500 for shelter operations, along with hundreds of dollars in grocery and department store gift cards for NHHR clients.

The Bussman Foundation for their generous and ongoing support.

Foote School third graders for conducting a fund raiser.

Our volunteers at The Furniture Coop, including Jaymar Batts, Craig Callahan, Jean Davis, Corey Greenberg, Steve Greenberg, Caroline Istvan, Allen Klein, Lourdes Mullaly, David Susman, GERALYN Tagatac, Sue Turi, Lori Vastarelli, Alice White and Sarah White.

Emily Emerson for her donation of beds, including mattresses and box springs.

David Rubin for his donation of twin and double mattresses and box springs solicited by **Carole and Harold Greenbaum** on behalf of NHHR.

Laura and Joe Anastasio and Lauren Rossi for answering a call for need for an NHHR client who suffered a loss in a fire. 🙏