WHCH memories shared by city residents

WEST HAVEN (Jan. 21, 2016) - In 2016, the West Haven Community House is celebrating its 75th anniversary serving the needs of the citizens of West Haven. Last year, we began asking members of the general public to send us their own recollections of their personal experiences with the Community House.

Many of you did, and among them was Janie Granniss Santangelo, who wrote: “I graduated from West Haven High School in 1965 and we lived on Second Avenue. The Community House was our second home. It was the only place all of our parents would let us go. It was safe and fun. “Dances were on Friday nights; Howie West would play and I can still picture the stage. We would all sing.

“When I was younger, I would help with the kids. I never got paid, I just loved being there. As I grew up, I would attend the Yoga classes on Tuesday nights. I brought my aunt to a class and she went back for years!”

Janie continued, “Bernice was working there around that time. She created some great day trips. It was the best place to be. I loved the Community House and I felt blessed to have a fun place to hang out. Thank you, West Haven Community House.”

Peggy Gordon Spagone wrote, “I worked both the before and after-day care at Thompson School. I was a great job and I was allowed to bring my daughter Tricia with me. She rode the van back to the Community House after she got out of school.

“I was there to care for her and the other after school children. I have great memories of that job.” Peggy Scranton wrote, “I went to Camp-to-Come-To. I think it was in Durham. [It was for a time.] I remember taking the bus there. We had sleep-over nights, too, and I remember bringing my sleeping bag and staying on bunks.

“I also remember a story being told about a wapisman, a creature that would lurk around at night. It sounds funny now, but it was scary back then. I remember making breakfast in the kitchen the next day. “At the end of camp we would all sit around on what I think were tree stumps until we were let back on the buses to go home. I loved spending my summers there.”

Through the years, Camp-to-Come-To was also held at several other sites, including several in West Haven and along the beach in Woodmont-Milford.

Kenneth Colucci noted, “I went to Camp-to-Come-To but we went to Painter Park in West Haven.”

Other remembrances:
Cherylann Natale: “My son went to the before and after program and summer camps. We loved it and loved Carol and Lynn.”
Karen Wolfson Murphy: “I went there when I was young and so did my daughter many years later.”
Janice Vece Agostini: “Both my children attended the Community House for before and after school programs and also did camp there.”

Joleen Marie: “I remember as a kid they used to have something called ‘Super Saturday.’ Does anybody else remember this? It was so much fun.”

Shannon Cholko: “I went to Camp Silverberg for years. I also did gymnastics there and took cooking classes. I loved it there when I was younger.”

Cheryl Novak: “Both my sons went to Head Start. I loved the staff. I had Joanne and Barbara. Now Barbara is my neighbor’s little girl’s teacher.”

The Community House wishes to hear your story or remembrance. Send us yours to: 75th Anniversary Stories, WH Community House, 227 Elm St., West Haven, CT 06516.

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