



West Haven Community House

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Community House Endowment Growing

West Haven, CT—(July 13, 2017) A recent gathering of board members, endowment donors and friends took place at the West Haven Community House for their annual fiscal year-end meeting to take stock in the progress throughout the year. The agency welcomed new board members Chet Latin, Manager and Senior Tax Specialist at H&R Block; Michael Todd Taylor, Attorney and Program Manager at DCF; and returning members Annette Knobloch, Medical Assistant at Allergy Associates PC; and Bill Lang, Retired Teacher in Guilford, CT. While new board members were welcomed, the agency bid farewell to two members of their board Frank Paolino, Principal at Carrigan School and Patrick Clifford, Director of College Career Counseling at Albertus Magnus.

While honoring and thanking board members and volunteers, the meeting's main focus was the installment of a new named fund. To have a Named Fund, donors must pledge to contribute a minimum of \$5,000. This could be done in a lump sum or over time. Sadly this year one of the West Haven Community House, Community Connections employees passed away after a courageous battle with cancer. Sophia O'Connor Brown was the activities coordinator, and prior to her passing was a dedicated and enthusiastic advocate for all adults with intellectual disabilities. "Sophia was a diligent worker who came to work every day with enthusiasm and a smile, even while the disease was taking quite a toll," said Marie Watson, Director of Community Connections, "The clients meant everything to her and she and her co-workers shared a very close bond."

Sophia's family asked that donations in memory of Sophia be made to the Community Connections program. The outpouring of love and support during this difficult time was so remarkable that enough money was donated to create a 'Named Fund' – the Sophia O'Connor Brown Fund, in honor of her commitment to individuals with disabilities. "We are sincerely grateful to her family for establishing this perpetual tribute in her memory. Distributions from this fund will be used for the benefit of individuals with disabilities in our Community Connections programs." said Patty Stevens, Executive Director of The West Haven Community House.

The West Haven Community House named funds include Eugene and Helen Dorsi Fund, Eder Brothers Fund, Jill Fleming Fund, Ken Ginsberg Fund, Patricia Herbert Fund, Beatrice Howell Fund, John & Dodie Ireland Fund, Mary Jane Kelly Fund, Jean & Nathan London Fund, Sophia O'Connor Brown Fund, Gene McCarthy Fund, Pvt. Stephen J. McHugh Fund, Scott Merriam Fund, Dr John Onofrio Fund, Ralph Paolillo Fund, Helen Pinzi Fund, James Shanbrom Family Fund and Peter Schwartz Fund.

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The Community House Endowment was created 20 years ago so that individuals can help the Community House “in perpetuity” and to honor or memorialize a loved one. “Major shares of contributions to our Endowment have been through our Named Funds. The other source of revenue to this fund is donations in honor of birthdays, holidays or in memory of someone who has passed away. We are very appreciative of everyone who has contributed to making this a success and are proud to announce that, 20 years later, our Endowment is worth \$733,774.” said Stevens. Following the endowment spending rule, the Community House will be taking its first distribution to help offset statewide budget cuts that caused a deficit year.

The meeting ended with a “wrap up” of the year’s budgetary and programmatic successes and challenges. On the positive side, the Community Connections program saw growth with an increase of clients, now serving a total of 109 clients the day and residential programs.

In spite of devastating budget cuts to Care 4 Kids, Connecticut’s child care subsidy helping low to moderate income families pay for child care costs, the Community House tightened their belts in order to continue to provide services to those who need them the most. This included two-thirds of the agency’s programs; the Head Start school readiness program which serves more than 140 preschool children from income eligible families, and the Children and Youth Services in-school childcare program, giving working parents peace of mind, provides a safe place for more than 230 children to be before and after school and during summer school vacation.

“All in all, we have had an exciting and challenging year.” Stevens said “We look forward to the future with great hope and anticipation that the Community House will be a strong voice for the needs of our constituents and continue to have a positive impact in the community.”

For more information about The West Haven Community House’s Endowment program, please visit www.whcommunityhouse.org or call (203) 934-5221 x131.

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