



## West Haven Community House

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### Community House Celebrates Teacher Appreciation Week



*West Haven, CT—(May 4, 2021)* The Community House, the cornerstone social service agency serving West Haven children and families for eighty years, celebrates Teacher Appreciation week by thanking the more than 45 wonderful, dedicated teachers employed in their Head Start preschool and Children & Youth Services before and after school care programs.

The Community House established the first Head Start program and first licensed before and after school childcare center in West Haven.

“All of our teachers play a key role in developing the minds of young students, and are part of a dynamic, hard-working team who bring their all to the classroom every day, always exceeding expectations and moving our programs forward while giving families peace of mind knowing their child is cared for and thriving,” said Patty Stevens, Executive Director of West Haven Community House.

“It’s been a tough year, but our educators continue to stand out and give families hope and play a key role in developing the minds of students; and we appreciate all that they do each day”, she continued.

One teacher from the Children & Youth Services before and after school program, Tanya Charles, has been with the Community House for nearly 23 years. When asked about her experience, she said “I am real clear as to why I’ve dedicated so much of my time to this position; it’s all about the children, their lives, and their lights. They matter”.

The program focuses on the development of the whole child and provides academic enrichment activities that support the school’s common core curriculum standards. Whether its STEAM, Social Emotional Learning or Literacy; the fun, hands-on activities are adapted to meet various developmental levels, learning styles and interests of the students.

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Anne Rescsanski, a Community House teacher in the Head Start preschool program, who has been with the agency for 8 years, recently reflected on her teaching experience by stating “my favorite part of teaching is watching the children grow and develop and master their skills”.

Created in 1965 as part of President Johnson’s “War on Poverty,” Head Start is the most successful, longest-running, national school readiness program in the United States. It provides comprehensive education, health, nutrition and parent involvement services to children of income eligible families. Nearly 36 million pre-school aged children have benefited from Head Start.

As part of its mission, the Community House has always been committed to providing a variety of support services to preschool children and their parents. Starting with a nursery school back in the 1940’s, and in 1978 was awarded the funding for the Head Start program with a \$38,000 grant, which was enough to operate a 15-child program. Today, the program provides comprehensive health, nutrition, and education services to more than 144 children and helps families achieve their goals around housing stability, continued education, and financial literacy.

“Preschool teachers will often take basic concepts and incorporate them into play. Children at this age learn through play that incorporates all their senses. While they are having fun and practicing essential social concepts - being respectful of each other, taking turns, etc. - they are unaware that they are even absorbing educational concepts,” said Stevens. “Our teachers are experts at engaging students and offer lessons through playful and productive avenues”, she continued.

**About the West Haven Community House:** *For 80 years, the Community House has been the cornerstone social service agency of West Haven with programs including Head Start, a quality school readiness program for children from income-eligible families; Children & Youth Services, a before and after-school program for school-aged children; and Community Connections day and residential program for adults with intellectual disabilities.*

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