

# Stay Connected

## Community Connections Newsletter

A publication of the West Haven Community House  
227 Elm St., West Haven, CT 06516  
www.whcommunityhouse.org



April 2018  
News from

October 2017  
to March 2018

## A Journey Through The Years

### 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Family and Friends Semi-Formal Dinner Dance

The Residential program held its annual Family & Friends dinner and dancing night out at Anthony's Ocean View restaurant in East Haven on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Each resident was able to invite friends and family to this event and along with fine food there was lots of dancing and much laughter and smiles.

The theme this year was *A Journey Through The Years With The Walking Warriors*. Marie Watson spoke about the history of the team and announced that the Walking Warriors has raised nearly \$25,000 in the last 6 years. Wow! Great job everyone.



## Best Buddies

Students from the University of New Haven come once a month to work with, and hang out with individuals who attend the Community Connections program as part of a global volunteer movement called Best Buddies, a program that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Best Buddies is an international, non-profit organization, started in 1987 by Anthony Shriver, that strives to create relationships that dispel the stigmas about disabilities and establish programs to assist people with disabilities in achieving their goals.

The Community Connections' participants really enjoy their time with the UNH students playing games, working together on fundraising events, watching a movie together and just hanging out.



# Always In Our Hearts

*Two beloved members of our Community Connections' family, for more than 30 years, have passed away.*

## Frank M. Perlin

August 31, 1936 - March 22, 2018



In 1988, shortly after his 52<sup>th</sup> birthday, Frank moved into the Community House's first group home on Elm Street. He quickly became good friends with his house mates and direct-service professionals from Community Connections.

Throughout his more than 30 years at Community Connections, Frank enjoyed vacations to Martha's Vineyard, Foxwoods Casino, Mystic Aquarium, Essex Riverboat and Steam Train and New York City where he saw the "The Lion King" on Broadway, to name a few. And for many years, he participated in the Special Olympics and walked in the local Memorial Day parade with "Team West Haven".



Frank especially enjoyed the many parties hosted by the Residential Program including the annual Family and Friends Dinner, holiday events and especially the Halloween and Spring Dances as he particularly liked dancing and holding the hands of any of the ladies that are at the events. Even at 80-plus years, Frank was as charming as ever. Frank will be greatly missed by all who knew him.



## Timothy Paul Boucher

January 1, 1965 - January 2, 2018



Tim was a client of the West Haven Community House Community Connections Program since his graduation from high school in 1986. Throughout his many years with the us, Tim had the opportunity to experience many

vocational opportunities. Throughout his career, Tim became adept at assembly, packaging and collating. He had an eye for quality control and always took pride in his work.

In June, 2014 Tim retired from vocational services and became a full time client in our Day Service component where he enjoyed the opportunity to build and maintain skills as well as explore social and leisure interests.

Tim enjoyed his outings with his peers and took the time to get to know each and all he encountered. Tim's special skills included an exceptional memory, if he met you once he would always remember

your name, birthday family members and so forth. Tim was also able to tell you on what day of the week you were born based on your birthdate and was a bit of a trivia guru when it came to music.



In 2016, Tim once again, decided to change his pace and advocated to become a participant in the SMILE program. Tim continued to enjoy his social and recreational opportunities and always was a willing participant in extra-curricular events hosted by the Community Connections. We will miss our friend and will forever keep him in our heart and memories.

## All Smiles at a Spoo-Tacular Halloween Dancy Party

Halloween is a special time of year for Community Connections. Everyone loves to dress up, get together and dance the night away!

Whether dressing up as a character from a favorite musical like “A Chorus Line” or as a dream profession like “a cop” everyone had a story to tell with their costumes.

Students from the University of New Haven’s ‘Best Buddies’ program joined in on the fun. A great time was had by all.



## Friends + Thanksgiving = Friendsgiving

We held ‘Friendsgiving’ in November where staff and clients brought in foods that represents their own culture and heritage. Celebrating everyone’s differences was certainly a fun-filled learning experience for all.

By exposing our individual cultures, our clients learn to become more accepting and tolerant of each other. Thanks to our staff and families for sharing a piece of your heritage with us. Erik and Joe are sampling some food included Greek Dessert, Spanish Rice and Beans, Flan, Italian Ziti and Jambalaya, to name a few.



## Bowling Under the Sea at Bass Pro Shop



Who doesn’t love a trip to Bass Pro Shop? There is always so much to see. Not only is it an amazing store, but it is also home to Uncle Buck’s Fish Bowl & Grill. Several of our participants enjoyed eating and bowling at the unique underwater-themed bowling alley while working on social skills and interacting with others. Here’s Shawn (left) at Uncle Bucks. Justen (right) also enjoys the sport. Here he is getting a little help on his turn at a local bowling alley.

## Winter is a Time For Good Friends, Good Food and Warmth

Our annual Winter Celebration was a great hit this year! Despite the blustery weather outside, the individuals living in the West Haven Community House's Residential Program stayed warm and cozy together while celebrating the joy of the season.

Everyone enjoyed opening gifts, sharing time together and sending well wishes. Picture below and to the right are pictures from both Residential and Day programs' winter celebrations.



## The Gift of Giving

Just like the rest of us, clients at Community Connections are caught up in the hustle and bustle of the holiday season and like many of us, they like to give gifts just as much as they enjoy receiving them.

This December, some of the individuals in our program wanted to learn how to sew, so what better way to learn than to make our very own pillows. Together, they shopped for fabric, needles and thread, practiced their designs and then got busy enhancing their fine motor and attention to detail skills. What a fantastic job they did.



## Music and Movement as a Means of Maintaining Skills



Music and movement play a big part in our SMILE Day program. It is one of the few activities that involve using the whole brain. Musical games and activities can significantly improve the social, emotional, cognitive and motor skills of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

It also helps with physical coordination and range of motion. Zandra (left) and Renee (right) really enjoyed the activity.

## Checking in with The Avenues Program



The young adults in The Avenues Program used their cooking skills to make grilled cheese sandwiches and soup, which they sold along with homemade Holiday Treats, which included caramel popcorn and peppermint bark.

These treats were

so tasty they sold out within two days! All of the profits went towards the "Walking Warrior Team".

They wanted to find a way to give back during the holiday season, so they researched different community service agencies in our area to sponsor for the holidays. They chose the New Haven "Salvation Army", and facilitated a food drive. They created flyers, and collected five boxes of nonperishable food over three weeks. They delivered the food to the Salvation Army for the holidays, the food pantry program director was grateful for all they had collected.



Their community service did not stop there; they attended the annual "Trees of Hope" and purchased raffle tickets in hopes to win a tree. All proceeds from the "Trees of Hope" went to the Ronald McDonald House in New Haven.

## Improving Independent Living Skills at Home



In addition to offering positive social interaction and enrichment for participants in both our Day Programs and Residential Program, we also work on improving independent living skills on a daily basis.

Robin (above) at her apartment is trying to learn how to use her new computer. She has been using email to communicate with her sister, and she would like to learn how to use SKYPE to communicate with family and friends as well.



In their own apartments, Linda (left) and Dorothy (right) practice their meal preparation skills. They both have come a long way with this, and are becoming more and more independent.