

Creativity Flourishes at Community Connections



Art has become serious fun especially during the cold winter months. Annette, ralph and Nitsa proudly display their most recent accomplishment in painting.

Currently clients paint with acrylic on canvas and as you can see, they compare well to some of the great masters.

Art Expressions



In 2013, STEP (Support, Travel, and Entertainment Partnership) Associates LLC was established in Connecticut by co-founders Latonya Tillman-Amin and Davaul Amin, Community Connections assistant director. STEP "bridges the gap" between individuals with intellectual disabilities with other members of community, making connections and creating new positive relationships.

One of the STEP programs is Art Expressions. It is a social and leisure program where participants meet weekly to partake in art, acting, singing and dance in a friendly and social atmosphere.

Many Community Connections clients are enrolled in the program and are preparing for their first live performance on Saturday, July 8th, 4pm -8pm at Farnam Neighborhood House, 162 Fillmore Street, New Haven CT. Tickets are \$20.00 which includes a raffle. Contact Davaul at (203) 931-4004 for more information.



Stay Connected

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The Avenues Program Is In Full Swing

The Avenues Program kicked off in the fall and is offered to young adults' ages 18 to 21 years who are diagnosed as Intellectually Disabled. There are currently 2 clients in that program, lead by Skyla Drader, Program Manager.

Whether it's learning to travel in the community to local museums, honing their cooking skills by designing home made pizzas or taking hikes at local parks to work on staying healthy, these clients are always on the go!



228 Elm Street Gets A Facelift

The Residential home located at 228 Elm Street recently received a new front porch after weeks of being under construction. A construction crew from Luanci Construction worked tirelessly throughout the winter months to complete the project. Thanks to Luanci and a grant we received from from West Haven Community Development Administration (CDBG), residents and staff can now enjoy sitting on their new front porch just in time for the spring season.

The house was purchased 33 years ago in the spring of 1984 by a group named The Corporation for Independent

Living (CIL). This is around the time that the group-home concept for special needs individuals was first introduced in the state. CIL was a private group that helped agencies start group homes for adults with special needs.

After much debate and planning, the Community House Board approved a lease agreement with CIL and voted to precede with the plan to operate a group home, the first of its kind in West Haven. By the end of August 1984, the Community House operated its first group home with five clients, including two from Southbury Training School, which was being closed by the state.



Celebrating Good Times

If there's one thing that the Community Connections' "family" enjoys most, it's celebrating! Whether it's a birthday or anniversary, dinner and dancing or activities like movie night, ice cream socials or a St. Patrick's Day get together, there's never a shortage of fun activities and smiling faces.

St. Patrick's Day



Family & Friends Dinner

Anthony's Ocean View restaurant in New Haven was once again the setting of the 6th annual Family and Friends event in March. Before the dinner and dancing portion of the evening, Joe Canelli, Residential Program Manager, kicked off the event with a brief explanation of Community Connections' services and announced a new program called "Individual Home Supports" or IHS for short.

This service is designed to allow a person to live in their family home or live in their own home and provides assistance in basic skills, banking, budgeting, shopping and. Typical use of this service is 5-20 hours a week. There are currently 4 individuals in this program.

Joe closed his presentation with a plea to all guests to help advocate saying "As caregivers, parents, guardians, family members, and friends you can make your voice heard by writing to state legislators about keeping and/or increasing our budgets", said Canelli. Each guest received information on how to contact their state representatives along with a sample letter.

25 Years and Going Strong



Cynthia Scully celebrated 25 years with Community Connections last December. If you haven't met Cynthia yet, you are in for a treat! She is one of our Day Coaches and our official weather person as she is rarely wrong about the forecast. When she walks into a room, she finds a way to brighten everyone's day with a joke or a funny story. She has a great relationship with the staff and clients alike.

A Warm Welcome to Natacha

Natacha Jean-Paul is the newest addition to the Community Connections' family. She is the Assistant Program Manager of Day Service Option (DSO) and works with both Case Management and the Program Manager. Natacha's role includes developing and implementing programs and coordinating site activities. Give a warm welcome to Natacha.

