

Fall 2014



Hartford Community Court News & Updates

Volume 16, Issue 2

Produced by Chris Pleasanton



COMMUNITY GARDEN

The Hartford Community Court
community service crew
working on the community
garden project
(see more on pg. 4)

INTRODUCING JUDGE SANTOS

The Hartford Community Court would like to welcome the Hon. Thelma A. Santos to the court. Judge Santos has 27 years of experience on the bench, with more than half of that time serving in juvenile court. In addition, Judge Santos has also served in criminal, housing, family, and civil courts.

A lifelong resident of Connecticut, Judge Santos is a graduate of the University of Connecticut School of Law. The Hon. Raymond R. Norko sits one to two days per week and Judge Santos covering the rest of the work week.

"Serving at the Hartford Community Court brings to mind the approach I had as a judge in juvenile court," Judge Santos said. "Rehabilitation is the key element to what we do at the community court, measured with accountability; it's a service oriented approach designed to help the defendants stay out of further trouble, lead healthier, more productive lives, while not criminalizing them."

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HARTFORD STUDENTS VISIT

The Hartford Community Court was pleased to host two July visits by students from the CREC Public Safety program and the Hartford Public High School Law and Government Academy. The students, many of whom have achieved honors levels in their studies, were brought to the Community Court by Hartford police officers Mike Cryder and Jim Barrett. The students toured the court, met with Program Manager Chris Pleasanton to learn about the community court's unique operations, and met with Hon. John Mulcahy, who participated in a question and answer session with the students.

Community Court Statistics

| | MARCH | APRIL | MAY | JUNE | JULY | AUG | TOTALS |
|------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Total Arraignments | 486 | 609 | 585 | 728 | 846 | 608 | 4,867 |
| Community Service Hours | 1,888 | 2,739 | 2,580 | 2,764 | 3,954 | 4,050 | 17,975 |
| Value of CS (\$8.70 Min Wage) | \$16,425 | \$23,829 | \$22,446 | \$24,047 | \$34,400 | \$35,235 | \$156,382 |
| Social Service Referrals non DMHAS | 43 | 56 | 67 | 52 | 72 | 134 | 424 |
| Appearance Rate | 92% | 89% | 90% | 91% | 93% | 91% | 91% AVG |
| Suburban Caseload | 23% | 18% | 15% | 16% | 13% | 13% | 15% AVG |

DELAWARE DEVELOPING COMMUNITY COURT

The Hartford Community Court was recently visited by judicial representatives from Wilmington, Delaware, who are working to implement a community court in their city. Chief Magistrate Alan Davis, Operations Manager Mark Hitch, and Court Administrator Marianne Kennedy drove from Wilmington to see the Hartford Community Court and meet with the staff, particularly the social services and community service teams.

The Hartford Community Court appreciates the social services partners who made the time to talk with the Delaware representatives, especially George Dillon of CHS, Tamara Collins of the State DSS, Karem Ballestas of the Hartford Health and Human Services Department, Kim Beach of Advanced Behavioral Health, Mildred Hickman of DMHAS, and Steve Diaz of ADRC.

“We are very excited about the development of the Wilmington Community Court and were very honored by their visit,” Program Manager Chris Pleasanton said. “Their team has a lot of expertise and motivation that was inspiring to everyone who met with them in Hartford.”



(From left) Chief Magistrate Alan Davis (DE), George Dillon (CHS) Tamara Collins (DSS), Kim Beach (ABH), Karem Ballestas (City HHS), Operations Manager Mark Hitch (DE), Program Manager Chris Pleasanton (Hartford), Mildred Hickman (DMHAS), Steve Diaz (ADRC) and Court Administrator Marianne Kennedy (DE)

CHS HIV-AIDS OUTREACH & EDUCATION

Community Health Services and the Hartford Community Court have had a thriving working relationship for more than 10 years. As a leading community health center in Hartford, CHS provides a vast array of services to in-need people, at little-to-no cost, including physical, dental, pediatric, podiatric, and behavioral health care. Working together, CHS has accepted several hundred Community Court defendants into its African Men In Recovery (AMIR) clinical/peer-to-peer substance abuse recovery program and countless others for the other high quality CHS services. Over the past several years, CHS and the Hartford Community Court have expanded this relationship to include the placing of CHS HIV Education and Outreach Workers David Weaver and Patricia Miles at the court each Wednesday and Thursday respectively.

Mr. Weaver and Ms. Miles perform free instant HIV testing and provide educational information and resources to anyone at the court who would like to participate. The process is entirely voluntary and people are not required to participate in this testing and educational program as part of a case they may have at the court. Test results and educational meetings are confidential between the CHS staff and the client.

According to Mr. Weaver, many people have taken up the offer for testing and educational counseling. Since September 2012, almost 550 people have participated in the program.

“Several studies have shown that people involved in the criminal justice system have higher rates of HIV and other STDs than the general population,” the Hon. Raymond R. Norko said. “Therefore, providing testing and education at the Community Court is a natural fit.”

“Mr. Weaver and Ms. Miles are also very knowledgeable and committed to their work,” Judge Norko added. “We are very appreciative of them and of CHS for their commitment to helping people in Hartford.”

FRANK PERROTTI, BAIL COMMISSIONER

The Hartford Community Court is pleased to welcome new Bail Commissioner Frank Perrotti to the court. Mr. Perrotti, a Connecticut native, is a graduate of Albertus Magnus College with a degree in criminal justice. He has worked for the Judicial Branch for nearly two years, having served for 22 months as a Juvenile Detention Officer in Bridgeport. In addition to his regular duties, Mr. Perrotti also helped run groups in aggression retraining and life skills.

As a Bail Commissioner, Mr. Perrotti’s duties include checking the prior criminal history of defendants, making bond recommendations to the court, and supervising some released defendants.

“Frank has been a welcome addition to the Hartford Community Court,” Judge Norko said. “We are pleased to be working with him.”



Patricia Miles & David Weaver,
CHS HIV/AIDS Educational Outreach Workers



Bail Commissioner Frank Perrotti

COMMUNITY GARDEN

The Hartford Community Court's Community Garden has been a rousing success in its first year. Located in the community garden managed by Knox Parks Foundation at the intersection of Barbour and Earle Streets, all of the vegetables produced in the garden have been donated to local shelters, soup kitchens and community groups so that local residents could have access to locally-grown fresh vegetables.

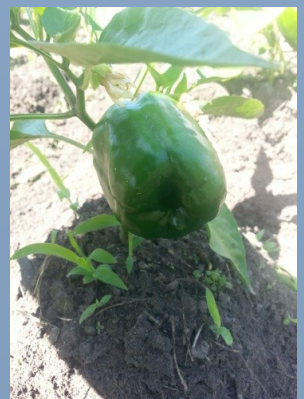
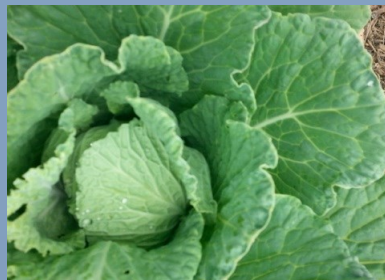
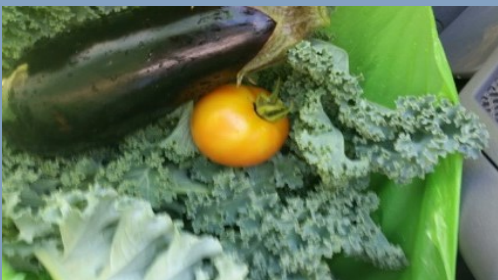
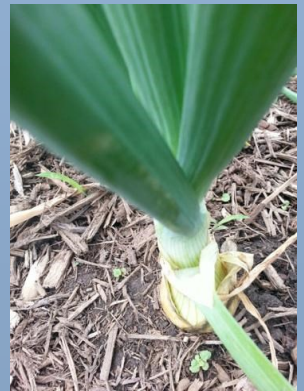
The Hartford Community Court's garden was planted, maintained and harvested by defendants assigned to perform court-supervised community service. Similar to other defendants performing community service through the Hartford Community Court, those who work at the garden are under the supervision of Community Partners In Action staff.

"We designed this project to be a productive way for our defendants to pay back the community for their violation, but also to help increase the person's sense of connection with the community," CPA Program Manager Deborah Barrows said.

Many of the defendants working at the garden have indeed had a positive reaction to working on the project and have expressed their pride at performing on a productive project that helps people in need.

According to CPA Assistant Crew Leader Elizabeth Rosa, "We have had some defendants who had experience working in their own gardens at home and they willingly shared their knowledge with other crew members and staff on everything from how to plant seeds to how to tell what vegetable is ready to pick."

The Hartford Community Court would like to express its thanks to Charmaine Craig of Knox Parks Foundation and the UConn School of Agriculture for their advice and support in this project.



OXFORD STUDENTS VISIT

On May 27, the Hartford Community Court was visited by students from Great Oak Middle School in Oxford. The students, led by their teacher (and Judge Norko's sister) Donna Norko, met with both Judge Norko and Judge Santos and watched the court in session. The students later wrote essays to the court on their impressions of the court and the justice system. The student's wrote most about the shoplifting cases and the wide array of items people were charged with attempting to steal.

Students from Great Oak Middle School have been visiting the Hartford Community Court each year for more than 10 years. Over that time, more than 400 students have experienced a day in the court and met with the judges and court staff.

JOE KALACHE: A QUALITY APPROACH

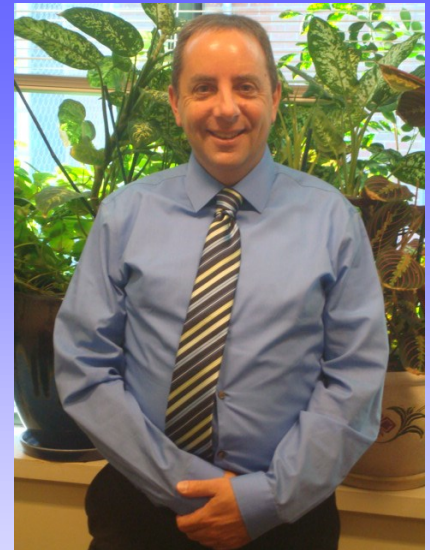
In recent months, Town of West Hartford Social Worker Joe Kalache has initiated a new approach to how he handles his social services clients at the Hartford Community Court. In the past, Mr. Kalache operated on more of a triage level, spending about an equal amount of time with each person he assessed, which sometimes limited his time to work with clients who may have had more significant social issues. Mr. Kalache has since refined his assessment and interviewing technique while still providing a thorough assessment of West Hartford/Bloomfield defendants sent to him.

The additional time created by this refinement allows Mr. Kalache to conduct more in-depth, higher-quality interventions than were previously possible.

“History shows us that many people who come before the Hartford Community Court for a low-level offense actually have significant social issues that require a meaningful response,” Mr. Kalache said. “Refining my approach has allowed me to provide the high-quality intervention and service necessary to help the clients address their issues.”

Another key to Mr. Kalache’s approach is to get as much input from the clients about what they think they need to work on to make a change in their lives. From there, he works with the client to develop a treatment plan that the client is personally invested in.

“I have found that when a person is involved in developing their treatment plan, it’s a good indicator of the client’s future success and their willingness to work with me for a longer period of time to achieve that,” Mr. Kalache said.



Joe Kalache, LCSW, LADC
Social Worker
Town of West Hartford

HARTFORD AIDS AWARENESS WEEK

The Hartford Community Court was also appreciative of the opportunity to collaborate with the City of Hartford Health and Human Services Department in recognition of HIV Awareness Week. City Outreach and Education Representative Vanesha Heron provided written information and answered HIV-related questions to court clients and the public throughout the morning of June 27, 2014. In addition, Ms. Heron provided voluntary instant testing on the City’s health van to anyone who was interested.

“We are grateful for the opportunity to work with the City Health and Human Services team to raise HIV awareness and appreciate their willingness to conduct outreach at the Community Court,” Judge Norko said. “Ms. Heron’s knowledge, expertise, and professionalism were key to making the day a success.”



Vanesha Heron of the City of Hartford
Health and Human Services Department

PROCEDURAL JUSTICE IN COMMUNITY COURT

Written by Assistant State's Attorney Tom O'Brien

Procedural justice or procedural fairness, describes the experience that defendants and other court users have with the court. For many people, the perception of how they were treated by the court often matters more to them than the final outcome of their case (referred to as distributive justice). The court process can be confusing and intimidating, especially so for those new to the system or not well versed in English. The same may also be said for our more seasoned defendants, who may be distrustful of a system that they perceive has grown wary of them and for which their prior experiences have not always been resolved in their favor. Studies have shown that when both groups of defendants believe the court process was fair they were more likely to comply with the court's orders and to be law-abiding in the future.

There are several procedural justice concepts that promote this sense of fair treatment. Defendants want to feel that they were given a meaningful opportunity to be heard, to express themselves and to explain their side of what occurred. Court users want the judge, prosecutor and other court staff to treat them with dignity and respect. Defendants have an expectation of neutrality whereby court decision makers will be consistent, unbiased and transparent about how decisions are made. Defendants also want to feel that the court made an effort to consider their personal situations and to help them understand the decision-making process and what is required of them to fulfill the court's orders. When these expectations are met, court users are more likely to trust the court and its decision making.

Procedural fairness is a natural progression of the restorative justice mission of our court whereby we encourage people to accept responsibility for their actions and then offer them a chance to reconnect to the community through a combination of social services, mental health assistance and community service projects. Adherence to the concepts of procedural justice prioritizes the treatment of the individual and their case rather than the forced movement of the case through the system. In subsequent issues an effort will be made to explain how procedural justice may be incorporated into each function within the court's operation and to explain the benefit of adhering to procedural fairness from a prosecutor's perspective.

HFD FIRE PREVENTION OUTREACH

The Hartford Community Court is appreciative of the Hartford Fire Department and Lt. Mario Oquendo who came to the court on May 6, to conduct fire prevention awareness and education. Lt. Oquendo manned a table in the court's lobby for the entire morning and spoke with dozens of court clients and members of the public. In addition to handing out brochures and speaking with people, Lt. Oquendo also signed several people up for installation of free smoke detectors.

**For more information on the
Hartford Fire Department
and its programs,
please visit their website at
www.hartford.gov/fire**



Lt. Mario Oquendo,
of the Hartford Fire Department

COMMUNITY SERVICE SITES

June 2014

| Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| 2 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Colt Park (with DPW), Sherbrooke St., Grafton St. | 3 Foodshare, Community Garden, Ebony Horse Women EC, | 4 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Ebony Horse Women EC, Community Garden, | 5 Foodshare, Community Garden, Ebony Horse Women EC, Amity St., Heath St., Wilson St., Barbour St. | 6 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Community Garden, Treadeau St., Montowese St., Saybrook St. |
| 9 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Ebony Horse Women EC, Foster Heights Park (with DPW) | 10 Foodshare, Community Garden, Ebony Horsewomen EC, Public Safety Complex, Ellington St. | 11 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Community Garden, Anawan St., Stonington St., Groton St. | 12 Foodshare, Community Garden, Ebony Horse Women, EC, | 13 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Community Garden |
| 16 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Community Garden, Keney Park (with DPW) | 17 Foodshare, Community Garden, Ebony Horse Women EC, Pliny St., Belden St., Battles St., Loomis St. | 18 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Community Garden, Blue Hills Ave. | 19 Foodshare, Community Garden, Ebony Horsewomen EC, Canterbury St., Blue Hills Ave. | 20 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Community Garden, Albany Ave. |
| 23 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Community Garden, Public Safety Complex | 24 Foodshare, Community Garden, Ebony Horsewomen EC, Public Safety Complex | 25 Foodshare, Community Garden | 26 Foodshare, Community Garden, Ebony Horse Women EC | 27 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Community Garden |
| 30 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Community Garden, Pope Park (with DPW) | | | | |

July 2014

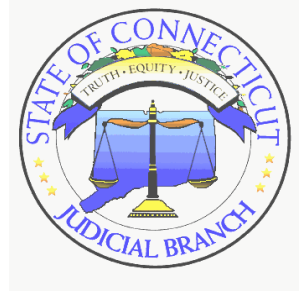
| Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| | 1 Foodshare, Holcomb Farms, Circus Fire Memorial, Community Garden, Orange St., Lincoln St. | 2 Foodshare, Community Garden, Sherbrook Ave., Grafton St., Washington St., Lafayette St. | 3 Foodshare, Community Garden, Riverfront Recapture—Great River Park |  |
| 7 Foodshare, Community Garden, Riverfront Recapture, Keney Park (with DPW) | 8 Foodshare, Holcomb Farm, Community Garden | 9 Foodshare, Holcomb Farm, Community Garden, Cornwall St., Baltic St., Sharon St., Hebron St. | 10 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Webster St., Barry Sq., Barnard St. | 11 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Russ St., Lawrence St. |
| 14 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Pope Park—Lozada Park—Maria Colon Sanchez Park (with DPW) | 15 Foodshare, Holcomb Farm, Congress St., Nepaquash St., Van Block Ave., Wyllis St. | 16 Foodshare, Community Garden, Chesnut St., Edwards St., Bonner St., Williams St., Allendale Rd., | 17 Foodshare, Community Garden, Acton St., Judson St., Barbour St., Capen St. | 18 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Community Garden, Rockville St., Vine St., Trumbull St. |
| 21 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Community Garden, Colt Park (with DPW), Lennox St., Deerfield Ave. | 22 Foodshare, Holcomb Farms, Community Garden, Benton St., Whitmore St., Plymouth St. | 23 Foodshare, Community Garden, Morris St., Evergreen Ave., Alden St., S. Whitney St. | 24 Community Garden, Feed The Children Event at Comcast Theatre | 25 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Community Garden |
| 28 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Community Garden, Grafton St., Sherbrooke Ave., Curtiss St. | 29 Foodshare, Holcomb Farm, Community Garden, Exeter St., Colby St., Amherst St. | 30 Foodshare, Community Garden, Franklin Ave. | 31 Foodshare, Community Garden, Albany Ave., Greenfield St. | |

August 2014

| Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| | | | | 1 Riverfront Recapture, Community Garden, Brookfield St., Mather St. |
| 4 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Community Garden, Keney Park (with DPW) | 5 Foodshare, Holcomb Farm, Community Garden, Pulaski Mall, Atwood St., Willard St., Sumner St. | 6 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Community Garden, Sheldon St., S. Prospect St., Park St. | 7 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Community Garden, Ashford St., Waverly St., Greenfield St. | 8 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Community Garden, Deerfield Ave., Thomaston St., Blue Hills Ave. |
| 11 FOODSHARE, Warrenton Ave., S. Whitney St., Huntington St., Cone St., Imlay St. | 12 Ebony Horse Women EC, Martin St., Judson St., Risley St., Winchester St., Auburn St. | 13 Charter Oak Coat Drive, Snow Removal Projects | 14 FOODSHARE, W. Raymond St., Love Ln., Harper St., Vineland Terr., Rockville St. | 15 New Park Ave., Francis Ct., Clermont St., Giddings St., Waterford St. |
| 18 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Community Garden, various parks (with DPW), Palm St., Granby St. | 19 Foodshare, Holcomb Farm, Community Garden, Park St., Ledger St., Bannister St., Roger St. | 20 Foodshare, Community Garden, Lyme St., Pope Park Highway, Broadview Terr., Arbor St. | 21 Foodshare, Community Garden, S. Marshall St., Gillette St., May St., Edwards St., Williams St. | 22 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Community Garden, Benton St., Hungerford St., Pawtucket St. |
| 25 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Community Garden, various parks (with DPW), Wethersfield Ave. | 26 Foodshare, Holcomb Farm, Community Garden, Brownell St., School St., Colonial St., Mather St. | 27 Community Garden, Zion St., Ledyard St., Enfield St., Park St, Baltimore St. | 28 Foodshare, Community Garden, Coventry St., Palm St., Garden St., Pliny St., Guilford St., Enfield St. | 29 Foodshare, Riverfront Recapture, Community Garden, Green St., Center St. |

STATE OF CONNECTICUT JUDICIAL BRANCH

HARTFORD COMMUNITY COURT



FALL 2014 NEWSLETTER

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