



Winter 2018

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Produced by Chris Pleasanton



JUDGE NORKO TO RETIRE

I am writing to let you know that, after thirty-three years on the bench, I am retiring on March 10. It has been my honor to serve the people of Connecticut, in particular the people of Hartford, as a Judge of the Superior Court.

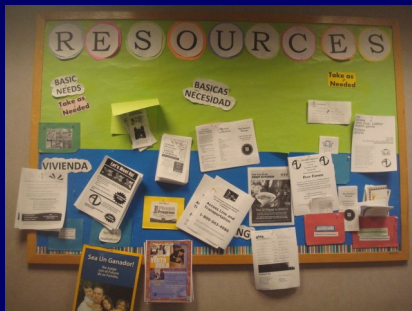
Since 1985, I have served on cases ranging from motor vehicle to capital felonies; I've seen the very best and the very worst of human nature from my place on the bench. It has been an exciting journey, one that I have learned a great deal from. I am perhaps most proud of my service during the development and continued success of the Hartford Community Court.

When I was first asked to lead the development of the Hartford Community Court in 1997, I said no. It was a radical concept, with only two other community courts in the nation at that time, and I wasn't sure it would work. After thinking about it for a short time, and seeing the commitment of the community, the Judicial Branch and our other partners, I felt that we could make a big difference in our city and our courts, and decided to accept the challenge. Happily, it has been an extremely rewarding experience and, over 18 years since opening, the Hartford Community Court remains vital.

(continued page 4)



Honorable Raymond R. Norko



REDEFINING SERVICE

CPA redefines what
community service is at the
Hartford Community Court
(see more on page 10)

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Community Court Statistics

	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	TOTALS
Total Arraignments	491	559	376	272	1,698
Community Service Hours	1,500	2,100	1,854	1,851	7,305
Value of CS (\$10.10 Min Wage)	\$15,150	\$21,210	\$18,725	\$18,695	\$73,780
Social Service Referrals non DMHAS/PD	1	10	29	3	43
Failure To Appear Rate	5%	5%	8%	9%	7% AVG
Suburban Caseload	17%	14%	22%	22%	19% AVG

COMMUNITY COURT'S JUDICIAL MARSHALS

Courthouse safety is of vital importance, not only for the well-being of the public and staff, but also for the efficient conduct of court business. Here at 80 Washington Street, we are fortunate to have a good team of Judicial Branch marshals who promote a safe environment that ensures smooth court operations. The Judicial marshal team is led by Lieutenant Vernon Green and Sergeant Antonio Lopez. Lt. Green, a 10-year marshal veteran, and Sgt. Lopez, a marshal for 18 years, lead the marshals team in maintaining building security at the public entrances, premises and courtrooms; they ensure the safe transport of in-custody defendants, and are the first responders to any courthouse situational or medical emergency.

“The Judicial marshals team in the Community Court is truly excellent,” Judge Tammy Geathers said. “Their professionalism and the tone they set at the courthouse are exemplary.”



Judicial Marshals Lt. Vernon Green and
Sgt. Antonio Lopez

PUBLIC DEFENDER DOUG OVIAN

In October 2017, the Hartford Community Court was pleased to welcome a new public defender to the court Attorney Douglas Ovian. As the public defender at the Hartford Community Court, Attorney Ovian represents in-custody and walk-in defendants without private lawyers throughout their prosecution from arraignment to disposition. The public defender team at the Community Court includes Attorney Ovian, longtime social worker Bryan Habif and new clerk Jahmille Soares, with all staffers reporting to Hartford Public Defender supervisor David Warner.

Attorney Ovian is a graduate of the College of the Holy Cross and worked in Boston and Washington, D.C. before entering Western New England University School of Law, where he was editor-in-chief of the law school newspaper. During his law studies, Attorney Ovian interned for the Connecticut Attorney General's public safety unit and the Connecticut Judicial Branch. Upon graduation, he clerked at Hartford Superior Court for 15 months before joining the Connecticut Public Defenders with which he has been associated for more than 25 years.

"I am honored to be the Community Court public defender and work in a place concerned first with people's rights as well as their needs," Attorney Ovian said, adding, "it is fitting that a venue so focused on delivering procedural justice is located so close to Connecticut's State Capitol and Supreme Court."

"Attorney Ovian is a fine addition to the Hartford Community Court," Judge Tammy Geathers said. "He truly cares about his clients and provides each with high quality legal representation."



Public Defender Douglas Ovian

JAHMILLE SOARES PD CLERK

Last fall, Jahmille Soares joined the staff of the Hartford Community Court as a public defender clerk. An honors graduate of both Capital Community College and Eastern Connecticut State University, Ms. Soares brings to the Community Court previous experience with the Bloomfield Police, I.R.I.S. Investigations and the Danielson Public Defender's Office. She also has substantial work and volunteer experience caring for the elderly.

"Jahmille has the right combination of talents needed here at the Community Court," remarked her colleague, Attorney Douglas Ovian. "She appreciates investigations, administrative detail and the law as much as she does people in need and is eager to make a difference for our clients as the newest member of our defense team."

Ms. Soares also contributed to the spirit of the Community Court by co-organizing with State Attorney's Clerk Dana Geter and Judicial Deputy Clerk Gloria Hall a mid-December holiday luncheon for courthouse employees that was enjoyed by all.



PD Clerk Jahmille Soares

... JUDGE NORKO TO RETIRE CONTINUED

There are several accomplishments during my Hartford Community Court tenure that I am most proud of. Perhaps the biggest accomplishment is the partnerships that were developed through the community court. In addition to the Judicial Branch, it was the City of Hartford, the State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the State Department of Social Services and most importantly, the Hartford community who worked together to build this court and most continue to play a vital role to this day. Without that level of collaboration, the court would not have been a reality. As the court has grown over the years, we have had other partners join our efforts including the suburban communities folded into the Hartford district in 2003, the State Department of Labor and numerous local non-profit service providers including Community Health Services, Community Partners in Action, the Hispanic Health Council, Catholic Charities, Foodshare and so many others who have helped us to provide better services and improve our community.

Another fundamental accomplishment of this court is that we have been able to provide a meaningful response to low-level quality of life crimes. These violations are misdemeanors or city ordinances. They are not the most serious crimes on the books; they are not often headline-grabbing cases. However, when you live in a community where these crimes occur and go unchecked, they contribute significantly to the deterioration of your neighborhood. That makes these cases important. In the Hartford Community Court, we were able to create a forum where these quality of life violations are focused on, where people are held accountable for their actions but also given an opportunity to address the social needs that are driving their behavior. Whether it is substance abuse, mental health or lack of resources, I have found a large percentage of people who have come before me have one or all of these issues.

The Hartford-area has great services and wonderful providers; however, most of the people we see are not connecting with services on their own. It often takes involvement with the court to connect the in-need person to services. That's where accountability comes in. Without the accountability to the court for a quality of life crime, not only does the community suffer for the conduct, but most of the in-need people I see will not connect meaningfully with help. At the Hartford Community Court, we have been able to provide justice that restores the community and the offender alike, without criminalizing people, as their cases get dismissed upon fulfilling their agreement with the court. We have also been able to look beyond the basic structure of what we do in order to do better work. For instance, we are not a veteran treatment court, but we have striven to be sensitive to the special factors that impact veterans and to consider those factors whenever possible. As an Air Force veteran, I am very aware of the impact military life has on people and I am glad that we have been able to incorporate that awareness in the Hartford Community Court.

One of the more innovative structures of the Hartford Community Court is community service. As the primary tool we use to hold defendants accountable, community service can be looked at as a punishment. However, we see it as much more. To this day, most of the community service projects we work on are suggested directly by local residents and community groups. We also work with great community-based organizations like Foodshare. In this way, our defendants "pay back" the community for their violation. However, in having a defendant perform community service in the neighborhoods affected by their behavior, we are trying to connect the person with a sense of belonging and contributing to the community. (continued next page)

... JUDGE NORKO TO RETIRE CONTINUED

The Hartford Community Court has been a busy place:

Since 1998, we have handled more than 154,000 arraignments, more than 568,000 hours of community service has been performed (at a value of \$4,389,035 based on minimum wage at the time the work was performed) and tens of thousands of social service referrals have been made.

I am also proud that the Hartford Community Court has become an international model for other communities looking to develop their own community courts. In 2009 and 2014, the US Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Center for Court Innovation selected Hartford as one of four recognized mentor courts. We have hosted visitors from throughout the United States, and we have had visitors from across the globe including Australia, China, Ukraine, France, Japan, Peru, Russia, Cape Verde, Columbia, Sweden, India and the Slovak Republic amongst many more. We have also travelled to many places to share our experiences. While it has been an honor to share our knowledge and help others innovatively develop their justice systems, the bigger reward was how much we learned in return from our visitors and hosts. I thank them for that.

One of the most enjoyable visits I was invited to make was to Russia in 2010. I found Russia to be about 10 or 15 years away from having a mindset where a community court could be a reality. However, about 6 weeks after my visit, the local court implemented the first court-based community service project in their history, based on how we perform projects in Hartford. It was such a unique event, it made headlines in their papers!

The Hartford Community Court will continue after my departure. I am happy to say that the court is in good hands with the Honorable Tammy Geathers serving as Presiding Judge. Judge Geathers, along with the long-time and newer staff at the court continue to remain committed to meaningfully addressing quality of life crimes in the Hartford Judicial District. I am confident the court will remain robust and continue to be a vital leader in justice.

I would also like to make special mention of Chris Pleasanton. Chris has worked with me at the Hartford Community Court since 1999. We have worked together to build the court from its early days, to develop the partnerships, programs and vision for the court and to maintain focus and achieve our shared goals for the court. It has been an honor to work with him all these years.

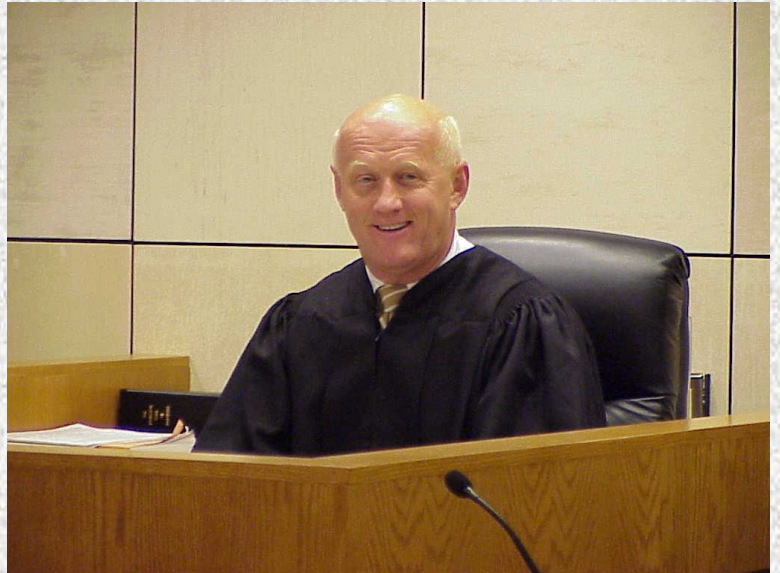
There have also been a lot of great people I have worked with at the Community Court, too many to mention by name, but I am so thankful to each and every one for their hard work and dedication to the court.

As a long-time Hartford resident, I look forward to continuing to being an active member of our community and to working with many of you to improve our city. Now, as I retire, from the bottom of my heart, thank you to each of you for your friendship and support.

JUDGE NORKO AT COMMUNITY COURT



Judge Norko with Judge Tammy Geathers
(January 2018)



Judge Norko on the bench (2009)



Judge Norko with Center For Court
Innovation's Brett Taylor, Julius Lang,
and Judicial Program Manager
Chris Pleasanton (2009)



Judge Norko with Public Defender Ray
Cuatto and Asst. State's Attorney Glenn Kaas
on their retirement day (June 2009)



Judge Norko with the recruits of the
Hartford Police Academy (2011)



Judge Norko with Supervising Clerk Gloria Hall,
Valerie S. Myrick, Linda Ruffino, and Joyce
Williams of the Community Court Clerk's office
(2013)

JUDGE NORKO AT COMMUNITY COURT



Chief Justice Chase T. Rogers and Judge Norko at UConn School of Law (September 2015)



Judge Norko and visitors from Detroit, Michigan and Hyacinth Yennie (center, front) of Hartford's Maple Avenue Revitalization Group (July 2011)



Tom Ritter, retired Speaker of the House, presents Judge Norko with a Legislative Citation from Deputy Majority leader Matter Ritter and the Hartford legislative delegation (December 2017)



Judge Norko speaks with a delegation from South Korea (December 2010)



City of Hartford liaison RaeAnn Palmer and Judge Norko (December 2002)

JUDGE NORKO AT COMMUNITY COURT



Judge Norko with Judicial interpreter Alejandra Donath on 1120 -AM Spanish language radio (December 2010)



Judge Norko with Jonathan Geter, Hartford student and son of State's Attorney Clerk Dana Geter (2002)



Judge Norko and the City of Hartford's Yanira Rodriguez speak with students (2013)



Judge Norko with long-time courtroom clerk Valerie Sanders Myrick (January 2003)



Judge Norko with Community Health Service's George Dillon and Lisa Cameron (December 2012)

THANK YOU, JUDGE NORKO



Written by Glenn Kaas

Senior Assistant State's Attorney (Ret.)

In late 1997 or early 1998, Judge Norko called me into his chambers to explain the developing concept of "Community Court." He then asked if I would join him as his inaugural prosecutor when (if) the Hartford Community Court was established. I admit I was taken aback somewhat and asked for a bit of time to consider this offer.

I had gone to law school later in life after retiring early from the Hamden Police Department. I wasn't certain how this new 'touchy-feely,' therapeutic oriented atmosphere applied to me, the retired cop. After a bit of thought, and discussion with friends and family, I decided to give it a try.

For some time before this request, I had been struggling with some personal problems and was trying to maintain an even equilibrium at work. I wasn't sure a change of assignment at that moment would be all that productive. As it turned out, the transfer to the Community Court was exactly what I needed at that time.

From that first day, long before the date we actually opened for business, I was in on the planning stages: meeting with the Judge to set policies and procedures; reviewing the physical layout of the court; discussing the philosophy and goals with others who would staff the court; and even assisting with the hiring of support staff in the State's Attorney's office. There was much to be done before our first 'client' came in, when we opened our doors in November of 1998.

As it turned out, this 'touchy-feely' examine-the-underlying-cause of anti-social behavior approach to prosecution turned the adversarial system upside down. The bottom line was we all were pretty much interested in the same outcome: to investigate and address the underlying cause (i.e. homelessness, mental illness, addiction, etc.) of the 'quality of life' violations, and to persuade the offender to pay back the community with some sort of restorative service. This respite from decades of the adversarial mindset – in my police career, law school and my other State's Attorney's assignments – was a welcome change and served greatly to reduce my stress levels.

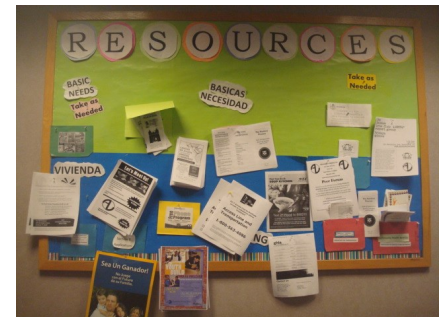
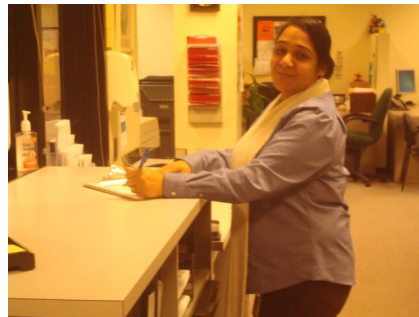
I quickly became an enthusiastic proponent of the Community Court model, travelling to various venues to speak, writing an article for the national prosecutor's magazine about this new paradigm for prosecutors and making visitors welcome from all over the U.S. (and the world) to see how we conducted business in Hartford, a newly-designated "mentor court."

Thank you, Judge Norko, for recognizing something within me that would be compatible with the Community Court, turning me into a staunch advocate for this concept and for making the last eleven years of my prosecutorial career meaningful and memorable.

CPA: REDEFINING COMMUNITY SERVICE

Community Partners in Action is the contracted provider that operates the Hartford Community Court's community service program. A vital component in restorative justice, CPA helps defendants to pay back for their violation and restore the community through performing community service. At the same time they help restore the defendant's sense of community by working on projects that help them feel a positive connection with Hartford neighborhoods.

In the Hartford Community Court, CPA is so much more than just community service. CPA and its staff, led by CPA Program Manager Deborah Barrows and Crew Leader Elizabeth Rosa, take it upon themselves to go the extra step to help people in need, through maintaining information boards in the social services waiting room that can connect people to jobs, housing and veteran's assistance. They also gather clothing donations from places such as the Saint Matthews Ladies Guild of Bristol, Reverend Charles Jacobs and the parishioners of Holy Trinity Church, William Morgan and his criminal justice students at Lincoln College, Mr. Winfred Phillips and the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Louise White and Voya Financial Services and The Hartford insurance company. Through their efforts, CPA has redefined the meaning of community service and has helped make Hartford a better place.



(Clockwise from above) Deborah Barrows with some of the clothing donations, Elizabeth Rosa helping a client at the waiting room window, several of the information boards in the waiting room, racks of clothes and shoes donated for in-need defendants.



CCAR: A BEACON OF LIGHT IN HARTFORD

Community based addiction recovery resources are vital. Service locations that are accessible, helpful and safe places for clients who are in-need, with limited transportation, and often afraid to take the first steps towards recovery are especially invaluable. One such place that fills those needs in Hartford is the Connecticut Community For Addiction Recovery (CCAR) Recovery Community Center at 198 Wethersfield Avenue.

This recovery center serves as a sanctuary for people in recovery in the heart of Hartford. Here, CCAR provides a place for recovery meetings and coaching, family support groups and safe, specific social events. They also provide telephone recovery support for people in recovery who voluntarily receive calls from peer-to-peer trained volunteers to check on their progress and see if they need any help. Although not a drop-in center where people can hang out aimlessly or a full treatment center, the recovery center provides a safe and welcoming place for people to work on their recovery with others in the community and to connect with the wide-array of community based services in Greater Hartford.

CCAR and the Hartford Community Court have worked together for more than a decade to help court based clients connect with these services. At the present time, CCAR Coordinator Geraldo Rivera comes to the community court many Monday mornings to touch base with court staff and to connect with any clients the court would like to refer.

“We are very appreciative to CCAR for working with us to provide a direct link to services through the community court,” Judge Geathers said. “They are a beacon of light to people who need help with addiction in our city.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CCAR: Please visit their website at <https://ccar.us> or call 1-866-205-9770 or 860-244-CCAR. To contact the Recovery Community Center at 198 Wethersfield Avenue in Hartford, please call 860-244-3343.

DMHAS JAIL DIVERSION’S LEON HOPKINS

The Hartford Community Court would like to welcome new State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services Jail Diversion Program Supervisor Leon Hopkins to the court. Mr. Hopkins will oversee the DMHAS Jail Diversion program at the Hartford Community Court and the Hartford Superior Court on Lafayette Street. The Jail Diversion team plays a very important role in the courts by working with people whose mental illness and/or addiction is a major contributing factor to their court-involvement.

Where legally appropriate the Jail Diversion team works with the courts to divert the person from possible incarceration towards supervised treatment and therapy as a means of addressing the person’s underlying issues.

“For nearly two decades, the Jail Diversion team has provided this court with productive options to resolve cases, has significantly helped thousands of people and has always operated with the utmost integrity,” Judge Geathers said. We look forward to continuing this important collaboration with Mr. Hopkins leading the team.”



DMHAS Jail Diversion Supervisor Leon Hopkins

COMMUNITY SERVICE SITES

October 2017

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
2 Foodshare—CRT mobile truck @ Jefferson St. Salvation Army, Benton St., Webster St.	3 Foodshare Bloomfield facility, Ebony Horsewomen, Holcomb Farms	4 Foodshare Union Baptist, Riverfront Recapture, city-wide trash bag pickup	5 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford, Knox Parks Earle Street Community Garden	6 Foodshare Bloomfield facility, Riverfront Recapture, Ebony Horsewomen
9 Columbus Day	10 Foodshare Bloomfield facility, Ebony Horsewomen, Holcomb Farms, Pulaski Mall	11 Foodshare Union Baptist, Ebony Horsewomen	12 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford, Riverfront Recapture	13 Foodshare Bloomfield facility & Place of Grace Episcopal Church, Ebony Horsewomen
16 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford, Riverfront Recapture,	17 Foodshare Bloomfield facility, Ebony Horsewomen, Holcomb Farms	18 Foodshare Union Baptist, Albany Ave., Main St., Maple Ave., Barry Square, Webster St.	19 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford & Union Baptist	20 Foodshare Bloomfield facility, Ebony Horsewomen, Riverfront Recapture
23 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford, Riverfront Recapture, Knox Parks Earle St. Garden	24 Foodshare Bloomfield facility, Ebony Horsewomen, Holcomb Farms, city-wide trash bag pickup	25 Washington Street, Retreat Ave., city-wide trash bag pickup	26 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford & Union Baptist	27 Foodshare Bloomfield facility, Ebony Horsewomen, Riverfront Recapture
30 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford & CRT mobile truck @ Jefferson St. Salvation Army	31 Foodshare Bloomfield facility, Ebony Horsewomen			

November 2017

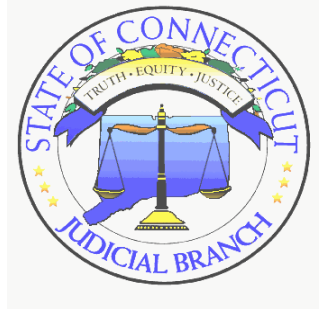
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
		1 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford, Riverfront Recapture, Webster St., Maple Ave.	2 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford, Sherbrook St., Grafton St., Hillside Ave.	3 Foodshare Bloomfield facility, Riverfront Recapture, Mark Twain Dr.
6 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford, Riverfront Recapture	7 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford, Ebony Horsewomen	8 Foodshare CRT mobile truck @ Park St.	9 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford	10 Veteran's Day
13 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford & CRT mobile truck @ Jefferson St., Riverfront Recapture	14 Foodshare Bloomfield facility, Ebony Horsewomen	15 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford, Ebony Horsewomen	16 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford & Union Baptist	17 Community Health Services Thanksgiving food distribution, Riverfront Recapture
20 Charter Oak Health Center Thanksgiving food distribution, Riverfront Recapture	21 Foodshare Bloomfield facility, Ebony Horsewomen	22 Foodshare CRT mobile truck @ Park St.	23 Thanksgiving	24 Riverfront Recapture, Holy Trinity Food Pantry, Ebony Horsewomen
27 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford & CRT mobile truck @ Jefferson St., Riverfront Recapture	28 Foodshare Bloomfield facility, Ebony Horsewomen	29 Sherbrooke St., Grafton St., Hillside Ave.	30 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford, Riverfront Recapture	

December 2017

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
				1 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford, Riverfront Recapture
4 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford, Riverfront Recapture, Mark Twain Drive	5 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford, Lafayette St., Russ St., Lawrence St.	6 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford & CRT mobile truck @ Jefferson St. & Place of Grace	7 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford, Sherbrooke St., Grafton St., Hillside Ave.	8 Foodshare Bloomfield facility, Ebony Horsewomen
11 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford & CRT mobile truck @ Jefferson St., Riverfront Recapture	12 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford, Ebony Horsewomen	13 Foodshare Bloomfield facility	14 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford, New Britain Ave., Washington St.	15 Foodshare Bloomfield facility, Ebony Horsewomen
18 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford	19 Foodshare Bloomfield facility, Ebony Horsewomen, Julius St.	20 Foodshare Bloomfield facility & CRT mobile truck @ Park St. & Putnam St.	21 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford	22 Foodshare Bloomfield facility
25 Christmas	26 Foodshare Bloomfield facility, Ebony Horsewomen	27 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford	28 Foodshare Regional Market Hartford	29 Foodshare Bloomfield facility, Ebony Horsewomen

STATE OF CONNECTICUT JUDICIAL BRANCH

HARTFORD COMMUNITY COURT



WINTER 2018 NEWSLETTER

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