

Engaging residents and building community

By Scott Thompson, Family Centers

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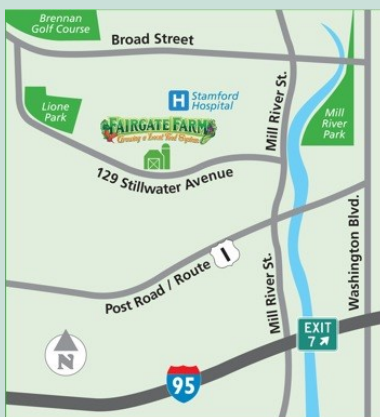
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Fairgate Farm Free and Open to All!



Come, volunteer and see what everyone is talking about! Take home just-picked fruit and vegetables – plus contribute to the health and wellbeing of our community!

FairgateFarm.com

Board Meetings for 2017:

- August 23, 2017
- September 27, 2017
- October 25, 2017
- November 15, 2017
- December 13, 2017

The meetings will begin at 6:00 p.m. at Post House, 40 Clinton Avenue in the first-floor meeting room.

The desire to belong and to be part of a larger community is universal. No matter how independent we may feel, our lives typically are improved through activities with family, friends, neighbors and associates who share our interests and values, work with us, or support our needs.

For many years Resident Service Coordinators (RSCs) have attended to individual needs and connected residents of Charter Oak Communities to community services. It is a time-honored mission to identify opportunities, provide access and assistance, and to follow up with residents and their families.

Through this work, many individuals and families at COC expressed a desire for more community-related opportunities and activities. It seems that inside all of us are individual identities as well as community identities. Like food, clothing and shelter, our need for community is vital, but our experience of community has declined. The commitment to ‘us,’ ‘we,’ ‘together’ have taken a back seat to daily needs and responsibilities.

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Resident Service Coordinators top row, left to right: Alexa Griffin, Jean Vaccaro, Mirlande Pressat, Samuel Ambroise, Nicole Beckham, Ramon Lara. Bottom row, left to right: Victoria Mitlin, Shawnece Simmons, Resident Service Supervisor Scott Thompson.



Employee Profile: Pete Novajosky



Pete Novajosky, Fairgate Farm’s new manager, has been busy in his position since May. Beginning at the height of the planting and growing season, Pete has been active with general Farm management, as well as getting to know and assisting the volunteers, and conducting community outreach. “Although it needed manicuring in the spring, I was excited about its potential and was impressed with the dedicated volunteers behind it,” Pete observed.

Pete’s previous positions have prepared him well for his new role at Fairgate Farm. His passion for farming

began with working in his family garden every summer as a child. He further developed his interest through books, courses and experiences. Employed as a farm manager at Gilbertie’s Herb Gardens, Pete managed an extensive organic farm of potted herbs and vegetable plants, micro greens and other organic produce. Pete’s extensive plant knowledge lead him to his position at Green Up in Stamford, where he consulted with customers in both organic and hydroponic garden design and operation, as well as living wall and garden bed design and installation.

His favorite aspects of Fairgate Farm are the diverse fruits and vegetables grown, and the committed and hard-working volunteers who share pride in the Farm. There are several senior volunteers he’s grateful to who love to weed in the gardens and who provide advice and wisdom from their experiences in their birth countries using herbs to help cure certain ailments.

Our all-organic community farm has hosted individuals of all ages, including mothers with young

children, students, seniors and corporate team-building groups. Pete looks forward to attracting high school and college student volunteers to the farm, as well, and wants the farm to be an educational tool for engaging everyone in the community.

Pete has plenty going on in his free time – he is recently married to Amanda and they have a new house to help keep them busy. He likes to travel and was recently in Aruba for his honeymoon. In his spare time, Pete enjoys spending time with family and friends, partaking in any outdoor game or sport, playing the guitar and of course, working in his own garden.

Pete would like the community to know he welcomes all volunteers, whether for a one-time visit, occasional help or a regular, ongoing commitment. Volunteering is a healthy, outdoor activity that lends itself to meeting interesting people and giving back to the community. For more information, visit us at FairgateFarm.com.

Engaging Community

A presentation to celebrate black history month was held at Lawnhill Terrace with lead drummer, Kwame Henry Jones, of Infinite Roots. Kwame returned to Lawnhill Terrace in July as part of an initiative the Stamford Library Bookmobile hosted called ‘Build a Better World.’





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From one small meal at Oak Park, families and RSCs engaged in discussions about their experiences relating to community. This has generated many ideas and a year of incredible momentum. Our lesson learned: be good listeners and support the residents, but also serve as facilitators.

For example, residents wanted a summer event for their children. Last summer a bouncy castle, ice cream truck, popcorn machine and family games served as vehicles for an extraordinary event in which more than 100 residents and families joined. The event generated such goodwill and enthusiasm that a Fall Harvest event was planned, and over 85 people came together to celebrate regional cuisine and stories of food and family.

Parents then expressed their concerns for a safe place for their children to learn and grow. RSCs created a needed after-school program at Lawnhill Terrace. This past June, 17 children ‘graduated’ in a wonderful celebration of culture and learning. Seamlessly, there has been a black history celebration including a rousing drumming presentation by the children of Oak Park and Lawnhill Terrace, an Easter egg/spring celebration, family photo portraits, and a Mother’s Day celebration.

At each COC site, RSCs have been cultivating new relationships within the community and have identified a host of activities. Wellness-related events such as Scofield Manor’s seated Tai Chi, walking groups, family tea events,

complicated coloring, and political chat have been well received. Glenbrook Manor hosted a breakfast buffet recently, and Rippowam Manor hosts community coffee time three times per week.

Additionally, Fairgate, Westwood, Palmer Square and Greenfield include ‘Youth Chat,’ and have been host to 150 school breakfasts and lunches this summer. Stamford Public

Library’s book mobile, adult swimming classes, a holiday decoration event, adopt-a-grandparent, and summer and yearlong reading challenges also have been held. Stamford Manor hosts healthy

cooking, photo reminiscing and “garden in a pot” activities. Clinton and Quintard Manor dove deep with March Madness basketball events, multi-modal art days, hunger awareness, “beat the heat” art day and computer classes. Post House hosts the “most enthusiastic bingo games on the East Coast,” ladies luncheon, wellness with Jean, cupcake decorating and an upcoming event in which the children of Stamford’s West Side family sites will ‘adopt a grandparent.’

As of this summer, there were more than 60 community engagement events attended by more than 430 residents, doubling last-year’s activities. We are less without each other, and community is one way to complete ourselves. Capturing the experience of shared living at COC and going beyond our individual identities has helped us create an expanded identity of that of community resident.





New Multi DDA Lockbox

Effective August 1, 2017, COC has moved to one centralized multi-DDA lockbox at Webster Bank for all properties.

Please **discontinue** using the previously provided envelopes with the following addresses:

1. Stamford Housing Authority – Federal, Dept. 331, P.O. Box 1259, Harford, CT 06143-1259
2. Stamford Housing Authority, d/b/a Charter Oak Communities, 22 Clinton Avenue, Stamford, CT 06901
3. Stamford Housing Authority – State, Dept. 332, Hartford, CT 06143-1259

Only use the envelope that reads:

**Stamford Housing Authority – Multi DDA Lockbox
Department 340
PO Box 1259
Hartford, CT 06143-1259**

As a reminder, please remember:

1. Priority mail either through the post office, FedEx or UPS is **not accepted** at the lockbox.
2. Please include the statement stub with all payments.
3. Correspondence should not be sent to the lockbox.
4. Security Deposits should not be sent to the lockbox.
5. All payments should be filled out correctly and signed.

Painting for Dad

By Family Centers



A new twist on Father's Day art projects was in action at the after-school program at Lawnhill Terrace. The children were introduced to different types of art projects as part of their free activity time. For Father's Day, the children used a Sketch Master Computer application, which converts regular photos into raw sketch lines that were then printed. The children then painted the sketches using their favorite colors, giving them an added sense of artistry.

The event also provided the children an opportunity to paint different photos that were given to them. They were encouraged to interact with their peers and practice shared painting to learn more about each other as well as about one another's parents. Teamwork was also stressed. These activities allowed the children to express their artistic skills while doing something for a loved one.

The presentation to parents was tremendous as they were on the receiving end of a very personal art expression from their child. The activity had a very positive impact on the children and motivated them to continue to work on their artistic skills. "Painting for Dad" coordinated by Resident Service Coordinators, has been one of the many great activities happening at the Lawnhill Terrace and Oak Park after-school programs.