

## Fairgate Farm Kicks Off Its 2019 Growing Season!

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### Calling All Volunteers to Fairgate Farm!



April is *National Volunteer Month!* Our season opens officially on April 15<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. Review our new website for updates, [www.FairgateFarm.com](http://www.FairgateFarm.com)

#### Board Meetings for 2019:

- April 24, 2019
- May 22, 2019
- June 26, 2019
- July 24, 2019
- August 28, 2019
- September 25, 2019
- October 23, 2019
- November 13, 2019
- December 18, 2019

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

Fairgate Farm's 2019 growing season is underway! Volunteers and Farm Manager Pete Novajosky have been busy working indoors while the Farm itself has been sleeping.

Last year, the Farm produced over 5,000 pounds and 150 varieties of organic fruits, vegetables, herbs and flowers. This year is promising to be just as bountiful and exciting. Here are a few highlights of what has been happening over the winter months, and upcoming activities:

The Healthy Food Fund grant was awarded to Fairgate Farm by The Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation. The grant will provide support for building volunteer participation and increasing access to healthy, locally-grown organic produce.

Additionally, the Farm will be expanding community development efforts with our newly hired part-time seasonal employee, Heidi Andersen. Heidi has been a volunteer at Fairgate Farm since 2017 and has added tremendous value, including work on the farmers market, compost maintenance, classes and educational development, and

website refinement. Please welcome Heidi to Fairgate Farm when visiting this spring!

There is a busy program of events planned for the 2019 season. Earth Day will launch the season Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup> with a Farm and neighbor-

hood cleanup, soil preparation and some planting.

For the first time at Fairgate Farm, we will have starter plants for sale on Saturdays throughout May. Pete began the seedlings in our greenhouse in March. They include an assortment of herbs and vegetables, all available for purchase. We'll also be hosting several free gardening classes this May to

help home gardeners get started planting no matter how much space you have to grow plants. Additionally, our annual Strawberry Festival will take place Saturday, June 8<sup>th</sup>, with activities for all ages and, of course, delicious strawberries to taste!



*Seedlings that were started in our greenhouse will be ready for our plant sale on Saturdays in May.*

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## Employee Profile: Daniela Franco



Daniela Franco joined COC as a custodian in January 2018. Her formal job title, though, hardly captured the range of services she provided. She has performed work orders, painted, completed unit turnovers and been a meticulous cleaner, as well as completing general custodian and maintenance

work. Recently, Daniela was promoted to a Building Service Associate at Wormser Congregate. She is responsible for ensuring the safety and security of all residents and performing custodial work and general maintenance repair tasks for the facility.

Daniela enjoys her work at Wormser Congregate, especially being with the residents. Proud to be one of the staff members, Daniela exclaims, “The residents are pleasant, and it’s an awesome place to work!” Daniela is a true asset to the organization, always ready to lend a hand, with a dynamic smile and bountiful energy. She enjoys the residents and often goes the extra length to help those in need.

Daniela emigrated from Brazil to the United States more than 19 years ago and lived in New York before making

a home in Stamford. Daniela speaks Portuguese and is currently taking English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and studying to be a United States citizen. Although Daniela’s free time is spent reading and studying the English language, she enjoys going to the movies with her two sons, ages 9 and 19, to learn and understand English more fluently.

With strong family values, Daniela enjoys spending time visiting family and friends in Brazil. Gatherings and celebrations include family traditions with delicious food, such as churrasco (steak), and other native dishes of their culture, along with much joy and laughter!

*Thank you to Luisa Correa, Technology Services Supervisor at COC, for her assistance with translation.*

## Valentine’s Day Bash Was a Big Hit!

By: Samuel Ambrose, Family Centers Resident Services Coordinator

Stamford Manor’s Annual Valentine’s Day Bash was another hit this year! Over 35 Stamford Manor residents came to join in the festivities. This year was particularly exciting due to the delicious food and special amenities. Several residents and Resident Service Coordinator Samuel (Sam) Ambrose came together to create a backdrop on a wall that was used to take colorful, awesome pictures of the residents!

The backdrop was created by the Stamford Manor Arts & Craft Group that meets every Monday with Sam and the residents. In addition to having pictures taken at the event, residents created silly Valentine props for their faces to make the event even more fun. In fact, the props were so popular that the residents wore them throughout the evening. To add to the

festivities, a delicious chicken salad and heart-shaped red velvet Valentine cake for dessert was enjoyed by everyone.



It was an epic event for everyone to remember! They laughed, listened to some great music, danced and had a great time with friends, which is reflective of the great community spirit at Stamford Manor.

To continually bring the Stamford Manor community together, residents are welcome to join in weekly events such as Movies & Snacks, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, Bingo, and You Tubing Around the World, as well as Games & Fun. For more information on Stamford Manor activities contact Sam Ambrose at (203) 977-1400, Extension 3164.





## Fairgate Farm Kicks Off Growing Season! *(Continued from Page 1)*



Our composting program is ongoing at Fairgate Farm. Individuals are encouraged to bring their compostable materials (such as fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee grounds, eggshells, grass and plant trimmings) to the Farm year round. For convenience we have yellow composting bins located at our main Farm gate for easy access.

*The Farm's grapevine-covered outdoor classroom – Anthony's Arbor – is the perfect meeting space for our community members to attend garden classes, cooking demonstrations and learn about nature while building community.*



Be sure to visit us in May when our Farmers Market will open on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon. In June, the Market will open on Thursdays from noon to 6 p.m. through October. The Farmers Market will source from local Connecticut farms to offer the best seasonal selection of organic fruits, vegetables and herbs, as well as selling excess produce grown right at Fairgate Farm.

Finally, the Fairgate Farm family is always interested in meeting new volunteers. Please email [FairgateFarm@gmail.com](mailto:FairgateFarm@gmail.com) if you are interested in helping out, planting and harvesting your own fruits and vegetables. Volunteers take home fresh-cut produce; what's left is delivered to homeless shelters and soup kitchens throughout the community.

There is such an abundance of activities, events and classes to attend this season! So be sure to visit us at our new website [www.FairgateFarm.com](http://www.FairgateFarm.com) for all current updates. We hope to see you soon.



*Tomato and pepper seedlings growing in our greenhouse!*



### Safety TIPS

- ◆ Grills are not permitted on COC balconies, patios or lawns.
- ◆ Open fires are not allowed on any property.
- ◆ Balconies are not storage units for car parts, tires or old furniture. Only exterior patio furniture belongs on the balconies.
- ◆ Bikes are not allowed in buildings. They should be stored outside on bike racks.
- ◆ Commercial shopping carts are not allowed in buildings. Residents should purchase a small fold-up cart for shopping.

### Career Opportunities



CHARTER OAK COMMUNITIES

For the latest employment opportunities, review <https://charter oak communities.org/careers>



## *Art and Conversation at Wormser Congregate*

*By: Family Centers Wormser Congregate Intern Nikki Jezairian, MSW*

Last October our newest group, Art & Conversation, began at Wormser Congregate. The hallways were buzzing and the residents were full of curiosity and excitement! Though the group started off small with only two curious residents, within a few weeks it expanded to 10.

The residents have enthusiastically completed projects such as canvas painting, collages, bead and charm necklaces, sketches and decorative wooden boxes.



My favorite project with the residents was making vision boards. This gave each resident the opportunity to make their own board with pictures of things they enjoy doing, places where they would like to go, words that motivate them and pictures of their loved ones. It was inspiring to see how much they shared, and the joy that this project brought to each participant.

Along with the art aspect of the group, we have conversations as well. The group discusses a plethora of topics from popular culture to their childhood experiences. This group has given the residents of Wormser Congregate a safe place to speak freely and lead conversation,

as well as an outlet to express themselves through their artwork.

I've learned so much from the Wormser residents! They are a talented group of people, and I'm fortunate to have had the opportunity to join the

Wormser team. The residents have been truly an inspiration to me, and I can only hope to have had a positive impact on them, as much as they have had on me.

## *Family Centers Hosts Classes at COC Communities*

- National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) science workshops for children ages five to 12 years old will be held on Fridays at 4 p.m. at Lawnhill Terrace and Fairgate communities. Call Mirlande Pressat at Lawnhill (203) 977-1400, Extension 3165, or Nicole Beckham at Fairgate (203) 517-0132 for more information.
- "Computer Basics for Adults" will be held at Quintard Manor on April 17<sup>th</sup>. Call Shawnece Simmons (203) 977-1400, Extension 3171 for more information.
- "Afterschool Hangout" club at Park 215 meets 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. All children ages five to 13 are welcome to join! Call Jackie Ofria at (203) 517-0597 for more information.
- "Walking in Mill River Park" on Tuesdays at 2 p.m. resumes at Stamford Manor. Call Sam Ambrose at (203) 977-1400, Extension 3164 for more information.
- "Mommy, Daddy and Me" parent/toddler play and learning group at Lawnhill Terrace will be held on Wednesday mornings at 11 a.m. Call Carmen Izaguirre at (203) 324-3167, Extension 4112 for more information if you have a child ages 18 months to three years old.