



TRANSFORMING LIVES

Spring 2026 Newsletter

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A New Place to Call Home: Berkowitz II Opens Its Doors

Chrysalis Center is proud to announce the opening of Berkowitz II, a new 28-unit affordable housing development located in the heart of New Britain's vibrant Little Poland neighborhood. A ribbon cutting ceremony held on Friday, April 24th brought together community partners, supporters, and local leaders to celebrate this exciting milestone and the completion of nearly two years of planning and collaboration.

Located at 686 Main Street, Berkowitz II represents a transformative investment in the community, turning a long-vacant lot into a welcoming mixed-income residential community. Funded by the State of Connecticut Department of Housing, the \$11.3 million development features 28 thoughtfully designed two-bedroom townhome apartments, providing high-quality, affordable housing for families seeking stability, independence, and a fresh start in the heart of New Britain.

Designed to help break down barriers to housing, Berkowitz II includes six supportive housing units designated for single parents experiencing homelessness, alongside 22 apartments serving a mix of income levels. Families moving into supportive units are welcomed into fully furnished apartments equipped with essential household items, helping ease transitions and ensuring every resident is treated with dignity and care.

Berkowitz II is proof of what is possible when people and partners come together with a shared vision. More than just housing, it represents a foundation for new beginnings, stronger communities, and brighter futures. Berkowitz II also builds upon the success of the original Berkowitz building - once an empty landmark, now a place where individuals and families have found renewed hope and opportunity.



Seila Mosquera-Bruno, Commissioner, Department of Housing, **Sharon L. Castelli**, CEO, Chrysalis Center Housing Development Corporation
Susan Bysiewicz, Lieutenant Governor & **Robert "Bobby" Sanchez**, Mayor of New Britain



Empty Bowls 2026, A Night of Impact

On March 25th, Chrysalis Center's TCC (Training & Conference Center) was filled with friends, volunteers, and supporters who came together for our Empty Bowls event - an evening dedicated to raising awareness about food insecurity through this global grassroots initiative. Empty Bowls events are held in communities around the world to support local charities and hunger relief efforts. The generosity of Chrysalis supporters helps sustain the Freshplace food pantry and the La Cocina Culinary Arts Training Program.

Guests enjoyed homemade soups created by Chrysalis Center's Culinary Arts training students and salads featuring produce from Urban Roots Hydroponics. Each guest selected a beautiful, handcrafted bowl to take home - a simple yet powerful reminder of all the empty bowls around the world.

Chrysalis Center is deeply grateful to our sponsors, whose generosity and partnership make this event possible year after year; **Max Cares Foundation & Tom Griesing**, and to the many wonderful artists and studios who donated their work: **The Lazy Potter Studio, Gildersleeve Pottery, The Clay Date, Lisa York Arts, Summer Green Pottery, The Firestone, The Pottery Piazza, Bliss Pottery House, Wesleyan Potters, Brush It Off Art & Pottery, and The Northampton Pottery.**

A special thank you to **Bearingstar Insurance** for volunteering as our soup servers! We are so grateful to have community partners like you standing alongside us in the fight against hunger.



Decades of Dedication at Chrysalis Center

Honoring Becky & Jenny

At Chrysalis Center, the focus remains on individuals seeking support and those dedicated to providing it. Becky Wilmot and Jenny Maher exemplify this commitment through their decades long service to the organization.

Becky, now in her 26th year at Chrysalis Center, began in 2000 as a case manager in residential programs for individuals with long-term mental health challenges. She transitioned to the Family Matters program, dedicating over two decades to assisting families with children in securing stable housing and self-sufficiency. Her responsibilities include home visits, coordinating with landlords, and connecting families to vital resources and employment support. The most rewarding aspect of Becky's work is seeing families achieve independence.

Jenny, who has been with Chrysalis Center for 20 years, began her career in the Mental Health Alternative to Incarceration program, supporting individuals as they worked toward stability and recovery. Currently a Community Support Specialist, she assists clients with organizing daily routines, managing households, and developing coping strategies for mental health issues. Jenny also encourages self-advocacy and provides practical tools such as journaling prompts and mindfulness techniques. She measures success through incremental milestones like independent anxiety management and clients achieving self-sufficiency.

Becky and Jenny share the belief - central to Chrysalis Center's mission - that **with appropriate support, individuals can achieve meaningful progress**. Over the years, they have observed former clients regain stability and return to contribute, whether by donating, supporting others, or entering the social services professions themselves.

After decades of service, Becky and Jenny cite the relationships they build and the impact they witness as primary motivators. While their work evolves, their purpose remains constant: supporting individuals as they build stability, independence, and hope for the future. Chrysalis Center thanks Becky and Jenny for their commitment, dedication, and the excellent care they provide to our clients.



Becky Wilmot
Community Case Manager,
Family Matters



Jenny Maher
Community Support Specialist,
Community Support Program

Client Spotlight: A New Chapter for Jermaine

After three decades behind bars - sentenced as a teenager in the 1990s - Jermaine stepped into a world that had completely changed. Still, he made a decision early on to move forward with purpose. "When I came out, I did everything I needed to do," he said.

That mindset shaped his reentry. Jermaine leaned into every opportunity, completing certifications and enrolling in programs across the state. "Every program that came my way, I took advantage of it," he shared. Whether it was job training or support services, he stayed committed to building something better for himself.



Jermaine pictured here with Court Support Case Manager, Casey Vieira

Finding work, however, was one of the toughest hurdles. Without prior work history, the process was discouraging and slow. "The job search ... it was rough," Jermaine said. "We were putting in applications - five, ten at a time - and nobody's calling." Instead of giving up, he pushed himself to grow. "I had to learn how to do interviews, how to sell myself," he added, skills that would eventually make a difference.

In February, Jermaine reached a major milestone when he landed a housekeeping job at St. Francis Hospital. "It meant a lot, that was my first chance," he said. Even as other job opportunities started to come in, he chose to stay where he was given that first opportunity. "I'm not gonna leave," he said, proud of the trust he's building and the consistency he's maintaining.

Throughout the journey, support played a critical role. Jermaine credits his Court Support Case Manager, Casey Vieira, with helping him stay focused and motivated. "She always kept me moving ... 'Keep working hard,'" he recalled. During a particularly difficult stretch, when progress felt slow, an extension on his housing made all the difference. "That was really big. I needed that. It gave me the motivation to keep going."

Today, Jermaine is focused on what comes next. He's working toward full-time employment, saving money, and eventually having a place of his own. He also has hopes of starting a small business one day. More than anything, he takes pride in the path he's on now. "Being an upstanding citizen - it means a lot," he said. "I'm doing it the right way." For others navigating life after incarceration, Jermaine keeps his message simple and honest: **"Stay focused. Stay steadfast. Don't give up ... it's a journey."**

Volunteer Spotlight: Thank You, Nassau Financial Group

Thank you, Nassau Financial Group, for your incredible support! Your generous donation is helping cultivate a thriving garden with trees, raspberry bushes, and fresh plants for the 2026 season - directly supporting the individuals and families we serve.

In addition to this meaningful investment, Nassau brought 20 dedicated volunteers who rolled up their sleeves to help plant, mulch, and weed, warmly welcoming these new additions to the garden. Their hands-on support not only brought the space to life but also helped lay the groundwork for a successful and abundant growing season. Because of partners like Nassau Financial Group, we are able to expand access to fresh, healthy food while creating opportunities for connection, learning, and community. Chrysalis Center is grateful for the continued partnership and commitment of Nassau to our mission!



Volunteers from Nassau Financial assist with garden preparation and planting.



Save the Date: Butterfly Bash
Thursday, October 1st, 2026
Hartford Marriott Downtown
More information to follow - we look forward to celebrating with you!

Scan below to visit us online:



For information about joining the committee or sponsorship opportunities, please contact Summer Sivetz at ssivetz@chrysaliscenterct.org

A Night of Gratitude: Celebrating Our Volunteers & Donors

On Tuesday, April 21st, Chrysalis Center had the pleasure of hosting our Donor and Volunteer Appreciation Event at the TCC (Training & Conference Center). It was a meaningful evening dedicated to celebrating the incredible individuals and partners who make our work possible.

The evening began with a behind-the-scenes look at Chrysalis Center's programs. Aliana Rivera, Freshplace Program Manager, led guests on a tour of the Fresh food pantry, while Sean Bodnar, Urban Farming Manager, shared a brief overview of Urban Roots Hydroponics Grow Center and the impact of our broader Food Hub initiatives.

Later in the evening, Chrysalis Center proudly recognized this year's award recipients. The **2026 Individual Volunteer honoree, Tom Griesing**, has made an incredible impact in just under a year. From arriving early every Monday at Freshplace to help prepare for the week, to playing an important role in the success of Empty Bowls, Tom brings dedication, consistency, and a great sense of humor to everything he does. Chrysalis Center is incredibly grateful for the time and commitment he gives.

Chrysalis Center's **Group Volunteers of the Year, Traveler's Chorale**, has been a valued partner for many years, and we've been incredibly fortunate to be chosen as the beneficiary of their twice-yearly concerts. Through these efforts, they have helped provide thousands of pounds of food - enough to keep Freshplace shelves stocked for months at a time. That level of consistent support makes a meaningful difference for the families Chrysalis Center serves, and it's not something we could do without their support. What's especially impactful is that their generosity extends beyond the concerts. Members, along with their friends and families, continue to give in additional ways - whether through financial contributions or gift cards that directly support Chrysalis Center's programs and the families who rely on them most. **Thank you everyone!**



Freshplace food pantry Program Manager,
Aliana Rivera, Volunteer Honoree
Tom Griesing, & Volunteers



Members of the Travelers Chorale

Volunteer with us! Chrysalis Center is always looking for extra hands in the **Freshplace food pantry**, the **Food Forest at Cosgrove Commons**, and with **Facilities Maintenance** to help make a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals and families in our community. Please email Sarah Cripsey at scripsey@chrysaliscenterct.org for more information.

Wingate Recovery Home Opens at Chrysalis Center

Chrysalis Center is proud to announce the opening of Wingate Recovery Home, which will welcome its first residents at the end of May. This new program marks an exciting chapter in our continued commitment to recovery, healing, and community care.

Funded by the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Wingate Recovery Home is a co-ed residential program that provides up to 90 days of care in a safe, structured, and drug-free environment with 24/7 support. Designed for adults navigating substance use and co-occurring disorders, the program offers individuals a place to stabilize, rebuild, and move forward on their recovery journey.

Through person-centered case management, each resident develops an individualized recovery plan focused on employment, relapse prevention, life skills, and strengthening community connections. Residents are also linked to outpatient treatment services tailored to their unique needs, helping ensure continued support beyond their stay.

With a 16-bed capacity, Wingate Recovery Home provides an intimate and supportive setting where individuals can begin again while building a strong foundation for lasting recovery and independence.



(L-R) **Sharon L. Castelli**, CEO Chrysalis Center, **Nancy Navarretta**, Commissioner Department of Mental Health and Addition Services, **Christina McMillan**, Chief Program Officer, Chrysalis Center, **Nelcienid Sierra**, Program Manager, Chrysalis Center, **Dr. Natalie DuMont**, Regional Manager, Department of Mental Health and Addition Services

Connect with Chrysalis Center!

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The generosity of our donors and community partners makes our mission possible. Scan the QR code to visit our website. For more information on Chrysalis Center's programs and services or to be added or removed from our mailing list, please contact mediacomms@chrysaliscenterct.org.



Getting Help...Getting Better...Giving Back.

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Chrysalis Center accepts MasterCard, Visa American Express and Discover. Please visit our website or scan below, to donate online, purchase event tickets, or sponsor a fundraiser event.

Transforming Lives, Chrysalis Center's Quarterly Newsletter, is a publication distributed by Chrysalis Center, Inc. a non-profit charitable organization serving the Connecticut area.

For more information or to join our mailing list please visit: www.chrysaliscenterct.org

Save the Date:

Chrysalis Center will receive a 15% bonus on every donation made through the **Birdies for Charity** program.

Now through Sunday, June 28th!

Scan here to donate:



Fundraiser

Thursday, June 11, 2026 | 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm
5 1/2 South Main Street, West Hartford, CT

Every scoop purchased helps support programs and services that empower individuals and families on their path to transformation.

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