



TRANSFORMING LIVES

Summer 2026 Newsletter

Volume 51, Issue 2

A Place to Begin Again: Wingate Recovery Home

This spring, Chrysalis Center proudly opened Wingate Recovery Home, a 12-bed co-ed residential recovery program funded by the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). More than just a place to stay, Wingate is a structured pre and post-rehabilitation recovery program that helps adults with substance use and co-occurring mental health disorders build the skills and stability needed for long-term recovery. Residents receive up to 90 days of care in a safe, substance-free environment with 24-hour support.

Wingate serves individuals who are ready to begin the next step in their recovery journey. Many residents arrive facing homelessness, limited family support, or other barriers to stability. Through individualized case management, staff help residents address housing, employment, healthcare, transportation, benefits, and other essential needs while developing personalized recovery plans that foster independence.

Residents also participate in recovery groups, life-skills training, and wellness workshops covering topics such as relapse prevention, stress management, budgeting, communication, and healthy coping strategies. Rather than doing tasks for residents, staff guide them through everyday responsibilities like scheduling appointments, managing medications, and navigating community resources, helping them build the confidence needed for a successful transition back into the community.

Chrysalis Center partners with providers including Connecticut Valley Hospital, InterCommunity Health Care, Blue Hills Detox Center, APT Foundation, Inc., and The Institute of Living to ensure residents receive coordinated care throughout their recovery journey.

"We want people to feel like they're coming into a home, not an institution," said Program Manager Nelcienid Sierra. "We treat every resident with dignity, respect, and compassion."

By providing structure, support, and evidence-based recovery services, Wingate Recovery Home helps individuals move beyond treatment and build a foundation for lasting recovery and independence.



Shared living space



Resident room



Residents participate in an enrichment activity.

Scan below for site tour:



Driving Out Hunger, One Green at a Time

On June 4, Chrysalis Center welcomed golfers, sponsors, volunteers, and community partners to Manchester Country Club for our inaugural **Driving Out Hunger, One Green at a Time** golf tournament. Together, supporters enjoyed a sunny day on the course while raising critical funds for Chrysalis Center's Food Hub and our mission to combat food insecurity throughout Greater Hartford.

Following the tournament, golfers gathered for awards, raffle drawings, a silent auction, and an afternoon reception celebrating the event's success. Thanks to the incredible generosity of everyone involved, the tournament raised more than \$17,000 to support programs including Freshplace Food Pantry, Urban Roots Hydroponic Grow Center, and Chrysalis' community gardens.



(L-R) Ben Dion, Andrew Comollo, Ryan Zelek, Jonathan Bellock
from First Hartford: Connolly and Partners and
EH&N Construction



The scenic course at Manchester Country Club

Chrysalis Center extends its heartfelt thanks to our generous sponsors, dedicated volunteers from Cigna Healthcare, in-kind donors, and every golfer who helped make our inaugural event a tremendous success. Your support is helping expand access to healthy, nutritious food while creating brighter futures for individuals and families throughout our community.

We are grateful for the support of: Andrea Obston Marketing Communications, Brothers Oil Company, Inc., Coca-Cola Northwest, Connecticut Communications, Connolly and Partners, LLC, EH&N Construction Company, Faith Asset Management, LLC, Gallagher, Hartford Elks Lodge 19, Kris Squires Print & Promotional Products, LLC, Merchant Advocate, Northeast Door & Security, Omar Coffee, The Petit Family Foundation, Sans Souci Restaurant, Severance Foods, Inc. / Pan De Oro, Talcott Financial Group, TD Bank, Trader Joe's and Whole Foods.

Save the date for next year's tournament!
Thursday, June 10, 2027
Manchester Country Club

Stay up to date & Connect with Chrysalis Center:

Access our event calendar at chrysaliscenterct.org/get-involved

Scan Here!



@ChrysalisHtfd



Chrysalis Center, Inc.



@ChrysalisCenterHTFD

The generosity of our donors and community partners makes our mission possible. 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.

From Homelessness to Hope: Mickie's Journey

When Mickie moved from Puerto Rico to Hartford in 1994 he was looking for a fresh start. Instead, he faced a series of difficult experiences, including the loss of his mother, struggles with his mental health, substance use, and serious health challenges. Over time these experiences contributed to Mickie experiencing homelessness in 2009. During that period, Mickie struggled to care for himself and his health. For nearly two years he lived in an unstable and unsafe situation. "I was crying almost every day. My health was not good. I was not taking my medications."

Eventually Mickie decided to seek help. He connected with a program where he met a former Chrysalis Center case manager, who helped him enroll in the Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) program, and begin receiving housing assistance and case management services from Chrysalis. For Mickie, that support became a turning point. **"That is what saved my life. Since I got my own place, everything changed."**

In 2012 Mickie moved into his own apartment. Having a safe and stable place to call home gave him what he had been missing for years: security, confidence, and the opportunity to focus on his future. He began taking his medications regularly, eating healthier, paying his bills, and prioritizing his physical and mental health. "I started living a good life again. I got my confidence back." Stable housing also helped Mickie rebuild relationships with his family," as they saw him becoming healthier and more stable, they began reconnecting. Today, Mickie is grateful for his relationships with his sister, nieces, and nephews.

One of the most meaningful moments in his journey was being able to care for his father during his final days. Their relationship had been difficult in the past, but after Mickie found stability he had the opportunity to be there for his father and find a sense of closure. Before his father passed away, Mickie made him a promise to keep moving forward. "He wanted me to do good. And here I am right now." More than a decade after finding stable housing, Mickie continues to prioritize his health and well-being. He considers his progress with his mental health, remaining consistent with his medications, and maintaining his stability among his greatest accomplishments.

"Being healthy, seeking help for my mental health ... that's my motivation. I see myself right now, and that's the best motivation I have." Mickie credits the people who supported him - including his Chrysalis Center case manager - with helping him see a different future. **"I'm very grateful for Chrysalis Center. That was the door for me to get better."**

Today, Mickie wants others who may be experiencing homelessness or facing difficult circumstances to know that they are not alone. His message is simple: "Never give up. Seek help and talk to someone." Mickie's story is a powerful reminder that a safe place to call home can be the beginning of lasting change. With access to stable housing, supportive services, and people who believe in his ability to move forward, Mickie was able to rebuild his health, reconnect with his family, and regain his confidence.

Now Mickie is living the life he once hoped was possible.

YOUR SUPPORT HELPS CREATE NEW BEGINNINGS.

Scan here to donate and help support individuals like Mickie.
Your generosity helps provide the housing, supportive services, and
opportunities people need to build a brighter, more stable future.



Volunteer Highlight: Phelps Village Day of Caring

On August 20, Chrysalis Center welcomed a dedicated group of volunteers to Phelps Village for a Day of Caring. Phelps Village is a supportive housing community operated by Chrysalis Center that provides affordable housing and on-site support to 25 formerly homeless veterans.

Throughout the day, volunteers worked together to improve and beautify the property. Projects included pulling weeds, trimming bushes, clearing vines from walls, filling holes, and cleaning up areas throughout the campus.

Volunteers included James Tynan, Community Support Specialist, and Alyssa Davis, former Community Support Specialist at Phelps Village, along with members of the Vernon Military Flag Color Guard Group, Cindy and Vince Castagno, Carl and Polly Schaefer, and Phelps Village residents who joined in to lend a hand.

The day was a wonderful example of what can be accomplished when people come together and give their time and energy. Working side by side, volunteers helped create a more welcoming, beautiful, and well-maintained community for Phelps Village residents.

We deeply appreciate the continued support of those who give back to our community and help make a meaningful difference in the lives of our residents.



Cindy & Vince Castagno, Carl & Polly Schaefer, James Tynan, Alyssa Davis, members of the Vernon Military Flag Color Guard Group, and two Phelps Village residents at Phelps Village

Get Involved. Make an Impact.



Pam Blass volunteers at Chrysalis Center's Freshplace Food Pantry

Volunteer with us! Chrysalis Center is always looking for extra hands in the **Freshplace food pantry**, the **Food Forest at Cosgrove Commons**, **REC** (Recovery & Empowerment Center) and with **Facilities Maintenance** to help make a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals and families in our community.

Whether you're volunteering as an individual, with friends, or as part of a corporate or community group, there are opportunities to get involved and make an impact.

Host a Drive for Chrysalis Center! Choose what you'd like to collect, rally your team, friends, family, or community, and help provide essential items to individuals and families we serve. Choose a Drive:

- **School Supply Drive:** Help students start the school year prepared.
- **Turkey Drive:** Help families enjoy a Thanksgiving meal together.
- **Gift Card Drive:** Provide families with the flexibility to purchase what they need most.
- **Toy Drive:** Help make the holidays a little brighter for children.
- **Non-Perishable Food Drive:** Fill the shelves at Freshplace food pantry with nutritious foods for our neighbors in need.

To arrange a donation or to volunteer, please contact Sarah Cripsey at scripsey@chrysaliscenterct.org

Meet Jazmonay Cherry, Chrysalis Center's New Chief Program Officer

Chrysalis is excited to welcome Jazmonay Cherry to her new role as Chief Program Officer. In this role, Jazmonay provides strategic leadership and oversight across Chrysalis Center's programs, helping ensure the individuals and families we serve receive high-quality, compassionate, and effective services. Jazmonay brings more than a decade of experience working with individuals and families experiencing homelessness, housing instability, behavioral health challenges, and other barriers to stability and independence. Her background includes leadership in transitional, permanent supportive, and residential housing programs, as well as program development, staff leadership, quality improvement, compliance, and housing stability.

As CPO, Jazmonay works closely with agency leadership, staff, and community partners to strengthen programs, identify opportunities for innovation, and ensure our services continue to meet the evolving needs of our community. She directly supervises the Director of Housing and Director of Services, providing guidance across key areas of our work.

Outside of work, Jazmonay enjoys traveling, playing tennis and badminton, cooking, and spending time with family. She believes in finding the right balance between hard work, laughter, family, and making a positive impact wherever you go. Please join us in welcoming Jazmonay to her new role! We are excited for the leadership, experience, and perspective she brings to Chrysalis Center and the continued impact she will make in the communities we serve.



*Jazmonay Cherry,
Chief Program Officer*

Rooted in Community: Westmoor Park Visits Chrysalis Center

We had a wonderful visit with Jane from **Westmoor Park** in West Hartford. Jane shared that 50% of the produce grown at Westmoor Park is delivered directly to the shelves of Freshplace food pantry, helping provide fresh, nutritious food to individuals and families in our community.

Westmoor Park is a self-funded environmental, agricultural, and horticultural education center operated by West Hartford Leisure Services. The 162-acre facility is dedicated to nurturing a lifelong commitment to environmental awareness and responsible stewardship, while offering a wide variety of educational farm and nature programs for people of all ages. **"It's a teaching garden, but we are lucky enough to have produce to share,"** said Jane. And for that, we are incredibly grateful. Thank you, Jane and the Westmoor Park volunteers & team, for helping us bring fresh, locally grown food to our neighbors through Freshplace!



*Sean Bodnar, Urban Farming Manager, Jane
Gottier, Westmoor Park, and Aliana Rivera,
Program Manager Freshplace*

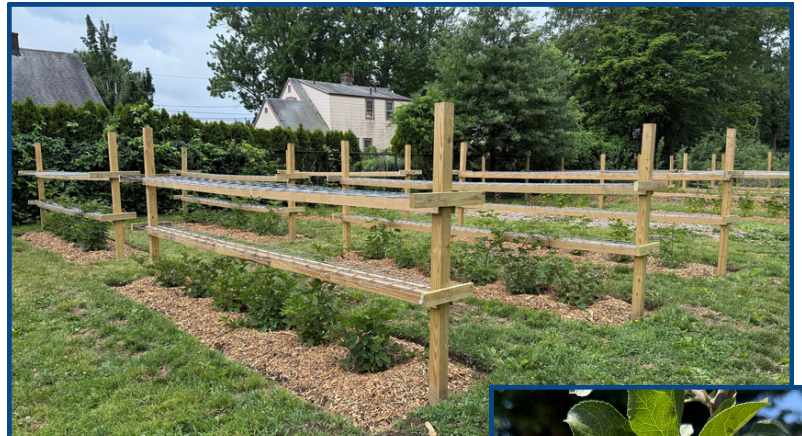


What's New at the Food Forest

Chrysalis Center's Food Forest at Cosgrove Commons continues to flourish, and we're excited to share our newest additions! Thanks to the generosity of our donors and dedicated volunteers, we're continuing to expand the Food Forest and increase its impact throughout the year.

This spring, Chrysalis planted 36 raspberry bushes and 36 blackberry bushes alongside 70 dwarf apple trees arranged in seven rows based on their distinct taste profiles. We also installed 12 espalier apple trees; espalier is a unique style of growing and training of trees that allows us to grow in a two-dimensional form that will serve as a living fence while maximizing production space. Each espalier tree has six different apple varieties grafted, allowing them to be grown on the same tree. Custom trellises were designed and installed to support these new additions and we look forward to a new greenhouse later this year to help extend the growing season in both the spring and fall.

The raised garden beds at Cosgrove Commons are also thriving with 39 varieties of vegetables, including tomatoes, potatoes, beans, peppers, onions, squash, zucchini, and eggplant. For the fall, our Urban Farmer, Sean Bodnar, will add cool-season crops such as carrots, beets, turnips, and radishes. These additions to the Food Forest represent another step toward strengthening our commitment to increasing access to fresh food and creating a lasting resource for our community.



Raspberry & blackberry trellises, apple trees & pollinator garden



*Scan here to Donate to the
Urban Roots Program*

Clean Out. Give Back. Support Chrysalis Center.



As you begin your fall cleaning, consider donating your gently used household items to Chrysalis Center's **Butterfly Boutique**. Your generous donations provide much-needed household essentials to our clients as they work toward stability.

We are currently seeking donations to help keep our shelves stocked. Most-needed items include pots and pans, dishes, silverware, baking pans, manual can openers, plastic cups, laundry baskets, brooms, dustpans, mops, buckets, dish drying racks, plastic storage containers, and other gently used household items. Please note that we are unable to accept cloth items or electrical appliances. **To arrange a donation, please email Sarah Cripsey at scripsey@chrysaliscenterct.org**

Cooking with Carol: Creating Connections Through Food

A shared meal can bring people together in meaningful ways and that's exactly what happens each month during Cooking with Carol at Chrysalis Center's Recovery and Empowerment Center (REC).

Led by Carol Larco-Murzyn, Vice-Chair of the Chrysalis Center Board of Directors, this monthly cooking class gives REC participants an opportunity to build confidence in the kitchen while enjoying a welcoming, hands-on experience. Each session focuses on preparing simple, nutritious meals while encouraging teamwork, conversation, and practical skills participants can carry into their everyday lives.

For many participants, Cooking with Carol is about much more than following a recipe. In July, participants prepared homemade potato salad, egg salad, and coleslaw, working together to prepare each dish before gathering around the table to enjoy a summer meal. Carol also generously provided chicken wings, chips, dips, and pickles to complete the celebration.

"Cooking brings people together in a way that few things can," Carol shared. "Seeing participants try something new, work together, and enjoy the meal they created is incredibly rewarding."

Through Cooking with Carol, REC participants gain more than culinary skills - they gain a sense of community, showing how simple shared experiences can make a lasting impact.



Carol Larco-Murzyn and REC participants

Thank you, Carol, for
continuing to bring
your time, talent, and
generosity!

La Cocina Delivers with Purpose

Planning an upcoming event?

Explore La Cocina's catering menu at LaCocinaCatering.org



Whether you're planning a 10-person business meeting or a 200-plus guest gala, La Cocina Catering delivers exceptional food, personalized service, and a memorable experience for every occasion.

This June, the La Cocina team catered events for more than 200 guests at both The Wadsworth Mansion and The Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts, showcasing their expertise through custom menus, hors d'oeuvres, and hospitality.

"Coordinating the catering at the Wadsworth Mansion was flawless when you have the right people on your team," shared Cassy Landes, Catering & Events Coordinator. "We're always looking at what worked well and where we can improve so that every event, whether it's a large gala or a small business meeting, is even better than the last."

When you choose La Cocina Catering, you're getting more than delicious cuisine. As a Chrysalis Center social enterprise, every order supports hands-on culinary training, workforce development, and employment opportunities for individuals working toward economic independence. **Book your next event with La Cocina Catering and make every meal matter.**



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

255 Homestead Avenue, PO Box 32613

Hartford, CT 06132-0613

Phone: 860-263-4400 Fax: 860-761-3103

www.chrysaliscenterct.org

Accredited by the Commission on
Accreditation of Rehabilitation
Facilities (CARF) for:
Case Management / Service Coordination:
Mental health (Adults)



Community Integration:
Mental Health (Consumer-Run)

Chrysalis Center is an Affirmative
Action Employer Committed to
Fostering Diversity in the Workplace

Funded in part by: DMHAS, DOC, DOH,
CT-NSP, HOPWA - City of Hartford
and HUD

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:



Butterfly Bash

Thursday, October 1st, 2026

Hartford Marriott Downtown



Please join us for the 2026 Butterfly Bash. Let's
make this an unforgettable evening of our
Mission in Motion.

**CHRYSLIS CENTER
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Officers:

Thomas P. Kennedy, Chair
Carol Larco-Murzyn, Vice Chair
Steve Erickson, Treasurer
Rosendo Garza, Jr., Secretary

Directors:

Yvonne Bennett
Bridget D'Angelo
Aleena Durant
Robert Lowry
Maisie Russell
Jay Shiel
Kevin B. Sullivan
Nicholas Thomas
Jean Wagner
Kimalee Williams

Chief Executive Officer:
Sharon L. Castelli