

CCO NEWS

The CCO welcomed new participants Anthony Bryant who lives with his family in Norwalk and Renee Mihalek from Sandy Hook, CT who is also enjoying her new housemates at Oldfield Road. In addition to continuing their longtime job restocking magazines for Hudson RPM, they are enjoying, bowling, miniature golf and playing with their new Wii.

The CCO Thursday evening program continues to flourish. They meet for dinner and fun 5-7pm. All are welcome. Call Amanda at 203. 256.4663 for more information.

MILESTONES



Ann Meiman Hughes and Janet Williams

Recently CLASP friend and former staffer Ann Meiman Hughes surprised **Janet Williams** at her 20 years of CLASP service celebration at the Southport Brewery.

We also shared in congratulating Vice President of Quality Assurance **Patty Richards** on her 20 years of service at Martel's in Southport.

Congratulations to President **Tracy Flood** on her upcoming wedding in September.

THANK YOU JO!



Jo receives the VAC award from Norwalk Mayor Richard Moccia

Jo Fuchs Luscombe recently received the Voluntary Action Center Award for Outstanding Volunteerism during National Volunteer Week for her dedicated service to CLASP.

Staying home to raise her two children, Jo didn't venture into local politics until she was in her early 40's. Then at age 48 she ran for and won a seat in the Connecticut House of Representatives. Eight years later, she became Republican Minority whip. Today she is still active in community affairs. CLASP considers itself extremely fortunate to be one of the many recipients of her philanthropic efforts. Jo, we congratulate and thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

GOOD BYE DEAR FRIEND...



On New Year's Day of 2011, we lost much beloved Maple Road friend Eleanor Snow. She resided with CLASP for 25 years. One of our fondest memories of Eleanor is the day she was given the opportunity, while on vacation, to swim with the dolphins. She is greatly missed.



CLASP times

INSIDE THIS ISSUE: 7TH ANNUAL TASTE OF WESTPORT, PERSPECTIVES, MILESTONES GROUP HOME NEWS...

7TH ANNUAL TASTE OF WESTPORT

We couldn't have been more delighted to be invited back to Earthplace in May for our 7th annual Taste of Westport. Executive Director, John Horkel and his staff made it easy to set the stage for a delightful and delicious evening. Allison Galloway and Deb Hollis generously took time from their busy schedules to decorate the venue to best showcase all the tasty food that was served in abundance. Collier Catering kicked off the evening with passed hors d'oeuvres while the Bruce Coviello band got everyone "in the mood". Greens Farms Spirits and Connecticut Distributors poured wine while Black Bear Wines & Spirits served up "Diamond Stars" and other delectable cocktails. San Pellegrino offered a wide selection of soft drinks and fun silent auction items, as did Crystal Rock. The restaurant line up never disappoints. Westport is home to many generous business owners and CLASP is very fortunate to have high caliber restaurants like Da Pietro's, Blue Lemon, Bobby Q's and Bombay as supporters since the event's inception. Patrick Jean, owner chef of the Brasserie in Fairfield, along with Matsu Sushi, Tarantino's, Tavern on Main, Rizzuto's, Riverhouse Tavern and Red Bee Honey have been longtime friends to CLASP. Living up to everyone's expectation le Farm, Manolo and Coromandel came on board for the first time. As guests finished their "entrees", they mosied on into Nature place to be enticed by sweets provided by Michlele, herself, of Michele's Pies and irresistible cupcakes from Cakesuite. Westfair staffing served up

their frothy cappuccinos again, to top off an evening of gastronomic delights.

TD Bank and Mose Associates were "Major Sponsors" while Kestin Brown Insurance lent their support at the "Sponsor" level and Wiggin and Dana at the "Supporting Sponsor" level. Janet Nazarian of Cox radio, Moffley Media, the Mynarski and Passerelle families and Miggs Burroughs of Miggs B design continued their generous longstanding support of our mission.

The Taste of Westport committee members worked tirelessly to secure ads and fabulous silent auction items in what has been the most economically challenged year yet for fundraising.

Our CLASP staff continue to always pitch in, sitting on the Taste committee and always making time to work on the event, in spite of their heavy work schedules. We couldn't be more grateful. The success of our events is made possible by all of you who so generously give of your time, your talents and your treasures!

Call Robin at (203) 226-7895 ext 144 to join the 2012 Taste of Westport Committee.



Matsu Sushi, a longtime CLASP supporter, serves up an impressive and beautiful selection of sushi.



A good time was had by all!



Rachel Golan and Bill Taibe of le Farm



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Our mission is to provide homes and opportunities for people with mental retardation and related disabilities. We offer high quality professional services that enhance each person's social responsibility, independence, dignity and continued growth. As a not-for-profit community organization, we are dedicated to increasing public understanding of the people we serve and their ability to be contributing members of the community.

PERSPECTIVES



I recently attended my, (gulp), 35th Staples High School Reunion. I have resisted the notion of going to all of the previous gatherings for various reasons, rationales, justifications, fears and phobias. This one came along – after the inception of Facebook – and I wasn't prepared for the peer pressure I received after I politely responded that I would not be attending! Then, someone got the very nice idea to

collect contributions from the attendees to make a donation to a local charity. You guessed it - they picked CLASP. Now I had no choice....

Seeing people I hadn't seen in 35 years is enough to put the fear of god into anyone. Will I remember them? Will they remember me? Do I remember why I don't like him/her? Did we go on a date, or did I just dream that up? As it turns out, it was one of the nicest, sweetest weekends I've had in a long time. I was heartened to see that all the people I dearly loved in childhood had turned out to be really nice adults. And those I barely knew were welcoming and open. Who knew?

This comes at a time when I am planning a September wedding, my first! It's a time of much happiness – I'm feeling very lucky and blessed. I am looking forward to celebrating this occasion with family and friends.

In addition, CLASP will be celebrating its 30th birthday next year – so all of these milestones are evoking many wonderful memories. When I was hired to work part time at CLASP I was in my last year of graduate school. It was 1984, and we had one group home that 5 men called home. I was being hired to help open our second home, with 3 of the 6 women

coming from an institution. This was new territory! I was 25, and very green. Little did I know that I would work as a Residential Instructor, Weekend Supervisor, Assistant Manager, Manager, temporary Program Director, Clinical Director, Clinical Vice President and President. CLASP is a family, and for many of us, once we join, we're here for the long haul. This year we will have a staff appreciation party where we will honor 35 staff who have been here ten years or more, (12 of them have been here for 20 years or more.) As I reflect on what we have accomplished in the 30 years, I am humbled by how hard our staff have worked, and by the connections that have been made. Our administrative staff is made up of people with similar stories. Clancy and John, our 2 Program Directors extraordinaire, both started out as direct care staff, eventually running various group homes for many years. Jen, our SLA Director began working here as she was finishing high school. She would come to work in her Catholic school uniform! Patty Richards, our VP of Quality Assurance and Michele Markelon, VP of Finance, have recently celebrated their 20 year anniversaries. This is an administration with deep roots, and firm beliefs about how important it is to help people live a life filled with meaning and fellowship.

The CLASP family has grown a bit each year, and we now serve almost 90 people. We support people in 12 group homes, and 9 apartments. We run a small community based social program with opportunities for people to volunteer. We support people through good times, and the very difficult days. We are there for people up to the time they take their last breath. That is hard to say. The number of people we have had to say good bye to grows each year. Most of them gone way too prematurely. But one of the things of which I'm most proud, is the way we care for people at the end of their time with us. The inevitable consequence of all of us being here so long is dealing with the reality that people will get sick and die. But I can honestly say that because we truly love the people we serve, it is an honor to allow them to stay in the comfort of their own home, and their own bed, as they face the ultimate milestone.

YOU MADE CLASP A WINNER!

Just prior to Christmas 2010, we at CLASP entered our first internet based contest online. It was titled "Santa's Wishlist" and we had the pleasure of coming in 3rd and winning \$500. Supporters voted online once a day for a two week period, leading up to Dec 24th, for their favorite non profits. It proved to be a very challenging and labor intensive process for all those involved. Because of the time involved for both our admin staff and the people voting, it was with great trepidation, that Tracy mentioned to her fiancée, Kurt, that Main Street Connect(the Daily Westport), was running another contest in February in celebration of Valentine's Day. The winner would get \$5,000 for themselves and another \$5,000 to be donated to the charity of their choice. Kurt subsequently wrote and submitted a story detailing his and Tracy's meeting and courtship. We once again appealed to our supporters to go online and vote every single day for another 2 weeks! This time, we, or rather Kurt won! In spite of the impending wedding and expenses involved in combining

the 2 households, Kurt and Tracy made the decision to donate the other \$5,000 also to CLASP, bringing the win up to \$10,000! This was an incredible coup...one that could not have been pulled off without your help. All and all it took thousands of votes, day in and day out, over a period of weeks and lots and lots of patience to just get registered and then vote daily on a very "user-unfriendly" website. The money was used towards the much needed purchase of a new, used wheelchair accessible van.



Main Street Connect presents CLASP Homes with a check for winning the Close to My Heart Promotion.

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS



In addition to CLASP being a recipient of donations made by fellow classmates of Tracy Flood's 35th Staples High School reunion, the legendary Mansion Clam House also showed their support. Soozie Folsom, fellow classmate, generously offered to donate half of the proceeds from the Thursday night pre-reunion festivities that were held there.

Westport's Sunrise Rotary Club, a longtime friend of CLASP, held its annual duck race on June 11, 2011. New this year was a "rubber ducky" decorating contest. Although Program Director Jen Saracin's duck didn't win, you have to admit she looked pretty chic with her handmade designer visor, sunglasses and pink feather boa!



Pictured left to right: Jonathon Mathias, Stacy Smith, CLASP President Tracy Flood, staff Janet Williams, staff Norma Serano and CLASP resident Annabelle Aponte

Back in March when Long Island sound was still a wee bit cold, SLA staffer Stacy Smith donned her penguin costume to brave the waters for the Penguin Plunge at Compo Beach to benefit the Special Olympics. Chef/owner Jonathan Mathias of "a dash of salt" catering also braved the cold temps in CLASP's name. Jonathan has been a generous and constant CLASP supporter and can whip up anything from a casual beach party to a full on elegant sit down dinner! Chris, Ashley, Candy, Guy, Allison, Roy and Sheila are among the CLASP residents who enjoy participating in the Special Olympics every year.

Did you know that our Vice President of Quality Assurance, Patty Richards is also a licensed yoga instructor? Patty is offering complimentary classes at the CCO on Tuesdays from 5-6pm for CLASP employees. No reservations required.

Behavior Specialist Tina Martire was honored with a 10+ Years of Service award for her work with "Best Buddies" on July 13, 2011 at the Omni Hotel in New Haven.

This past spring Patrick Francis, the owner of Premier Painting and a longtime friend of CLASP, began a dialogue with Program Director John Tyliczszak regarding the benefit of fresh vegetables. Subsequently, Patrick donated his time and all the materials and starter plants needed to install 2 beautiful vegetable gardens at Blue Ridge and Oldfield Road. Thank you Patrick for all you do for us! Please keep Patrick in mind for your painting, cabinet refinishing, snowplowing and other home needs. He can be reached at 203.852.1966.

Save the date and join the committee!

Clasp Fashion Show, Wednesday November 9, 2011, Westport Woman's Club

GROUP HOME NEWS

Maple Road resident Phil Jeffries graduated from ACES high school in Hamden

Robbie Ganley is looking forward to his time at Camp Angelfish.

Reynolds Drive residents are planning a cruise to Bermuda with their friends from Maple Road.

Oldfield Road welcomed new residents Yeimy Velaquez and Renee Mihalek

Pine Drive resident and Dekker Memorial Award winner, Joan Hylton, had a magnificent trip to Disney world! She was accompanied by an old friend and this was the fulfillment of a lifelong dream for her.

Blue Ridge residents Pat Mcbrinn, Neal Reilly and Jeff Russakoff recently went on a Canadian cruise with staff Alice Allen and Rita Edmonds. Assistant Manager, Jessica Williams gave birth to her 2nd child, a daughter, on July 5, 2011.



Jeff poses with one of the showgirls on board the cruise

Kings Highway residents have been enjoying day trips to the movies, Captain's Cove and much beloved trips to the bowling alley as well as their annual sabbaticals to Camp Horizons.

Webb Road welcomed new resident and longtime Fairfielder Mark Griggs

Sturges Highway resident David Batista was a happy first time Special Olympic participant, bringing home 3 medals!

SLAs This past spring Annabelle Aponte traveled on her second trip "flying solo" to Puerto Rico to visit her family.

Program Director Jen Saracin, Kathy Stablein, Christian Nelson, Roy Swan and Billy O'Callaghan drove up to Rhode Island for a two day beach getaway.

KEEP ON SMILING



Dr. Peter Ferrara of Imperial Dental Associates in Westport teamed up with Grant a Smile Foundation to secure Christian Nelson some much needed dental work. Chris's smile will now warm your heart more than ever before. Thank you Dr. Ferrara!

A GOOD TIME WAS HAD BY ALL...

In June residents gathered at Chatham Manor in Norwalk to dine and dance the night away. Tunes were provided by James Daniel Entertainment and Kevin O'Donnell. Kevin just can't resist when he hears those first few bars of "New York" by Frank Sinatra!

