

# 2018 Annual Report



Honoring the

**PAST** >

Celebrating the

**PRESENT** >

Looking to the

**FUTURE**



# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

**THIS YEAR GIVES US THE OPPORTUNITY TO LOOK BACK AT OUR HISTORY, AND REFLECT ON THE TREMENDOUS WORK WE HAVE DONE OVER THE PAST 55 YEARS.** At the same time, we can cherish all of the important work we have done this year, as we make plans for where we are going in the future. While this year has delivered its share of challenges to our agency, that will not stop us from continuing to think about the ways that we can expand our programs and services for people in need of support.

## HONORING THE PAST

CRT grew out of a grassroots movement to help Hartford-area communities experiencing the injustices of poverty. We were founded in 1963, and the next year CRT joined a national movement to reduce the causes and conditions of poverty – it is a commitment that we hold close in our hearts and minds, and continues to drive our actions today. At the time, CRT was designated the community action agency for Hartford County. Fast forward to 1999, and CRT expanded its services to the people of Middlesex County — thereby serving communities from Enfield, straight down to Clinton, and every city and town in between. And, over this past year, our Weatherization program was awarded the statewide contract for Connecticut, so now we are truly serving people throughout the state.

When you look back at CRT’s history, many of the programs that the agency began decades ago are still needed today.

- **In 1965, CRT was one of the original national Head Start pilot programs.** Today, we continue to serve the needs of children with year-round Child Day Care and a School Readiness program that gets youngsters ready for kindergarten.
- **In 1972, CRT opened The Craftery,** an art gallery with workshops and musical performances free for the public. Today, we continue the spirit of that work with our annual National Arts Program that has been celebrating artists for more than 25 years.
- **In 1973, CRT established the first Elderly Nutrition Program in Connecticut,** serving meals at eight centers in Hartford. Today, we continue to serve thousands of meals every day to seniors throughout Central Connecticut, both at community cafes in senior centers and through our Meals on Wheels program. For the latter, we are on track to deliver more than 500,000 meals to home-bound seniors this year.
- **In 1976, CRT created the Energy Assistance Program, five years before the federal program was established!** This program continues at full speed now, serving around 28,000 individuals and families each year.
- **In 1979, CRT’s Consumer Education and Counseling program provided direct services to 1,665 individuals, including 355 families.** And in 1985 we established the Hispanic Services Department, launching innovative initiatives to spur employment training and find ways for community members to help themselves. Today, our Community Services team continues to provide valuable counseling and advice to help people move towards a secure financial future.

## CELEBRATING THE PRESENT

As noted, many of the programs that we began in the 1960s and 1970s which serve as the foundation for our work in the community continue to be needed today. And of course, there is other good work that should not be forgotten.

CRT’s free tax preparation services (VITA) has been available for the past 15 years, and has served more than 25,000 families during that time.

This past summer, our annual “Helping Feed Hartford” event with Feed the Children aided more than 800 Hartford-area families with more than weeks’ worth of food and essentials.

In December, CRT will partner with area hospitals and the City of Hartford to host the 10th annual Gun Buyback event, to help reduce the threat of gun violence in our community. Last year, 68 different weapons were turned in to the Hartford Police Department.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As we think about the year to come – and the years ahead – we have so much to look forward to. This year we hosted two fundraisers laying the foundation for our forthcoming Women’s Empowerment Center that will enable women to achieve personal economic stability, forward their careers, and better provide for themselves and their children.

We were selected for a significant three-year grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) that will help to address the needs of people dealing with opioid addiction. We are hiring a “Youth Navigator” who will be working directly with homeless teens in Hartford, helping them to get off the streets, and into safe, permanent housing.

Our work and commitment to the community is without question. Our programs and services are designed to meet the needs of the most vulnerable, giving people resources that can dramatically change the course of their lives for the better. As we approach the year ahead, we hope you will continue to support us and find a way to join us in this important work.

Lena Rodriguez,  
President and CEO of CRT



# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

**WE HAVE ARRIVED AT A WONDERFUL MILESTONE IN THE LIFE OF CRT.**

Can you believe this year marks the agency’s 55th anniversary? As I think back about this past year – and throughout our history as the designated community action agency for the people and families of Central Connecticut, I am both proud and humbled by all that has been accomplished. In 2017 alone, CRT served more than 35,000 families, and over 86,000 individuals through our multitude of programs and services. One of the things that I love about the work

that CRT does is that we just do the work, and get it done. We do it because we know in our hearts that it is the right thing to do. We’re not in it for the accolades or the recognition – although it is nice when it happens, of course.

Our staff throughout the agency commits themselves to putting the needs of the people they serve first, going the extra mile to make sure the job gets done. This includes the delivery drivers who bring hot, nutritious meals year-round to home-bound seniors who partake of our Meals on Wheels program; and the clinicians who are helping people recover from addiction; and the job developers who work with people recently released from prison to help them find meaningful employment at a living wage; and the staff at our shelters, who help the homeless to find decent, permanent housing. The list goes on and on.

Earlier this year, we hosted a fundraiser for our soon-to-be-launched Women’s Empowerment Center. During that event, our keynote speaker, Cheryl McDonald, the co-owner of the Bear’s Restaurant Group in Hartford, called CRT a “special ops team” – working quietly and diligently for the people in our community. But we’re behind the scenes, taking care of business. I think her analogy fits perfectly. CRT is there when you need it to lend a hand and provide meaningful solutions that truly make a difference for the people we aim to serve.

**MANY PEOPLE KNOW OF ONE OF CRT’S PROGRAMS OR SERVICES, BUT THEN HAD NO IDEA THAT WE DID ALL OF THE OTHER THINGS WE DO, TOO.** Yes, we have a preschool program. But we also have job training for teens and young adults; energy assistance and weatherization for homes; an assisted living facility for seniors; and services for veterans and their families. The list goes on and on.

And again, we do what we do not because we are seeking a shining spotlight to stand under. We do what we do because it must be done. As long as there are people in need of our help, CRT will be there. It has been that way for the past 55 years. And while I would like to hope for a time when our services are no longer needed, I am confident that we will be there until that glorious day arrives.

Fernando Betancourt,  
Chairman, CRT Board of Trustees

2017

35,000  
families  
served

86,000+  
individuals  
served

Community Action changes people’s lives,  
embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities,  
and makes America a better place to live.

We care about the entire community,  
and we are dedicated to helping people  
help themselves and each other.



# THE MANY WAYS CRT SERVES THE COMMUNITY

The Community Renewal Team (CRT) offers a broad range of programs and services to the people of Central Connecticut. There are dozens of programs available throughout the year that assist young and old – and everyone in between – to make positive changes in their lives. From school readiness and child day care for youngsters to job training for teens and young adults to programs that serve the needs of the homeless, veterans, seniors and more, CRT is an integral part of the communities that we serve.



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# OUR ETERNAL THANKS

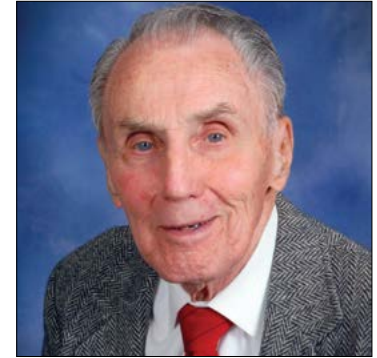
This year CRT lost two long-time volunteers who made a tremendous difference in the work that the agency does for people in our community. Both gentlemen went about their work with fortitude and grace – never seeking accolades for their efforts. They could be counted on to get their respective jobs done, each and every week, without fail.



First is **FREDERICK "BOZIE" STEARNS**, who died this past July. For 21 years, Bozie would make weekly trips to the local grocery store in his area to pick up the day-old bread and pastries that would have otherwise been thrown away, loaded up his van, and personally delivered them to the homeless shelters

in Hartford, including CRT's McKinney Shelter and East Hartford Family Shelter. As a result of his generosity, the McKinney shelter did not have to buy bread for its residents for over 20 years, representing a tremendous savings for the agency. The guys at the shelter would always look forward to Bozie's special deliveries.

This past summer we also lost **ROBERT FRANK "BOB" WARNER**, who was a volunteer delivery driver with our Meals on Wheels program for 23 years. Up until last fall, he delivered meals two to three times per week, making lasting, personal connections with other volunteers and with the recipients of the meals he brought to individual homes every time he went out on a shift. We are honored that he was willing to give so much of his time to home-bound seniors living in Central Connecticut.



Robert and Bozie were both true friends to CRT, and to the many people whose lives they touched through their constant commitment to CRT's mission, giving of themselves to people in need.

Their examples are a true gift to the work of CRT, and their legacy will not be forgotten.

**BASIC NEEDS**

- Resource Centers
- Food Assistance
- SSBG Case Management
- SNAP Outreach

**EDUCATION AND YOUTH**

- Child Day Care
- Child Nutrition
- School Readiness

**EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING**

- Capital City YouthBuild
- Summer Youth Employment
- Middlesex Youth Development

**ENERGY AND WEATHERIZATION**

- Energy Assistance
- Statewide Weatherization Services

**HOUSING AND SHELTERS**

- Affordable Housing
- CHAP
- DOC Scattered Site Supportive Housing
- East Hartford Family Shelter
- Generations
- Housing Counseling
- McKinney Men's Shelter
- Supportive Housing

**MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

- Asian Family Services
- Behavioral Health Services
- Fatherhood Initiative
- HIV Counseling & Case Management Services
- Homeless Outreach
- Integrated Services
- Pharmacy (Ryan White clients)
- Re-Entry Recovery Services
- Transitional Case Management

**MONEY MANAGEMENT**

- Financial Literacy Institute
- IDA Savings Program
- VITA Tax Preparation Services

**SENIOR SERVICES**

- Community Cafés
- Meals on Wheels
- The Retreat, Assisted Living Facility
- Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)
- Senior Affordable Housing

**VETERANS PROGRAMS**

- Supportive Services for Veteran Families
- Veterans Crossing

**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**  
**HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY. CONTACT CRT TO GET STARTED.**



# SOME MIGHT CALL HIM THE 'ROBOT WHISPERER'

**TROY EDWARDS, AGE 32, MIGHT NOT HAVE EVER DREAMED HE'D BE DOING THE JOB HE HAS TODAY, BUT HE'S A QUICK STUDY, AND NOW HE OVERSEES A SMALL ARMY OF ROBOTS EACH AND EVERY DAY.** OK, that's a bit of an exaggeration, but there are 10 robots that are his responsibility at a distribution center in Bloomfield that supply products to the local Trader Joe's stores in the Greater Hartford area.

"They showed me a few things, and then they threw me to the wolves," Troy said.

How'd he find himself in this role? That's an interesting story. Troy spent two years in prison for possession of a firearm – he was released early, and assigned to parole for 10 months. As a part of his release, he was directed by his probation officer to meet with CRT to work on next steps, including finding a job, saving money, and then getting an apartment of his own.

He came to CRT in April of this year, and was assigned to work with one of CRT's job developers that focus on the needs of individuals that have been referred to the agency by the Department of Correction (DOC) for CRT's Scattered Site program, which places individuals in temporary housing.

Initially, Troy was trying to get hired with a pool supply company, as he had previous experience with a similar company in Waterbury, Connecticut. While filling out that job application, he encountered a question which asked, "Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense?" Troy abandoned that application, and then working with the job developer he connected with a staffing agency that then was able to place him with the distribution company in Bloomfield. (It is worth noting, there is a movement in Connecticut to exclude questions about prior convictions from job applications. This is known as "Ban the Box".)

**"TROY'S WORK ETHIC AND HIS ABILITY TO QUICKLY MASTER ASSIGNED TASKS CAUGHT THE ATTENTION HIS EMPLOYER,"** notes the CRT job developer.



In the past six months that Troy has been with his present employer, he has been promoted twice...

...he is making enough money that he was able to get his own apartment in Hartford even sooner than he originally expected.

In the past six months that Troy has been with his present employer, he has been promoted twice, and earns a living wage. He often works 12 hour shifts – overnight – and he is making enough money that he was able to get his own apartment in Hartford even sooner than he originally expected. He spends the weekends with his four daughters (ages 6, 7, 12 and 13) who come up from New York City to stay with him.

His schedule is hectic, but he's trying to do what is best for his children. "I've got to be there in their lives," he says. "Now is my chance to make the best choices with this opportunity that I have."

# MICHAEL BURKE REALLY IS 'LIVING THE DREAM'

## **IN MANY WAYS, MICHAEL BURKE IS LIVING THE AMERICAN DREAM.**

He has a wife and four sons (ages 2, 7, 9 and 11), a job that he loves, and they were all recently able to move from a two-bedroom rental apartment after purchasing their own home in Windsor, Connecticut. Now, there is plenty of room for his young family. He attributes much of this success to the opportunity he had to sign up for an Individual Development Account (IDA)\*, which is a 'matched savings' program that he opened after learning about it from CRT.

While participating in the IDA program, Michael liked the fact that it helped him to focus on setting – and reaching – an attainable goal. He says he knew there would be obstacles along the way, but he also knew that he could figure it out and make it happen.

"I knew I would need to persevere and be disciplined, but I also realized there was nothing wrong with asking for help," Michael said. "No matter what your situation, you have the ability to move forward."

"I knew I would need to persevere and be disciplined, but I also realized there was nothing wrong with asking for help."

"No matter what your situation, you have the ability to move forward."



Michael originally came to CRT about three years ago to take advantage of the free VITA tax preparation services program that the agency provides to individuals and families in Central Connecticut each year during tax season.

Through the IDA program, Michael was able to save for a specific goal, in his case purchasing a home. Other eligible goals might include saving for education expenses, a car purchase, or for starting a business. At the time, the IDA program offered a 2-1 match, so by making monthly deposits and working to save \$1,500 over a set period of time, Michael then received \$3,000 from the bank affiliated with the program, for a total of \$4,500 saved for his home purchase.

While enrolled in the IDA program, Michael was hired by the Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America (NACA), where he is a mortgage originator in their Hartford office. NACA helps individuals to purchase their own homes, and Michael happens to be both an employee and a member of the organization, as they helped him to obtain his own mortgage.

**SO NOT ONLY IS MICHAEL LIVING THE DREAM, HE'S HELPING OTHER TO DO THE SAME EVERY SINGLE DAY.** There is a white board in Michael's office that is completely full with all of the other people he is helping with their own future home purchases. "It is so rewarding to help other people reach their goals and get into homes of their own," Michael said.

*\*The IDA program from CRT is being phased out at this time, and no new applicants are being accepted.*

# DETERMINED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN HER RECOVERY

**BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS STORY, SHANIQUE LOPEZ (ALTHOUGH SHE PREFERS TO BE CALLED TYE), WILL HAVE JUST TURNED 31 YEARS OLD, AND IT IS FAIR TO SAY THAT THE YEAR AHEAD IS FILLED WITH PROMISE AND DETERMINATION.** She came to CRT in September of 2017 seeking help, ready to make some big changes in her own life.



“Shanique is very honest, committed, and shy; but she is determined to be successful in her personal recovery, said her CRT counselor.”

**GETTING THERE WASN'T EASY.** During a two-week span in 2016, Tye lost three of her cousins – one to cancer, one in a car accident, and the other was killed in a shooting. Tye found herself drinking every day, and she got into a car accident, hitting another car. Luckily, no one got hurt at that time.

Tye took a cruise trip to try to get away from her problems, but unfortunately her cabin mate got in trouble with the law, and she was charged with conspiracy. She found herself in jail for just over a year, with one year's probation.

When she came to CRT, she was dealing with addiction issues with drugs and alcohol, as well as her own struggles with mental health needs. She was enrolled in an Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) for treatment, coming to CRT's offices on Market Street in Hartford three times per week for group sessions. Tye successfully completed the IOP in late October of last year, moving on to individual, weekly sessions with a clinician at CRT that she continues to attend.

“Shanique is very honest, committed, and shy; but she is determined to be successful in her personal recovery,” said her CRT counselor.



Tye is also enrolled in a local program from the Chrysalis Center known as EARN that offers job training services, including things like resume writing, interviewing skills and help with identifying job opportunities. Her employment specialist at the Chrysalis Center had this to say about Tye: “she has blown me away with her persistence, effort and determination to get back on track to secure employment ... She has a BIG heart, kind spirit and the motivation that can move mountains and it is ALWAYS a pleasure to work with her.”

While Tye is actively interviewing for a fulltime job, she also has a passion for art, and sees herself becoming a painter in the future. She is self-taught, and likes to find time to work on her art as well as craft projects with her parents. (She painted the work shown.)

Tye is excited about the prospect of working, and starting a career for herself. The day we spoke with Tye, she was heading to a job interview later that afternoon.



# MAKING A WISE INVESTMENT IN HER OWN 'RECOVERY CAPITAL'

"I've had so much drama in my own life," Julissa says. "It's time to help others so they can benefit from my experience."

Recovery is possible for anyone."



**JULISSA TORRES, AGE 43, HAS HAD MORE THAN HER FAIR SHARE OF HARDSHIP.** She has spent time in prison, has overcome trauma, domestic violence, substance dependency, mental health issues, and the removal of her minor children from her care by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). And yet, she has not given up.

She continues to work hard every day on her own recovery, and over the past several months has made great strides that are setting her on a path to a better life for herself, for her significant other, and for her children.

She came to CRT this past Spring, admitted to an Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP), to try to work on her recovery from addiction to PCP (or "dust" as she calls it).

But this decision to get help didn't come easy. It wasn't until her adult son reported her to DCF and her two minor children were taken away that she agreed it was time to make a change.

While in the IOP, Julissa once again tested positive for PCP use, and she was then referred to an in-patient program in Hartford for 28 days this past May.

That time was put to good use. As Julissa, reflects, "I got to work on myself, and develop the skills I needed to deal with the stressors in my life."

Julissa was able to go back to the IOP program this past summer, but that was interrupted while dealing with the consequences of previous DUI charges. She spent 45 days in jail this past summer, and then came back to CRT around Labor Day.

Since that time, Julissa has made steady progress. As her counselor at CRT notes, "Julissa is working hard on her own recovery capital." In other words, she is truly investing in her own future.

Julissa attends a Dialectical Behavior Therapy program at CRT once a week, and she is working at two different part-time jobs in the Greater Hartford area. If all goes well, one of those will convert to fulltime soon.

**LOOKING TO THE FUTURE, JULISSA HAS THREE GOALS THAT SHE WANTS TO ACCOMPLISH BEFORE SHE TURNS 45.** She wants to become a home owner, perhaps in East Hartford where her children attend school or in Manchester. She is thinking about getting married – she has been with her partner for the past 11 years. And, she wants to go back to school so she can become a counselor helping people with their own recovery from drug addiction.

"I've had so much drama in my own life," Julissa says. "It's time to help others so they can benefit from my experience. Recovery is possible for anyone."

# DON'T BE FOOLED, THIS 'BATH BOMB MOM' MEANS BUSINESS

**EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE YOU ENCOUNTER SOMEONE WHOSE POSITIVE ENERGY JUST SEEMS TO LIGHT UP THE ROOM, AND BRING A SMILE TO YOUR FACE.** One of those people is Shacoya Parkman. She's 26, and she's a single mom living in Hartford with her five-year old daughter Saroya. Over the past few years, both Shacoya and her daughter have benefited from several programs and services that CRT provides to people in the community.

Actually, you can look back even further to see the beginning of Shacoya's involvement with CRT. She was a part of CRT's Early Care and Education program when she was a child (back in the 90s!), so it made perfect sense for her own daughter to be enrolled in one of CRT's classrooms. Her daughter Saroya started when she was two years old, and now she is going to a full-day kindergarten in Hartford.

**OVER A YEAR AGO, GASTRITIS PUT SHACOYA IN THE HOSPITAL, CAUSING HER TO LOSE HER JOB AT THE TIME, AND OF COURSE HER INCOME.** Not being able to afford rent, she reached out to 2-1-1, and then she and her daughter were able to find a place at the East Hartford Family Shelter. She ended up staying at the shelter for about eight months, giving her time to clear her debts, and to work with staff from CRT who helped her to put in applications for permanent housing. She was able to secure an apartment in Hartford for her and her daughter – as of this coming February, she will have been living there for one year.

Today, she works during the day for a private security company, working for various businesses in downtown Hartford. She has been with the company for about a year now, and her work schedule matches her daughter's kindergarten schedule perfectly.

This fall, Shacoya signed up for CRT's Financial Literacy Institute, which meets weekly for 14 weeks, offering students the opportunity to learn how to make the most of their financial futures. Topics include savings and budgeting, investing and retirement, credit management and understanding your credit score, home ownership and much more – they even get homework! Interestingly, this year's class of students is all single mothers. Shacoya is using what she is learning in the Institute to work on improving her own credit score so that she will be prepared to purchase her own home in the future.



"Put your pride to the side. Don't be scared to ask for help, and stay open to new things."



If that wasn't enough, Shacoya has a home business of her own, too. It is called "Bath Bomb Mom" and as the name implies, she makes "bath bombs" and other home healthcare products, using essential oils. She's taking an online class to learn about aroma therapy. "I've got some customers now that really love the bath bombs. I love doing it, and I want to expand the business."

Her advice to others? "Put your pride to the side. Don't be scared to ask for help, and stay open to new things." Sounds like a plan.

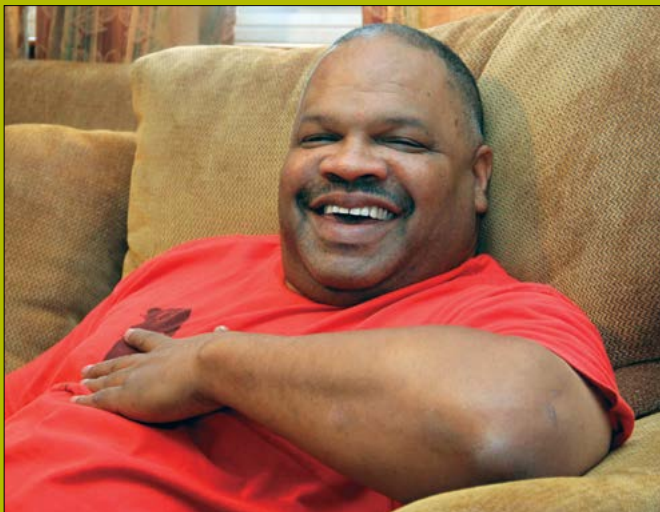
# LEARNING TO BE THE BEST VERSION OF YOURSELF

**KRISH NARAIN IS STARTING OVER.** But he's not worried about that fact. He seems to be taking it all in stride, with a bright smile on his face and a good sense of humor.

Krish has been a life-long resident of the Greater Hartford area. His father came to the United States from Guyana, and instilled a serious work ethic in him and his siblings at an early age.

Krish remembers that his first job was actually with CRT. He has been active in local politics, and local businesses, including a tobacco shop in downtown Hartford.

For the past 10 years he has worked as a building official with the University of Connecticut, helping to do inspections at facilities owned by the university, ensuring that everything is adhering to state and local codes.



“Identify with your story,  
and be willing to take it head on.”

“Be the best version of yourself  
that you can be.”

**IT SOUNDS LIKE HE'S GOT HIS LIFE IN ORDER, RIGHT? SO WHY IS HE STARTING OVER?** Krish got a divorce from his wife about three years ago. She used to handle the family finances while he worked. Following the divorce, he knew his personal finance skills were not where they needed to be, and he wanted to oversee his own financial future so he could support his two daughters (ages 7 and 11), and make plans to purchase a home. So last year he signed up for CRT's Financial Literacy Institute, a free 14-week program that teaches individuals about a wide range of money management skills.

But Krish, who is 60 years old, was concerned that he might be starting too late. As he recalls asking during one class, “If you're 60, why would a bank ever give you a 30-year mortgage?” He wasn't trying to be sarcastic – it was a genuine concern.

He completed the institute, receiving the “Energizer Bunny” trophy for his enthusiastic participation in the class. (This probably wouldn't come as a surprise to those who know him.)

**LOOKING FORWARD, KRISH HAS LAID OUT A THREE-STEP PLAN FOR HIS OWN FUTURE.** Completing the Financial Literacy program was step one. Check. Step two was to buy a home, and have a place where he can safely help to raise his two daughters. Check.

He was recently able to purchase a home in Bloomfield from one of his brothers. There is plenty of room for him and his kids, and the upstairs has an apartment for tenants, bringing him an additional source of income.

So far, so good. So what is step three? Maintain what he has been able to achieve. The Financial Literacy Institute gave him the tools he needed to manage his own financial future, so he can do things like keep an eye on his credit score, and save for the next phase of his life.

What advice does he have for others who might find themselves in a similar position? “Identify with your story, and be willing to take it head on.”

“Be the best version of yourself that you can be.” Krish is clearly taking his own advice to heart. And it is paying off.



# FROM HOMELESSNESS TO RISING HOLLYWOOD STAR

## **DANIEL DANIELSON. THE NAME JUST SOUNDS LIKE THAT OF A TV STAR, DOESN'T IT?**

Well, perhaps it was meant to be. You see, Daniel, who is now 48, never dreamed that someday he would be working alongside big-time Hollywood actors like Tom Selleck, Sela Ward or Missy Peregrym, but now he is doing that all the time.

Looking back, Daniel has good reason to think his current rise as a professional actor might not have ever happened. He grew up in Canton, Connecticut, but when he was 13 his parents sent him to a school down in Bridgeport. That didn't go well, and he soon found himself getting into trouble with drugs. He was first arrested when he was 14, and says between the ages of 18 to 36, he was in and out of jail on a regular basis. It was always because of drugs.

While he made attempts at kicking his drug habit, he admits he wasn't committed to the process. Around 1999 he met a chaplain who suggested a program he could probably get into in Hartford from The Open Hearth. He was there for a while, but then got back into trouble.

Skipping ahead to 2005, Daniel says that was "one of the worst years of my life." He remembered the chaplain who had helped him before, and called him up. He got the same advice – go back to The Open Hearth.



If Daniel's life was a play, the first act was certainly filled with plenty of drama. But the second act appears to be opening up a path to fame.

He tried, but they were full at the time, so he ended up coming to CRT's McKinney Shelter.

The McKinney Shelter in Hartford has 90 beds for homeless men, and is regularly near capacity. This fall, CRT's McKinney Shelter and East Hartford Family Shelter have been actively involved with a coalition of shelters serving the homeless in the Greater Hartford area in a "100 Day Challenge" to find permanent housing for 265 individuals and families by Thanksgiving.

Daniel was truly at a low point in his life. It was the middle of winter, and he had nowhere else to go, and no one close to lend a hand. "I was ready to do whatever I needed to do at this point." He got started in an intensive outpatient program (IOP) with a service in Avon, Connecticut (which is near where Daniel grew up as a boy).

"It was emotional for me to go back to there. I would cry coming down the road. But I was finally coming home."

The IOP was a success for Daniel, and he has stayed off drugs since that time. He managed to get an apprenticeship with the local iron workers union, and found himself working on some big projects in the Hartford area, including the construction of a Cabela's and also the Connecticut Science Center.

While at an AA meeting, he met a woman and they started dating. She was still using drugs at the time, and while trying to take her to a drug treatment program, she jumped out of the car. Daniel was charged with attempted kidnapping, and while that is clearly not what happened, he found himself back in jail for another year.

**DANIEL LOST EVERYTHING HE HAD, AND HAD TO START OVER ONCE AGAIN.** At this point, around 2009, the economy was bad and there were not a lot of prospects. He found work at a local Holiday Inn, and things were getting a bit better.

Late in 2012 he heard about a chance to apply for a position with the iron workers in New York City. He was accepted to begin in 2013, but the day he was heading down to the orientation from Stamford, he got stuck in traffic and lost the opportunity. *continued next page*

# SHE'S MORE THAN A RESIDENT, SHE'S ALSO THEIR PRESIDENT



...Mary knows everyone who lives there. You see, she's not just a resident, she's also the President of their Tenant's Association, a position she has held for the past several years.

**AS SOON AS YOU MEET MARY ROSE, YOU WILL KNOW SHE IS A "PEOPLE PERSON".** She's a proud 89-year old, and an active resident at Coventry Place in Hartford, where she has lived for the past 13 years. In fact, Mary has been there since CRT first opened the independent-living apartments.

A mother of nine children, seven of whom are still alive today, she is the matriarch of a five-generation family, with great-great grandchildren of her own. One of her daughters lives next door at Coventry Place, along with the other residents in the 30-unit building.

**AND MARY KNOWS EVERYONE WHO LIVES THERE.** You see, she's not just a resident, she's also the President of their Tenant's Association, a position she has held for the past several years. They hold meetings

once a month, and while she says she is ready to pass the torch to someone else, she knows she may continue to have this role for a while. It is a voluntary membership organization – residents are asked to contribute \$5 a month to be a member, and the dues help to pay for things like birthday celebrations and the annual Christmas party.

On a recent visit, Mary was happy to show off the library/computer room that she helped to establish. You can often find Mary at one of the four PCs, listening to music, or checking her email.

Mary has had a few medical issues to contend with, including a planned surgery in late November. But none of that appears able to slow her down. She cares deeply about the people that call Coventry Place home, just like she does. "I love them all. I know them all," she says with a smile.

**RATHER THAN FALLING APART, DANIEL TOOK HIMSELF TO AN AA MEETING, AND HE MET AN OLDER WOMAN THERE WHO TOLD HIM ABOUT HOW HE COULD BECOME AN EXTRA FOR TV SHOWS AND MAKE A LITTLE MONEY.** He gave it a try, and then started getting calls on a regular basis. His longest stint was in a recurring role as a precinct cop on the show "Blue Bloods" starring Tom Selleck. He did that for three seasons.

Today, he's in the Screen Actors Guild, and has a manager and two agents – one for voice-over work, and one for theatrical jobs. He recently had a stand-in part for a Nike commercial that stars Boston Celtics player Kyrie Irving. At the time of our interview, he was working

on a role in the new sitcom "God Friended Me" where he will be a doorman for a fancy Park Avenue apartment.

Daniel is grateful for the help that he received from CRT in the past, and wants to give back to others. He is working with staff at McKinney to arrange times when he can visit with homeless men staying at the shelter now, and share his own experience, providing words of encouragement based on his own life.

If Daniel's life was a play, the first act was certainly filled with plenty of drama. But the second act appears to be opening up a path to fame. Maybe someday Hollywood will tell Daniel's story.

# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST YEAR



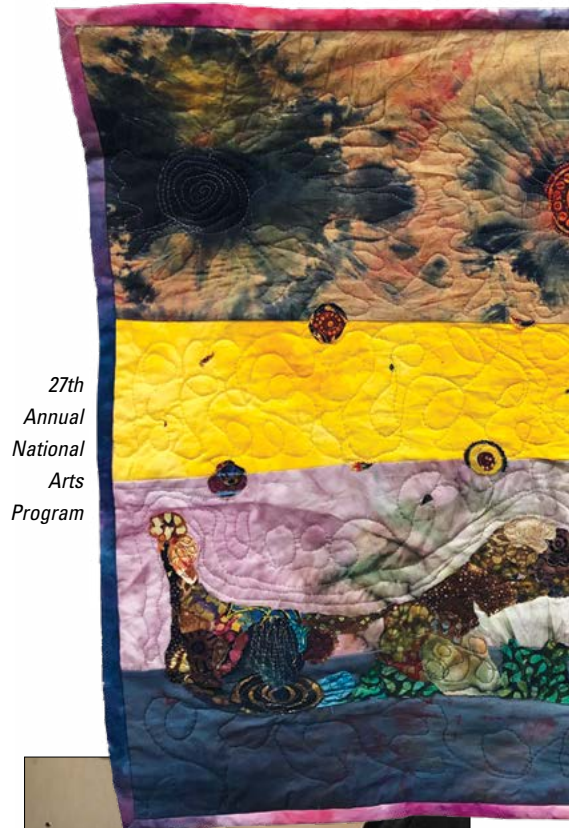
Hoffman Holiday Baskets



9th Annual Gun Buyback Event



Meals on Wheels Golf Tournament



27th Annual National Arts Program



CRT's Vita Tax Prep Service and Tax Day

## SUPPORT FOR VETERANS

American Eagle Financial Credit Union makes an annual donation in support of CRT's Veterans Services! In November of 2017, they presented CRT with a check for \$5,000.



Support for Veterans

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, What are you doing for others?"  
— Martin Luther King, Jr.

## 9TH ANNUAL GUN BUYBACK EVENT

For the ninth year, Connecticut Children's Medical Center, Hartford Hospital and Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center joined forces with the City of Hartford, Hartford Police Department, the Hartford State's Attorney's Office and CRT to sponsor a Gun Buyback Program in late December of last year. In return for firearms that were turned in, individuals were given Stop & Shop gift cards. A total of 68 different weapons, including 3 assault rifles & 1 machine gun, were turned in that day. The press conference the day before the event was attended by Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin, as well as Senators Chris Murphy and Richard Blumenthal.

## HOFFMAN HOLIDAY BASKETS

Every December, right before the holidays, the Hoffman Family of the Hoffman Auto Group, Inc. have given generously to help brighten the holiday season for so many of CRT's clients. These baskets, filled with festive foods to feed a family of 10, truly add to the holiday spirit for the 200 families that will receive them.

## 27TH ANNUAL NATIONAL ARTS PROGRAM

More than 200 pieces of art were submitted by both professional and amateur artists for the 27th National Arts Program which was on display for three weeks at Capital Community College in Hartford. An awards ceremony for the winning art work was held on January 27.





Community Action Day at the Capitol



Free HIV Testing on Valentine's Day



Women's Empowerment Networking Event



Child Abuse Prevention Day

### FREE HIV TESTING ON VALENTINE'S DAY

CRT offered free, confidential HIV tests on Wednesday, February 14 to anyone that wanted to get tested. The anonymous test results are available within 20 minutes. More than 45 people were tested that day.

### CRT'S VITA TAX PREP SERVICE AND TAX DAY

Our Director of Community Services, Elizabeth Horton Sheff describes CRT's annual Tax Day effort as "controlled chaos," and it certainly felt that way on Market Street this year! By 10:00 a.m. that day there were nearly 100 people waiting for help to file their taxes – all free of charge to eligible individuals and families. Trained volunteers work one-on-one with tax filers to prepare and electronically file their state and federal income tax forms, and to determine qualifications for eligible tax credits and refunds.

### CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION DAY

Every child matters! CRT hosted its annual observance of Child Abuse Prevention Day in its Early Care and Education classrooms in April. Guest readers from the community shared an age-appropriate picture book with the children - Your Body Belongs to You, by Cornelia Spelman. The children had a parade, and at one of our locations in Hartford, the Yard Goats mascot Chew Chew made a special surprise visit with the kids.

### COMMUNITY ACTION DAY AT THE CAPITOL

Governor Dannel P. Malloy stopped by the CRT table at the Capitol during "Community Action Day" in Hartford. We were proud to be there with CAFA and other Connecticut community action agencies that serve the people of our state every day!

### WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT NETWORKING EVENT

CRT hosted a networking event at the Gershon Fox Ballroom in Hartford to raise money for its forthcoming Women's Empowerment Center. We were joined by 150 people to help kick off this effort. During the event, Renee DiNino from iHeartMedia and The River 105.9 FM served as the Emcee, and speakers included: Lena Rodriguez, President and CEO of CRT; Gabrielle Bagot, a graduate student at the University of Saint Joseph and former resident at CRT's Generations campus where grandparents are raising their grandchildren; and keynote speaker Cheryl McDonald, co-owner of Bear's Restaurant Group in Hartford, who called CRT a "special ops" team for people in need.





8th Annual 'Helping Feed Hartford'



9th Annual Tee Off with Women



The Retreat Summer Carnival



"Beans to an End" with Blue State Coffee

**8TH ANNUAL 'HELPING FEED HARTFORD'**

CRT once again joined forces with volunteers from Feed the Children, PepsiCo & Price Rite for the 8th Annual Helping Feed Hartford event on Tues. June 12 at the XFINITY Theatre in Hartford. During the day, 800 Hartford-area families that work with CRT received a week's worth of food and essentials – over 40 pounds of food per family!

**THE RETREAT SUMMER CARNIVAL**

The weather might have been really, really hot with a chance of thunder storms, but that didn't stop the residents, family and staff at The Retreat from having a wonderful time at their annual summer carnival in July!

**"BEANS TO AN END" WITH BLUE STATE COFFEE**

The shop Blue State Coffee in downtown Hartford selected CRT as one of four charities that will receive a financial donation at the end of the year, based on customer votes. With each purchase, customers get a token to put in the jar for the cause of their choice.

**9TH ANNUAL TEE OFF WITH WOMEN**

CRT hosted its ninth annual Tee Off with Women at Keney Park Golf Course on Thursday, August 2 in Hartford. The tournament net nearly \$30,000 for its forthcoming Women's Empowerment Center. More than 60 golfers competed in this all-women's tournament, and there was also a clinic for first-time players to get to know the great game of golf. Not even a lot of rain could stop the fun during dinner that evening!



The Big Idaho Potato Rolls into Hartford





Voya Volunteer Day



OneDigital Volunteer Day



Meals on Wheels Golf Tournament



Meals on Wheels Golf Tournament



'Socktober' with the Glastonbury Newcomers and Neighbors Club

**THE BIG IDAHO POTATO ROLLS INTO**

**HARTFORD** The Big Idaho Potato truck came to Hartford on August 22 to help drive awareness and raise much-needed funds for CRT's Meals on Wheels program in Central Connecticut! It was a beautiful day with a four-ton tater strapped to the back of a tractor trailer!

**VOYA VOLUNTEER DAY**

Thank you to all the volunteers from VOYA who joined us during their National Day of Service at five different CRT sites, including CRT Generations in Hartford, along with the team from Capital City YouthBuild to help us plant an amazing veggie garden for the residents. There was a bumper crop by the end of the summer!

**MEALS ON WHEELS GOLF TOURNAMENT**

CRT's 17th Annual Meals on Wheels Golf Classic raised more than \$70,000 to help keep Meal on Wheels rolling in Central Connecticut! Nearly 100 golfers came to Keney Park Golf Course in support of this annual event!

**ONEDIGITAL VOLUNTEER DAY**

On Thursday, September 13, more than 35 volunteers from OneDigital, United Healthcare and Harvard Pilgrim Health spent several hours volunteering to help out at CRT programs throughout Hartford. Some volunteers worked outside doing fall cleanup projects while others spent time indoors organizing the shelves of food pantries and supply closets.

**'SOCKTOBER' WITH THE GLASTONBURY NEWCOMERS AND NEIGHBORS CLUB**

For the past two years, children and families with the Glastonbury Newcomers and Neighbors Club have collected socks for the homeless residents at CRT's McKinney Shelter and East Hartford Family Shelter. This October they collected more than 1,700 pairs of socks, which is always the most-needed personal item for the homeless.





# FUNDERS & DONORS

Community Renewal Team gratefully acknowledges the following individuals, organizations and public agencies for investing in our mission. We are proud of the trust that is demonstrated with each gift, grant and contract. By funding CRT programs, each of those mentioned here helps to eliminate poverty.

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 US Department of Agriculture  
 US Department of Energy  
 US Department of Health and Human Service  
 US Department of Housing and Urban Development  
 US Department of Justice  
 US Department of Labor  
 US Department of the Treasury- Internal Revenue Services  
 US Department of Veterans Affairs  
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 CT Department of Children and Families  
 CT Department of Correction  
 CT Department of Economic and Community Development  
 CT Department of Education  
 CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection  
 CT Department of Housing  
 CT Department of Labor  
 CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services  
 CT Department of Public Health  
 CT Department of Social Services  
 CT Health and Education Facilities Authority  
 CT Housing and Finance Authority  
 CT Office of Early Childhood  
 CT Office of Policy and Management

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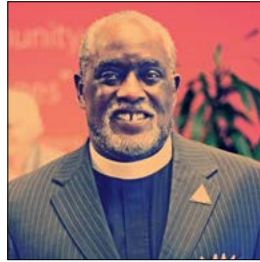
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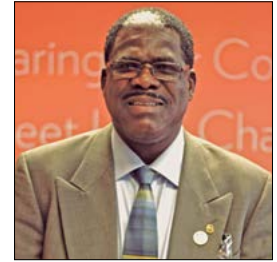
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Treasurer*



*Marta Bentham*



*Robert A. Benzinger*



*Robert A. Carubia*



*The Honorable  
Eric Coleman*



*Mayor Daniel Drew*



*Mary Everett*



*Robert Fishman*



*Mui Mui Hin-McCormick*



*Gloria Jones*



*Dr. Wilfredo Nieves*



*Daniel Schaefer*



*Navarda Williams*

*“We must open the doors of opportunity.  
But we must also equip our people to walk through those doors.”  
— Lyndon B. Johnson*



# 2017 FINANCIALS

## Operating Support and Revenue

### GRANTS AND CONTRACTS

Federal .....	37,532,460
State .....	8,183,314
Private .....	1,698,405
State Capital Projects .....	918,412

### CONTRIBUTIONS

In-Kind .....	1,999,826
Fundraising .....	174,496

### OTHER REVENUE

Education: Parent Fees and Subsidies .....	1,447,526
Elderly Nutrition Meal Subsidies .....	416,553
Catering .....	1,010,012
Child and Adult Food Program Subsidies .....	580,239
Patient Fees .....	2,198,604
Housing Services .....	803,005
CHEFA Debt Service .....	193,679

OTHER INCOME ..... 901,401

**TOTAL OPERATING SUPPORT AND REVENUE ..... 58,057,932**

## Operating Expenses

Salaries and Benefits .....	24,992,012
Client Assistance .....	17,213,321
Materials and Supplies .....	4,644,545
Contractual Services .....	3,119,825
Occupancy .....	3,428,918
Other Expenses .....	1,723,023
Depreciation and Amortization .....	982,462
Delegate Expense .....	116,854
Travel and Transportation .....	515,677
Interest Expense .....	30,500

**TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES ..... 56,767,137**

**NON-OPERATING EXPENSE – CAPITAL ASSET IMPAIRMENT ..... 1,041,142**

**TOTAL CHANGE IN NET ASSETS ..... 249,653**

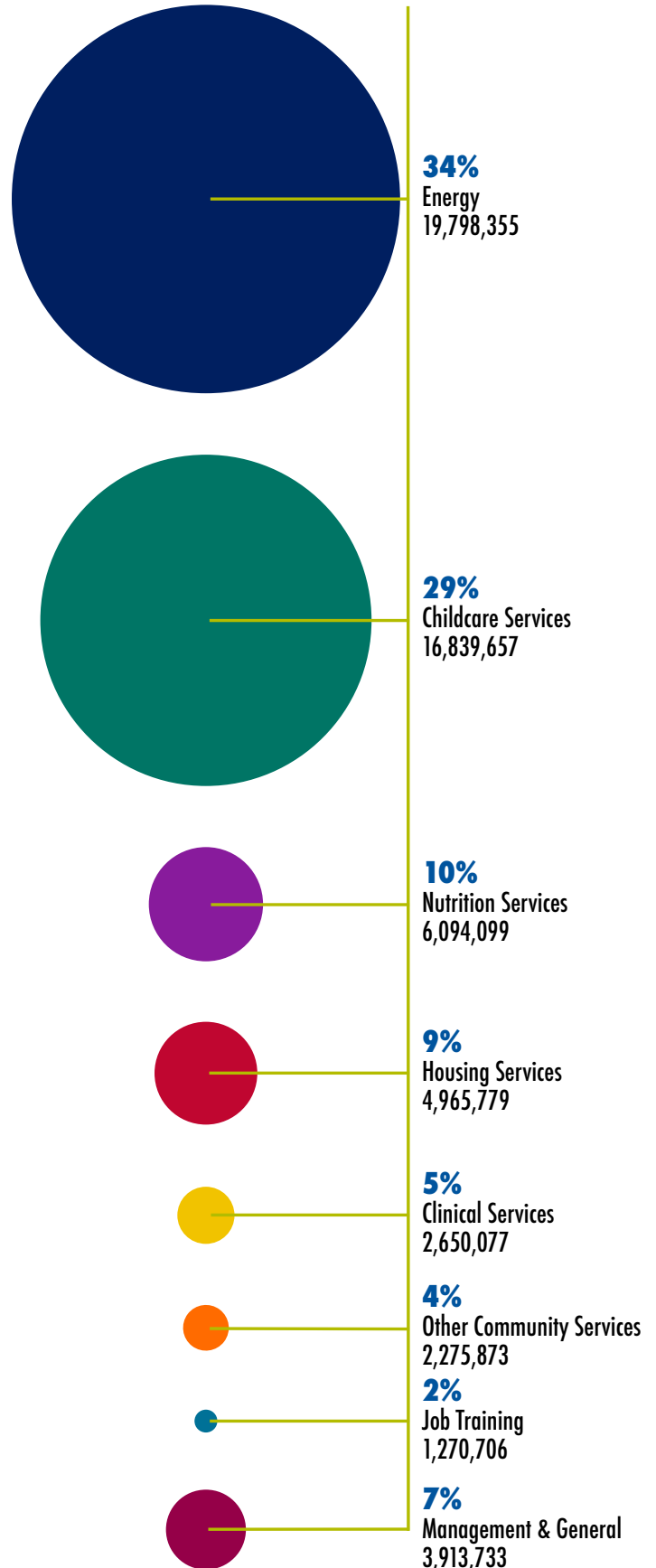
**LESS STATE CAPITAL PROJECT PROCEEDS ..... 918,412**

**CHANGE IN NET ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR USE ..... (668,759)**

**\$0.93 of every dollar that CRT spends goes directly to programs and services on behalf of our clients.**

Source: CRT and affiliates combined financial statements as of December 31, 2017.

## Expenses by Function



Community Renewal Team, Inc  
555 Windsor Street, Hartford CT

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S.Postage  
PAID  
Hartford, CT 06101  
Permit #161



**Community Renewal Team**  
Changing lives... Creating opportunity!