

HarcToday

Your Support Makes it Happen!

Hartford Foundation for Public Giving Chooses Harc in 1st Round of Funding

An enormous thanks to the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving for awarding Harc a \$125,000 grant as part of their \$6.4 million COVID-19 Response Fund.

The fund was created to rapidly deploy resources to organizations that serve residents who are disproportionately impacted by coronavirus and the economic consequences of the outbreak.

Harc was chosen for the first round of funding because of the vital work we do with our vulnerable population.



**Hartford
Foundation**

FOR PUBLIC GIVING

Together for good.®



Harry, Adam, and Kevin during our Harc parade

Harc Heroes Go Above and Beyond

There are many words to describe what a hero is: courageous, noble, selfless. Heroes are everyday people who find themselves in circumstances that not only test their character, but demand that they act boldly for the sake of others.

Heroes overcome adversity despite their fears. They do what needs doing now. Harc is blessed to have a team of heroes in place able to rise to the challenges we are facing today.

In ten short weeks, Harc staff have gone above and beyond, reimagining the way we provide programs and services, stepping in to save vital jobs for our participants, and most of all, striving to impart a sense of normalcy and calm to the people we serve in the wake of a pandemic none of us has experienced in our lifetimes.

When area employers were forced to lay off our participants, Harc case managers reached out to ensure those jobs would still be available

when the state reopens. We have case managers currently working at some of those businesses in place of our participants, so that participants can return to those jobs when it is safe to do so.

Many of us have been tasked with doing work we never thought we'd be asked to do. Day programs and residential staff are working together and learning from one another. Administrative staff are training to work in direct care situations. Everyone has had to become masters of social media and Zoom virtually overnight. All of us bringing myriad skills to the table with one factor binding us together – a total

Harc Heroes Go Above and Beyond (Continued)



Sarrin, Karin, and Mary cheering during the parade.



Oneal and Franny

The gratitude that the Harc community has for our heroes is immeasurable.



Connie, Harc's Security guard

commitment to the health and well-being of the people we serve.

With our participants stuck in a lockdown that seems to never end, our Harc Heroes have come up with creative ways to keep everyone connected. Be it face time with family, a Zoom scavenger hunt, virtual programming, or a vehicle parade past the group homes, Harc staff have taken action with new alternatives to help everyone remain positive through these uncertain times.

So many of our donors have also gone above and beyond with monetary gifts and purchases of much-needed items on our wish list through the Harc Heroes Fund. The Hadden family, in particular, have generously given a \$15,000 match to kick off the fund that has raised over \$183,000 to date.

All of this speaks to the dedication and compassion our Harc Heroes possess when they show up to work every day, ready to make changes on

a dime and to adapt to the constantly evolving 'new normal' conditions we find ourselves in.

The gratitude that the Harc community has for our heroes is immeasurable. It goes far beyond a mere 'thank you'. All of us are in this together, and we can take pride in knowing that what we've done and are still doing is having a positive impact on the individuals we serve.

Meet Annette Hargrove, Interim President & CEO

With over 25 years of business leadership, Annette Hargrove has the skills and experience to successfully lead Harc. Perhaps more importantly, she understands the power of motivation and believes that it is the key to both financial stability and making the Harc experience the best it can be for participants, families, and employees alike. Hargrove lives by the notion that we should,

“Always know the strength of the word ‘belong’ and empower all to be more than they thought they could ever be.”

Taking the helm of Harc during a pandemic has been challenging. But through it all, Hargrove never ceases to be amazed by the unwavering teamwork she sees in every aspect of the organization. She plans to keep this momentum going by prioritizing values and actions over processes. She is very optimistic about Harc’s future and hopes to see Harc grow as a provider as well as an employer. She believes that together, we can overcome the obstacles we face today and in the future.

“This is planting a seed and watching it grow,” said Hargrove. “I know we are up for the challenge.”



SPECIAL THANK YOU!

\$15K

Special Thank You to the **David & Sara Hadden** who contributed \$15,000 in matching funds to jump-start the Harc Heroes Fund

New Products and Partnerships Help SockStarz Look beyond COVID-19



Lilly at SockStarz in West Hartford, CT

SockStarz has reopened its doors with new safety precautions and a more nuanced approach to selling products in the wake of COVID-19. The physical changes are not the only things that are different. There are now private 'by appointment' shopping hours, and the store has added new products to the inventory such as face masks and high-end hand sanitizers. They even have a "Social Distancing" collection of socks celebrating the likes of Dr. Fauci and Governor Cuomo which helps to maintain the whimsical vibe of their products.

Although SockStarz prides itself on its cause-centric product lines, the most popular item they've sold since reopening are their very own hand-made masks.

Volunteers began sewing the colorful multi-patterned masks that have quickly become best sellers.

"People are seeing masks as a new accessory and want something that fits their look or personality," said Patricia Kinney, Harc board member and general manager of SockStarz.

But behind the humorous approach to product selling lies the very serious reason why the business operates in the first place: jobs for individuals with developmental disabilities, and a much-needed revenue source for Harc. The state closure of brick and mortar businesses has

had a profound effect on the developmentally disabled population SockStarz employs.

"While we stay open we can continue to pay our participants," said Kinney. "By keeping our store strong they will have jobs to come back to."

Through networking with the West Hartford Chamber of Commerce and West Hartford Business Association,

SockStarz has managed to form partnerships taking their product sales in new directions. Teaming up with fellow Chamber member, Eric Feeney, founder of Friends of Feeney, SockStarz has created its first custom design for the fledgling nonprofit whose mission is to help children and families in

need of assistance after heartbreak or tragedy.

Since reopening the store on May 20, many new and returning customers have stopped in to enjoy the welcoming environment of the store and to chat with employees.

"People were so happy just to be out and about to talk to others," said Kinney. "For some people, we were the first store they came to. They were just so happy to connect with other people. There's an 'I'm glad you're okay' vibe."

SockStarz is open daily from 12 to 4 pm. Learn more at www.sockstarzusa.com.





Kenneth holding up a sign he made for the Harc Parade

Harc's Programs Go Virtual

Like so many other nonprofits struggling to fulfill their missions, the COVID-19 crisis has caused Harc to completely rethink the way we provide daily programming to over 250 active program participants. After a lot of creative brainstorming, we've come up with a solution that allows us to stay true to the daily in-person activities that would normally be offered on-site. Launched on May 4th, **Harc's Connection Corner** Facebook group was born. The daily six-hour virtual programming schedule offers an array of interesting topics all designed to connect with our participants who are at home for the foreseeable future.

"Since the Day Programs have been closed, we really miss the ability to support and engage with our program participants," said Janice Marden, Vice President of Employment and Day Services. "The virtual program has brought a lot of joy by enabling us to interact and connect with our staff and most importantly with our program participants, even though it's from afar!"

Viewers can communicate with their program hosts in real-time via comments on the Facebook group page. This allows for direct communication between live presenters and participants, creating a sense of community and inclusion. In addition, all of the content is available 24/7 and can be searched by popular topics and viewed any time on demand.

Harc hopes to continue some form of this program model long after the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. It could potentially be offered to participants who are sick or can't be on-site physically.

Harc's virtual programming is proving to be a successful way for us to stay connected as we make our way through these challenging times.

If you would like to join the group just log on to Facebook and search, **Harc's Connection Corner**. All content is public, but you will have to be approved by administrators to comment on posts.

BIRTH TO THREE ONLINE



To meet the needs of the 400 children and their families that Birth to Three serves, we have transitioned the program to a virtual HIPAA-compliant platform. Families now access real-time sessions with our team of providers to ensure the continuity of their child's progress.

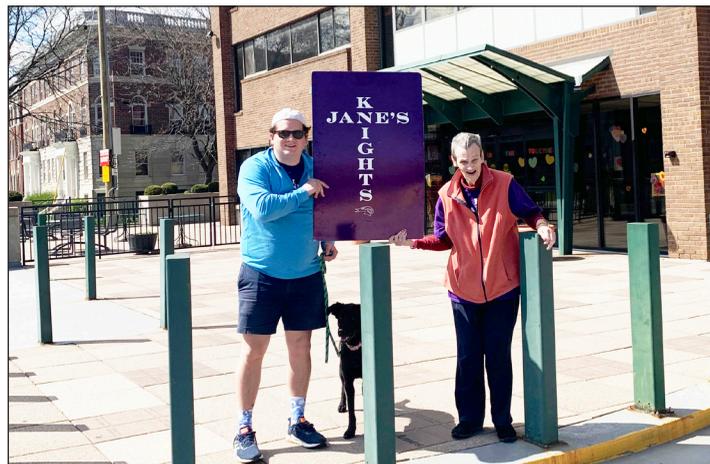
Now virtual, the services provided remain the same as they would be in person. Although it was a huge adjustment for families and staff alike, most parents like the new model of service.

"The staff and families have been really accommodating and work together as a team," said Kimberly Paluska, Senior Vice President of Programs. "Their cooperation and dedication to work together has made the virtual program a success."

Harc's Virtual Walk n' Roll Showcases Dedication and Love for the Longstanding Event



Peter's Platoon team enjoying their Virtual Walk



Greg Calnen, Board Member & Walk Chair, with his Aunt Jane

The annual Harc Walk n' Roll usually draws hundreds of supporters from near and far to raise money for Harc's programs by walking (and rolling) at the popular event. This year was a little different. Instead of everyone coming together on April 25th at Dunkin Donuts Park for a day-long event with festivities, we had to plan a virtual walk. What's a virtual walk you ask? It's a way for teams and individuals to still participate in the walk, only on their time and turf. Instead of a one-day event, we extended it so that walkers and rollers alike would have a whole month to participate.

Greg Calnen, Harc Board, walk committee member and public policy & advocacy chair states, "We know the value of the walk and how incredibly passionate everyone is about it. Since it is our only free event, it is a door into the organization to actually meet the people."

Taking up the challenge to keep this event as inclusive and celebratory as ever, participants took photos and videos of their walks and posted them on Facebook with the hashtag #HarcWalk.

"The extended event time allowed for more people to get involved and get creative in their approach. It goes to show the strength of our Harc family," said Calnen.

There were many obstacles to switching to a virtual event with little notice or time to plan. In spite of the challenges, we raised over \$27,000 because of the perseverance and dedication of all our supporters!

Harc plans to create a compilation of all the videos and photos submitted to Facebook to share with everyone in the near future. We hope to see you all next year to Walk n' Roll with our partners, the Hartford Yard Goats, at Dunkin Donuts Park!



Ann Jane and Shirl on their Virtual Walk



Clonan Contenders Virtual Walk



Alex's Army Virtual Walk

Joey's Team Honors His Memory



Team Joey on their Virtual Walk

The annual Walk n' Roll holds a special place in Zelia Melo's heart. Each year she honors the memory of her brother, Joey, by going above and beyond with her efforts to raise money for the cause.

She planned a fundraiser for the night before to add to the team's totals. Although the event had to be canceled due to the COVID-19 restrictions, most of the ticket holders opted to donate the ticket price to the walk. With the help of her ever-expanding team, Melo managed to raise \$4,152! Melo intends to reschedule the fundraiser for next year in honor of Joey.

"Joey would have loved this. I just have to keep his memory alive, I can do that by helping Harc."

Harc Celebrates Employee Milestones

The 2020 Spring Fling is Harc's way of recognizing our long-time staff members and to say 'thank you' for believing in our organization and for remaining a valued member of the Harc family. Although we had to celebrate virtually this year, the distance could not hamper how proud we are of our employees and the milestones they've achieved.

Congratulations!

5 Years

Sherrell Anderson
Marguerite Brown
Yaritza Cardona
Carolyn Chandler
Walter Omeally
Rochelle McCall
Sandra White
Tiffany Willis

10 Years

Joan Brown
April Godbee
Janine Griffith
Melanie Larson
Vidalisse Sanchez

15 Years

Mirjana Beslagic
Karin Dionne
Casandra Fluker
Lebert Lewin Jr.
Terrienne Simpson

20 Years

Kiana Alston
Patricia Devonish

25 Years

Maria Lozano-Aguilar

Storm Appleton Award

Lebert Lewin Jr.



Melanie, 10 year milestone awardee with Arsenia.



Terrienne, 15 year milestone awardee with Ne Ne.



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 900 Asylum Avenue
 Hartford, CT 06105

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