

Investing in the Health and Safety of Stamford's West Side Community

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Board Meetings for 2016:

- August 24, 2016
- September 28, 2016
- October 26, 2016
- November 16, 2016
- December 14, 2016

Meetings are Wednesday evenings and begin at 6:00 p.m. at Post House, 40 Clinton Avenue in the first-floor meeting room.



A young guest at the Fairgate Farm, Farm-to-Table Series proudly displays her completed craft.

It's no secret that cities across America are facing a multitude of issues from unemployment, poverty and health crises to crime and failing education systems. No cities have been spared from today's economic, wellness or safety challenges, and money and resources are strained and getting tighter. Even here in our own West Side neighborhood of Stamford, residents deal with a variety of hardships as they attempt to find and keep work, eat healthfully, and raise their families in clean, safe and welcoming communities.

With those goals in mind, the City of Stamford was recently awarded a \$60,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Reinvestment Fund. Stamford is one of 50 cities across the United States selected to take part in what is being called the Invest Health initiative. This initiative is aimed at improving health and safety in neighborhoods most in need of assistance. The Stamford team

will be identifying and designing programs tailored to the needs of the West Side neighborhood.

Invest Health brings together leaders from mid-sized cities to accelerate improvements in neighborhoods facing the biggest barriers to improved health. Stamford's team includes representatives from the Mayor's Office, Stamford Hospital, Family Centers, Inc., the Board of Education, and Charter Oak Communities. Recently, the team returned from one of four national meetings with the other 49 cities that will participate in this effort over the next 18 months.

"By working in collaboration with the City and other partners, we can address underlying issues, such as employment, public safety, education and community engagement," said Vin Tufo, executive

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Employee Profile: Darnel Paulemon



Darnel Paulemon joined COC in April 2015 as a Junior Asset Accountant in the main office. Prior to COC, Darnel worked for Management Resources of America, a specialty food company in Norwalk offering pre-

mium products. His favorite aspect of working at COC, he says, is the leadership and team collaboration with his co-workers. Darnel states, "Goals are clearly communicated and teamwork involves everyone. This provides a great work environment that I'm proud to be part of." He adds, "I'm happy to continue learning and have improved on my Excel skills."

Darnel's parents emigrated from Haiti to the United States more than 37 years ago and worked hard to raise their family. Darnel is the fourth of five children, and his parents instilled strong values and a strong work ethic. His parents encouraged him to go to school, to become

educated and to give back to the community to make a difference in other people's lives.

Darnel took his parents advice earnestly and graduated from Brien McMahon High School in Norwalk. He then graduated from the University of New Haven with a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting. Darnel is a basketball enthusiast and readily plays pickup games in the park with friends. Additionally, volunteering for his church is always heartwarming to Darnel.

Family time brings contentment to Darnel, which includes cooking, family traditions and feasts. Darnel enjoys cooking favorite dishes for his family such as rice and black beans, stews and Haitian pork griot (fried pork seasoned with fried plantains)!

Darnel also likes to travel and was recently in Brazil. The beautiful beaches, sipping on fresh coconut milk, enjoying the festive restaurants, food and people of that culture were some of the highlights. Fortunate to travel to Las Vegas last year and tour the Grand Canyon, the high point of his trip, he recalls, was to meet and talk with comedian Steve Harvey. Darnel is ready to pack his suit case for his next adventure!

Activities Held at the East Side Playground

The tremendous volunteer efforts that built the playground at McKeithen Park in August 2015 have completed a key mission: To help support play in cultivating healthy lives for children. The Park has been host to several events this year, including a bike maintenance program sponsored by Rip-powam Labs in April that taught children how to tune up their bikes, patch tubes, grease chains and align spokes. In May, children were taught how to plant tomatoes in pots and to maintain them.



Beginning August 5th through August 26th from 10:00 a.m. to 12 p.m., **Fridays only**, there will be a Day-of-Play for children four to 15 years old. Children will be able to participate in sports of their choice such as soccer, kickball, and jump rope. Activities will be supervised by the Family Centers' Resident Service Coordinators.

All are welcome to come and visit McKeithen Park for a Day-of-Play!



Resident Corner: Colette Connor

A resident of Rippowam Manor, Colette Connor, born in Liverpool, England, had a fascination with art from an early age. She moved to the United States at the age of 10 and read every art magazine she could get her hands on. Colette loved attending art class at Stamford High and did very well, but had to drop out of school at 16.

Colette's first job was as a retail saleswoman. She was always very excited when she was given the opportunity to design and dress the window scenes. Later, Colette became an apprentice as a potter working with porcelain. That job led to painting small furniture pieces. Colette's work was admirable and she began displaying the pieces in art shows in Greenwich and New York City galleries. During that time, she was commissioned privately to paint many fine pieces that kept her very busy.

At the suggestion of one of her private commission clients, Colette bid on a fabrication for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C. Winning the bid "Remember the Children: Daniel's Story" -- a special exhibition of a

child's diary that tells of his family's deportation to Auschwitz -- was one of the highlights of her career.

Colette surrounds herself with things she enjoys. Pinky, her Fawn Pug, adores going for walks in the area and greeting people. Colette also enjoys many of the people around her, and explains, "I'm delighted with Property Manager Monique Moye, who always listens to residents' concerns and provides a valuable service."

Colette takes pride in giving back to the community. This summer she is proud to assist in cleaning the Mill River banks in preparation for native plants that will be donated by Bartlett Arboretum. Additionally, Colette believes in keeping herself engaged and reads extensively each day. The editor of several flipboard newsfeed blogs, her viewer list continues to grow!

Prior to arriving at Rippowam Manor, Colette was homeless. Today, Colette applauds her Case Worker Janice Stewart, of Inspirica, one of the largest providers of services to the homeless in Connecticut and the largest in lower Fairfield County, for her guidance and assistance. "I'm



Colette is in the process of replicating *Guernica*, a painting by Spanish artist Pablo Picasso completed in June 1937, which assisted in bringing worldwide attention to the Spanish Civil War.

grateful and would like to extend my gratitude for the endless support Janice has offered me in obtaining my sunny apartment," said Colette.

Guests Should use "Visitor" Parking Spots or Street Parking to Avoid Towing

Please remind your guests to park in a designated "Visitor Parking" area when visiting. If all spots are occupied, encourage your guest to find a parking spot on the street. Visitor parking spots are available at Clinton Manor, Rippowam Manor and Stamford Manor.



Remind your guests that if they should park in another resident's space or in an unauthorized spot (such as a fire lane), they will be subject to having their vehicle towed. If a vehicle is towed, the owner must contact East Coast Towing directly at (203) 358-8311 and will be responsible for any costs related to retrieving their vehicle.

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director and CEO of Charter Oak Communities. "These are some of the challenges directly affecting the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents, and these partners can help by working together on programs and on outreach, and by leveraging public and private investments aimed at addressing these problems."

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is the nation's largest philanthropy dedicated solely to health. Since 1972, they have supported research and programs targeting some of America's most pressing health issues, including substance abuse and improving access to quality health care.



It's Summer Harvest and Learning Time at Fairgate Farm!

Peppers, tomatoes, eggplant, zucchini, lettuce, herbs, garlic, okra, kale, collards and beets are ready to be picked by volunteers at the Farm!

Fairgate Farm Volunteer Open Hours:

Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon; 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
(Closed on Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays)
Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Farm-to-Table Series (Six weeks)

Wednesday evenings, July 13th through August 17th from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Join us for delicious recipes, tasty samples and fun suggestions on how to make the most of fresh seasonal fruits and vegetables! Free and open to all!

Additional information can be located at FairgateFarm.com

What to Wear in Summer

By Jessica Herlihy of Family Centers
Stamford Family Self-Sufficiency Program Coordinator

Organizations typically remind us of their dress code, which may be more challenging to adhere to when the temperature gets hot in the summer. I've heard many differing opinions recently on what is considered "work appropriate." I decided to share some information with others who may be searching for jobs or just unsure of what to wear in the office.

As always, the culture of your office sets a tone for how you should dress. It is helpful when a written dress code is provided. Some people may be expected to wear business suits all summer long, but most of us have some freedom to lighten up when the weather gets warmer.

Many places institute a "business casual" rule and may even allow a "casual Friday." The problem is there rarely are clearly defined rules, and workers are left wondering, even testing, how "casual" is really considered appropriate. The best definition I find in my research is "clothing that is less formal than corporate business wear, but still gives off a professional vibe." Generally, items such as black or grey pants, khakis or chinos, pencil skirts, button-down shirts and knitted or polo shirts are agreed upon as "business casual" attire. There are also many agreed-upon "don't-wear" items for work such as shorts, tank tops, low-cut tops, flip flops or sandals, t-shirts and especially, sneakers, which often are not allowed.

If you're still not sure what to wear, take a look at some of the supervisors and team leaders at your place of employment. Also consider if you are directly meeting with clients or customers or are more behind the scenes. Some co-workers may need to dress more professionally for their role while those in the background may be allowed to be more casual. If you're still unclear after looking around, don't hesitate to reach out to someone in the Human Resources department for guidance. It's always better to ask before being called into an uncomfortable meeting about your dress.

A general rule to follow is to be on the side of caution. It's always better to be overdressed than underdressed; and if you think something might be bending the rules, it's best to leave it for the weekends. Dressing well is a form of good manners. Remember that your clothes are a reflection of you, and you should always put your best foot forward.