

# Homes with Hope

Solving homelessness in our communities through supportive housing



August 2011 Newsletter



## Stand Up For Homes with Hope: An Evening with Martin Short



Homes with Hope is holding its signature event, Stand Up for Homes with Hope, on Saturday, September 24, 2011 at the iconic Westport Country Playhouse. This year's gala – our primary fundraising event of the year - will be “An Evening with Martin

Short” the legendary comedic actor who will bring his own cast of well-known characters to the performance. Pre-show festivities, which include cocktails, SHORT ribs, SHORT cake and more from *a dash of salt* Caterers as well as a silent auction, start at 7:00pm with a live auction and show beginning at 8:30pm. All of the proceeds from the evening go to support the programs and services for the homeless and those at-risk of homelessness operated by Homes with Hope.

With a degree in social work from Canada's McMaster's University, Short is an inspired choice to lead the festivities for Homes with Hope's fourth annual event. Short made his professional debut in 1973 and is a graduate of the Second City improv group. In the 80's he achieved notoriety as the creator of Jackie Rogers Jr., Irving Cohen and the seriously likeable and weird - Ed Grimley. Many characters have followed, including Nathan Thurm and Jiminy Glick. His film presence has contributed greatly to the charm of *Three Amigos*, *Innerspace* and *Father of the Bride*. Short will bring his many characters and many talents to the Westport Playhouse this year.

Thanks to the wonderful venue, there are no bad seats in the house. In fact, some of the very best seats in this intimate theatre are in the mezzanine! Tickets are selling fast so make sure to reserve your space soon.

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### What is HwH up to?

- Stand Up For Homes with Hope: An Evening with Martin Short
- Surviving Tropical Storm Irene
- Westport National Bank Food Drive
- DSS Mobile Rx-Xpress Visits Gillespie
- Local Outreach to the Community Kitchen
- Fairfield County Community Foundation Grant for Families
- Gillespie Garden Restoration



## Surviving Tropical Storm Irene

Homes with Hope has 9 buildings in Westport, including Permanent Supportive Homes and emergency shelters, and thankfully Hurricane Irene spared all of them from structural problems or flooding. One big tree came down near the Linxweiler House on the Post Road but missed the garage and the house. Our emergency shelter experienced 24 hours without power, while the tenants of the Westport Rotary Centennial House struggled with power outage for more than three days. The case manager was in close touch with everyone as was our

property manager, and our tenants were stoic throughout the ordeal – as was so much of Westport. In Norwalk, at Fair Street Apartments, the only significant problem was that our intrepid case manager had trouble getting to work from Easton which had a lot of downed trees. She was also in touch with our residents and all are fine; the building sustained no damages and maintained power throughout.

Our staff and property manager were great before, during and after the storm. “We were well prepared, and our staff was flexible in filling in for personnel who could not get through the deluge,”



A narrow miss for the Linxweiler garage said Jeff Wieser. “Jim Barber was at the Gillespie Center throughout most of the storm and was relieved after 15 hours watching over the operation. That is an indication to me of the dedication of our team, and we are blessed to have them.”

## Westport National Bank Holds a Trailer Sized Food Drive



Westport National Bank Branch Manager, Robin Clark with bags of food.

Robin Clark, Branch Manager of the Westport National Bank wanted a volunteer project so that the bank could help those in need in the community. Her solution was to partner with the

Westport-based grassroots nonprofit, Homes with Hope, by helping to fill the agency’s Food Pantry. The Westport National Bank’s drive ran from August 1<sup>st</sup> through August 19<sup>th</sup> during which they collected non-perishable food

items with the goal of filling up a trailer that was staged in the bank’s parking lot. Ms. Clark requested that donors drop off food items to Westport National Bank located at 1495 Post Road East in Westport during normal business hours. For donors who didn’t have time to shop they could make a cash donation and the Bank did the shopping for them.

Jeff Wieser shared “the drive collected food and also raised more than \$1,200, which the Bank used to purchase food in bulk. The resulting delivery in mid-August brought in enough to get us through the summer and into the fall season when Westporters typically, freshly-returned from vacations and

into the new school year, return to the Food Pantry with generous donations.”



President of HwH, Jeff Wieser and Westport National Bank Branch Manager, Robin Clark next to the trailer of food collected.

## Mobile Medicare Rx-Express Assistance Center

The DSS Rx-Xpress is a mobile Medicare Rx assistance center operated by the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) and CHOICES (Connecticut’s program for Health assistance, Outreach, Information and referral, Counseling and Eligibility Screening), providing Medicare Rx assistance and eligibility screening for benefits to the homeless, older adults and persons with disabilities.

The mobile DSS “office” has been very helpful to our clients from all HwH

programs (as well as referrals from Westport, Wilton, and Weston Social Service Departments) by eliminating



The mobile DSS office

travel costs and providing benefits approval at time of application. Clients are seen by appointment only; although DSS staff has been very friendly and helpful in assisting clients that may “walk in” if time permits. The bus arrived outside of Gillespie Center, across from the Police Station for about 4 hours on Tuesday, June 28th. Many of our clients from all locations were able to get assistance and screening. We are hopeful that we can make this a quarterly event for a very much needed service.

## Local Outreach Benefits the Community Kitchen

Christ & Holy Trinity, Greens Farms, United Methodist, Assumption, Saugatuck, and Norfield Churches, Temple Israel and The Conservative Synagogue, as well as service clubs and “friends” of the Kitchen make sure that we have food every night for the many people who gather for sustenance and community. Summer is always a time of special opportunity for service from these groups as well as local businesses, and the diners at the Kitchen are always grateful for

their generosity. This year, Cohen & Wolf brought many staffers from their Westport office to serve at the Kitchen. Their conversation with the residents was appreciated by all, especially since this large entourage could not all fit into the Kitchen! Birinyi Associates provided a fun evening a few nights later when they brought “The Big Green Pizza Truck” to serve dinner. An unusual evening no doubt for our diners, but the event provided a fun change on a beautiful summer’s evening. These

groups reinforced the positive experience that families, congregations, offices, and service clubs have when they volunteer their time, efforts and talent at the Kitchen. They have loyally served our residents for 28 years. The tradition continues in many ways, and our residents are grateful for all the effort!



The Big Green Truck

## Community Foundation Comes to the Aid of Local Homeless Families

Homes with Hope has received a \$10,000 grant from Fairfield County Community Foundation to help support the agency’s emergency shelter for families headed by single women, the Bacharach Community.

The facility, which started in 1993, has served 148 families including 216 children since first opening. Families come to Bacharach from Westport and the surrounding Fairfield County communities. The majority of mothers are raising their children on their own and all are struggling with economic issues, which ultimately led to their becoming homeless. In addition many are dealing with mental illness, substance abuse, medical issues or domestic violence. These families find a safe and accepting home-like

environment at the Bacharach Community. Through training and counseling they develop the skills necessary to begin leading stable and productive lives. With the assistance of Bacharach’s Program Director the families ultimately find an appropriate permanent housing situation that is safe and affordable for them.

The demand has always been great for this shelter but the need has increased dramatically over the last few years as the economic environment continues to struggle and the cost of housing remains extremely high. According to HwH Vice President, Audrey Sparre, “in addition to the continuing need for more family shelter space, we are seeing an increase in the number of families who have been homeless for longer periods of time. This is due, in part, to a decrease in available rentals but also because families need more assistance to negotiate what can be a very confusing affordable housing system. Acquiring an affordable

2-bedroom apartment is possible but families can literally be on public or subsidized housing waiting lists for years.”

Fairfield County Community Foundation promotes the growth of community and regional philanthropy to improve the quality of life throughout Fairfield County. Individuals, families, corporations and organizations can establish charitable funds and contribute to existing funds.

The Foundation provides philanthropic advisory services, and develops and leads initiatives to tackle critical community issues. It is in compliance with the Council on Foundations’ national standards for community foundations. The Foundation has awarded over \$120 million in grants to nonprofits in Fairfield County and beyond. For more information, visit [www.fccfoundation.org](http://www.fccfoundation.org).



Fairfield County Community Foundation

## Gillespie Garden Restoration

Jed Ringel, a former Westporter, planned and implemented the amazing restoration of the Gillespie Garden, the area that borders Jesup Road, which began in 2004. The Jesup Road side of Gillespie used to be a tangle of vines and overgrown shrubs. Jed conscripted his family to assist him in the effort and they turned the garden into an award-winning oasis!

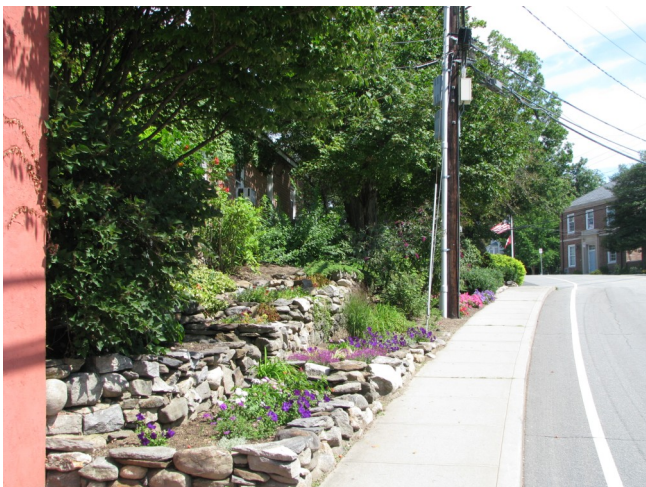


In very recent times, the garden had grown a little out of shape. Jed Ringel’s daughter, Jamie, is now an adult and had grown up working on the Gillespie Garden so when she was recently looking for a

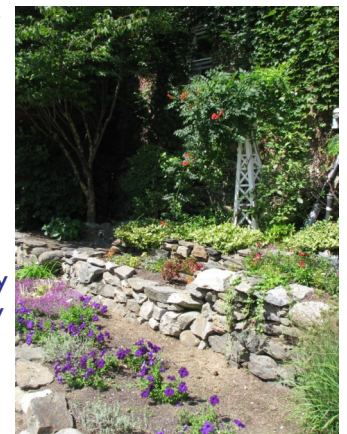
volunteer opportunity, she contacted Homes with Hope. Jamie jumped on the idea of renovating the garden and has worked it back to its original splendor!

She and her group, including her father, have cut back the overgrown parts, weeded, and added annuals. It looks very sharp once again and we are very grateful for this continuing legacy of assistance.

[Click here to view more pictures on Facebook!](#)



The Gillespie Gardens in Bloom





# Homes *with* Hope

[www.hwhct.org](http://www.hwhct.org)



Saugatuck Apartments  
Permanent Supportive Housing



Fair Street Apartments  
Permanent Supportive Housing



Westport Rotary Centennial House  
Permanent Supportive Housing



Hales Court  
Permanent Supportive Housing



Gillespie Center & Hoskins Place  
Emergency Shelter for Single  
Men and Women



Bacharach Community  
Emergency Shelter for Single Moms  
and their Children



Linxweiler House  
Extension of Bacharach Community

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Jeff Scanlan, *Vice Chair*  
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