



# HOMES *with* HOPE

*Dedicated to Ending Homelessness in Fairfield County*



Photo Credit  
Miggs Burroughs

## 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

*"A Caring Community Helps  
Its Neighbors"*

*John Walsh, Chair Board of Directors*

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Let me begin by extending my well wishes to you during these challenging times. As I reflect on all that has happened since I began this job in January 2020, it is hard not to overstate the disruption that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought into our lives. On a bright note, one thing that has not changed is the community's dedication to Homes with Hope's mission. Due to our strong partnerships, a dedicated Board of Directors and brilliant staff members, Homes with Hope continues to make strides towards homelessness becoming rare, brief and non-recurring in Fairfield County even during these unprecedented times.

I am proud to report that during the pandemic, Homes with Hope has adapted and increased our services to meet the needs of those with housing and food insecurity. Early in the pandemic, in an effort to contain the spread of COVID-19, Homes with Hope took the drastic step of vacating the shelter and moving all shelter guests to local hotels. Our Gillespie Center and Hoskins Place shelters were renovated, cleaned, sanitized and prepared to shelter the homeless in a new, safe format abiding by CDC and health department guidelines. This was the first time in 32 years that the facility had no shelter guests, allowing for needed repairs.

Currently, operating at full capacity, our Gillespie Center provides a very clean and safe environment for our emergency shelter guests to live in a social-distanced environment. We are grateful to our generous volunteers, board members, donors, state and municipal funders, staff, community leaders and friends for their support and partnership in making these critical changes and improvements possible. During these very trying times, we have seen first-hand how our generous community has rallied around our organization to ensure that the most vulnerable whom we serve continue to be well taken care of and supported.



Photo Credit  
Mindy Briar

The genuine concern and commitment from so many of you has been an inspiration to all of us at Homes with Hope. I am proud to have this opportunity to share with you the many successes of the men, women, children, and adolescents we serve in our various programs. You will read about the residents at the Gillespie Center and Hoskins Place, as well as the students participating in ASAP (After School Academic Program), HEAL (Health Empathy Altruism Love) and the clients in our Permanent Supportive Housing programs. Homes with Hope provided services to over 1,200 people in 2020 through our Community Kitchen, Food Pantry, Rapid Re-Housing and Diversion Programs, and we continue to provide housing and support throughout Fairfield County. As we reflect on our organization, I realize what makes Homes with Hope unique is YOU!

For almost four decades, this community has so generously shared its resources to undertake the task of assisting those individuals and families who have experienced the trauma of homelessness. We believe if small towns like ours across the country followed our lead, there would be a remarkably positive impact on the national crisis of homelessness. We are blessed that First Selectman Jim Marpe and so many of Westport's leaders provide their unwavering support to ensure the Town of Westport helps take care of those who are less fortunate. Like my predecessors, Jeff Wieser and Pete Powell, I strongly believe that homelessness is best treated at the local level where the community can join together and support those who might otherwise fall through the cracks.

Until we meet again, stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

*Helen McAlinden*

HELEN MCALINDEN  
PRESIDENT AND CEO

# HOMES WITH HOPE'S LIFE-SAVING PROGRAMS

**PREVENTING  
AND ENDING  
HOMELESSNESS  
& EMPOWERING  
THE PEOPLE  
WHO NEED IT MOST  
IN FAIRFIELD COUNTY**

WOMEN  
MEN  
CHILDREN  
& FAMILIES

## Shelter Diversion



A strategy that prevents homelessness by helping people identify immediate alternative housing arrangements and, if necessary, connecting them with services and financial assistance to help them return to permanent housing. Homes with Hope's staff make every effort to divert clients to other housing solutions at their first contact with the homelessness response system.

## Emergency Shelter



We provide safe emergency shelter and essential services to men and women who are homeless.

## Rapid Re-Housing



An evidenced based approach to end homelessness quickly by providing short-term Case Management Services and targeted Financial Assistance. Based on the "Housing First" model, RRH Case Managers help clients find housing and then provide them with any additional services they might need. This intervention has low barriers to entry, high placement rates and low rates of return to shelter. The Rapid Re-housing program ultimately helps our clients reach their goal of stable housing.

## Permanent Supportive Housing



We oversee 52 units of Supportive Housing for individuals and families who have experienced chronic homelessness. Case managers assist our residents with the tools they need to maintain housing stability and independent living.

## Food Programs



Our Community Kitchen and Food Pantry are available to all our clients and neighbors in need. Both of these essential programs are supported and maintained by the generosity of our dedicated community.

## Youth and Young Adult Programs



Our programs provide consistent structure, positive role models, academic support, and enrichment/community service activities to help young people develop the skills needed to be successful at school and in their personal lives.

## ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

**Helen McAlinden**  
President and CEO

**Paris Looney, LMSW**  
Vice President and COO

**Jacqueline Hogan**  
Chief Financial Officer

**Maureen Liebergall**  
Director of Community Relations

**Janet Zamparo**  
Director of Resource Development

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**Jennifer Ferrante**, Vice Chair  
**Bruce Hennemuth**, Treasurer  
**Rebecca Martin**, Secretary

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**Lauren Soloff**

**Kate Weber**  
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**Missy Zahler**

# SAFETY & DIGNITY

## THE GILLESPIE CENTER & HOSKINS PLACE



Photo Credit  
Miggs Burroughs

### **Emergency Shelter for Single Men and Women**

The Gillespie Center is Homes with Hope's 15-bed emergency shelter for single men. Hoskins Place, located in the same building, is our 4-bed emergency shelter for single women. Individuals seeking shelter are initially directed to call 211, a free confidential service, or to go online to [www.211ct.org](http://www.211ct.org). In both of these 24-hour facilities, Homes with Hope provides Case Management Services and utilizes a Housing First service model to assist shelter guests with ending their homelessness.

### **Also located at the shelter:**

The Community Kitchen is supported by a very generous and devoted community of volunteers who provide meals 365 days a year.

The Food Pantry, also supported and maintained by our dedicated community, distributes non-perishable food to all those in need.

# FINDING WAYS TO **HEAL**

## HELPING OUR COMMUNITY, ONE YOUNG WOMAN AT A TIME

A young woman arrived at **Project Return**, Homes with Hope's program supporting young women in crisis, for the first time in 2019. Unexpected life events forced her to leave Project Return and she returned once again at the beginning of 2020. With a second chance made available to her, she embraced every opportunity for self-improvement, self-care and advancement. She dove right into the HEAL program where she was supported and encouraged to find her voice and worked on understanding her past choices which helped to provide her with important lessons for self-fulfillment today.

Project Return/Susie's House is dedicated to supporting and empowering young women who have been impacted by homelessness. This fully-integrated **Homes with Hope** program provides a safe and nurturing environment in which participants are able to embark on their individual paths toward self-sufficiency and create and implement their plans for education, employment and home life. Susie's House also serves as the hub for the agency's HEAL program.

**HEAL (Health, Empathy, Altruism, Love)** is a community service program that provides teenaged girls with a sense of belonging. Recognizing the transformative powers of giving and altruism, the HEAL program is committed to helping adolescent girls, living in our communities, by bringing them together as a group to participate in volunteer services to others. Giving to others inspires feelings of well-being, optimism, confidence, and success. In their service to others, the girls begin to grow through that power of helping and healing others, gaining resilience and improving their own self-esteem. HEAL also offers programs that are tailored to the needs of the participants of ASAP and other young women in the community.



**HEALTH  
EMPATHY  
ALTRUISM  
LOVE**

Photo Credit  
Miggs Burroughs

# MY JOURNEY FROM WALL STREET



Photo Credit  
Miggs Burroughs

## SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR INDIVIDUALS

### Growing up

I had always been a high achiever, working hard to attend college on full scholarship, likewise attending law school on full scholarship, working for a prestigious New York law firm, and running my own business. Over the course of my life, I experienced a number of traumatic events that ranged from sexual abuse and assault to proximity to both terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. I had always been able to compartmentalize my trauma, never dwelling, pressing on and not letting anything slow me down.

### A traumatic time in my life

After 9/11 and an incident where I was sexually assaulted by an attorney at my law firm, I stopped doing legal work and started working with nonprofits in NYC's outer boroughs. I did fundraising for both established entities and grassroots organizations, and started a charter school, enjoying years of success. Then I threw my back out, and was bed-bound for two weeks the first time, then three months the second time. I couldn't walk, and I was in constant, chronic pain.

### A crumbling support system

Unfortunately, I was isolated at this time. I had only two family members in the area, one of whom I could no longer tolerate because of past abuse and my expanding inability to suppress trauma. I couldn't make money consistently, and I couldn't pay my bills. I also didn't have any health insurance. This was 2010, and it was the year I got evicted for the first time. One of the downsides of being a high-performer going through hard times for me was a complete inability to ask for help or to even acknowledge that help was needed and available. I had blown through my savings after this protracted span of inconsistently working, and I had no easy way to get another apartment.

### Getting back on my feet, with Homes with Hopes's help

I was provided a level of help and caring during my stay at the shelter that has made all the difference in my life. Ryan found me subsidized housing that was available because I had failed out of Rapid Rehousing, turning a lemon into lemonade. The Homes with Hope subsidized housing provides the support I need while I'm working to regain my coping skills. I continue weekly therapy with Suzanne and have started weekly group therapy at Norwalk Hospital. I have a Homes with Hope case manager who calls me regularly to ensure I haven't fallen into depression and remain safe and healthy. Often, I feel I have somehow squandered the God-given talents I was fortunate to have. **With the help of Homes with Hope, I'm hopeful that there's a second act where I appreciate the many blessings I've received and put them to the highest and best use.**

# A BETTER LIFE

## SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR FAMILIES

Bacharach Community, a program of Homes with Hope (HwH), served as an emergency shelter for homeless women with children for many years, offering on site case management services and support. HwH has been very involved in tracking the data of family homelessness both agency-wide and through the Fairfield County Coordinated Access Network (CAN). As a result of strong front end Diversion efforts to assist families with appropriate interventions before they become homeless, Fairfield County's family shelters were seeing a reduced demand. Subsequently, HwH made the decision to transition the buildings used for shelter to Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for families.

Bacharach Community transitioned in July 2019 to Permanent Supportive Housing and we had no idea how impactful that decision would be. The transition to PSH ensured three families the opportunity for permanent housing in the midst of COVID-19. These families are no longer moving with their children from place to place or crowded in a homeless shelter. The purpose of the Governors Stay Safe, Stay Home order was to slow and reduce the spread of COVID-19. It is impossible to stay safe and stay home, if you don't have one.

Homes with Hope now supports a total of 52 units of Permanent Supportive Housing in Westport and Norwalk for formerly homeless individuals and families.

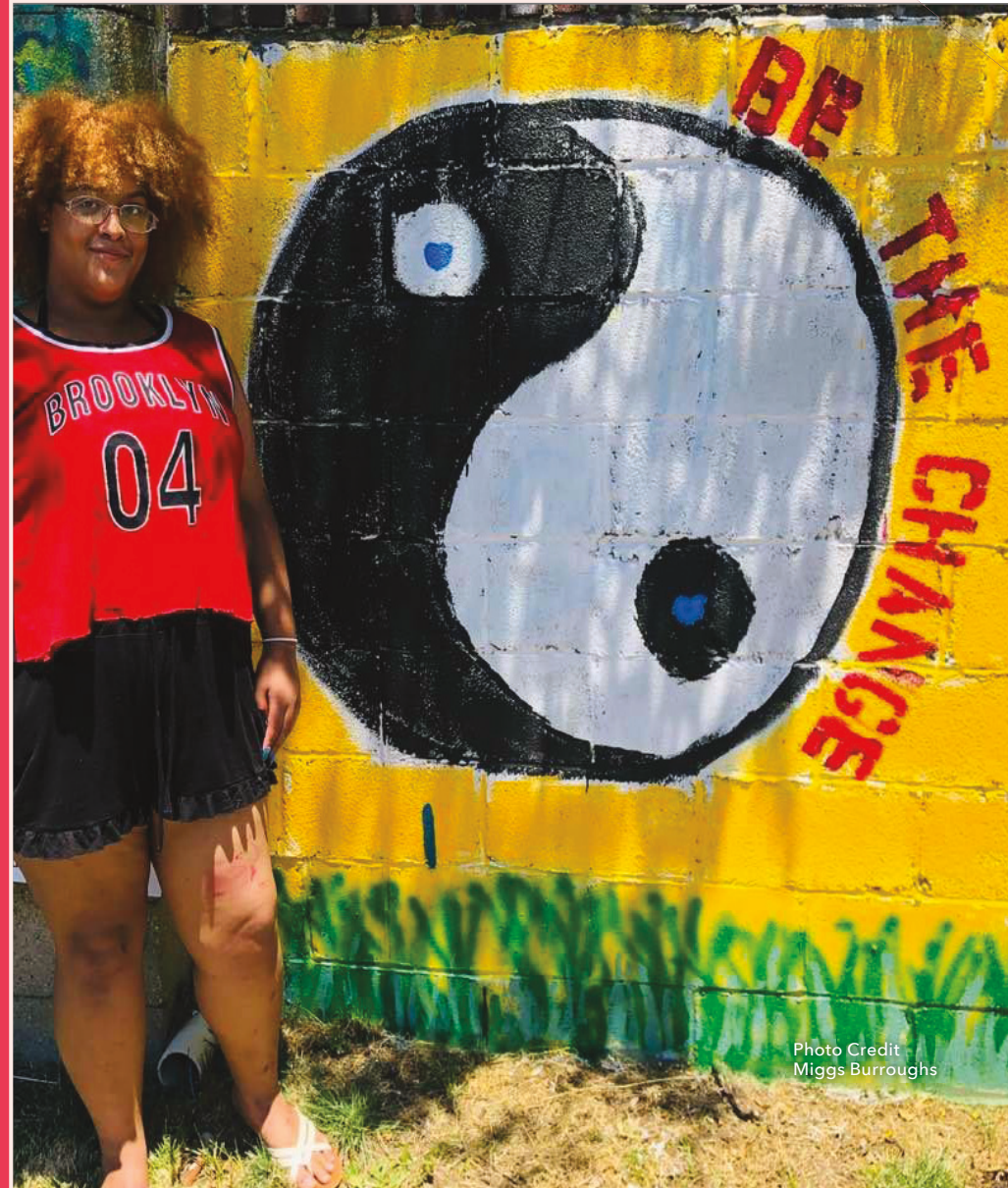


Photo Credit  
Miggs Burroughs



# HELPING THEM **ASAP**

## HOMES WITH HOPE'S AFTER SCHOOL ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Is a small site-based after-school program for children and teens who live in our Supportive Housing and in the surrounding neighborhood. ASAP's goal is to provide a consistent structure, positive role models, academic support and enrichment activities to help students develop the skills and healthy habits they need to be successful at school and in their personal lives. ASAP also provides four weeks of summer activities.

AFTER  
SCHOOL  
**ACADEMIC  
PROGRAM**



# STAFF REFLECTIONS ABOUT COVID-19

## **Lynn Abramson** - Program Director, ASAP (After School Academic Program)

Throughout 2020, I continued to provide support services for our student participants and their families to ensure that they don't fall further behind academically as they navigate the challenges of Distance Learning. When students are struggling and need help overcoming challenges, administrators, teachers and counselors either contact me or I reach out to them and we problem-solve the issues together. I believe my support and advocacy during the COVID-19 pandemic is more important than ever. I have also become especially sensitive to the food needs of undocumented families during this pandemic. The combination of lost employment and ineligibility for government support makes them especially vulnerable.

## **Jennifer Lyn Amon** - Program Director, HEAL & Mentoring Initiative

The past few months have been a challenge for sure. I think one noticeable thing is we are all going through it at the same moment, client and worker alike. The uncertainty and fluidity surrounding the pandemic make it difficult to be 'prepared' for the interactions still taking place. Transparency, commitment, and creativity are more important than ever. I feel fortunate to have found clarity amidst the chaos...in regards to the work I do and how...I understand now what I took for granted, and I am evermore motivated to be part of and encourage the greater good.

## **Wendy Epstein** - Director of Supportive Housing

During the pandemic we have all worked hard to maintain personal connections, whether on the phone, or at an appropriate distance. I have been very touched by how appreciative our clients have been during this time. In many cases, the client's relationship with his or her case manager is actually the only connection he or she has with another individual. While the pandemic has caused hardship and struggle, it has also highlighted the value of our human connection and the positive impact we've had on the clients we serve. Perhaps the connections we've built are more important now than ever - our clients know they are not alone!

## **Hayley Feuchs** - Case Manager, Rapid Re-Housing

I did not think my first full-time job post-undergraduate studies would involve mostly remote contact with clients and colleagues. Even though this time of unprecedented events has been difficult to navigate, I have developed my communication skills and connect with clients more efficiently and on a more regular basis. I am looking forward to having more personal interactions with clients in person, but for the time being, working from home has helped keep me, my family, and my community safe and healthy. Throughout this pandemic, I have felt very fortunate to work with colleagues that are so incredibly supportive and helpful even during a stressful time.

## **JoAnn Hughes** - Case Manager, Supportive Housing

This pandemic has impacted me because I am not meeting my clients face to face. When face to face, I was able to watch their expressions or body language to know if something was wrong. But now I only listen to their voices over the phone. I want every client to know and understand how serious this virus is. I am trying to show my clients they are important

to me. I want to ensure their health and wellbeing. This social distancing is hard for me so I can only imagine what it is doing to them. I am trying to help my clients develop some coping strategies to manage anxiety, help with their mental wellbeing and stay safe.

## **Wanda Oliveras** - Young Adult Rapid Re-Housing Specialist

In light of this pandemic, the way we supported each other as an agency was amazing. This has been challenging, but the experience brought us closer as a team. Being able to work during this difficult time has been a learning experience and a blessing as well.

## **Carl Palmer** - Case Manager, Supportive Housing

Attempt to start a new job during a pandemic - I did. With the support of my fellow co-workers, I was able to become a part of the team here at Homes with Hope without one concern. I am amazed at the hard work we all do as a team and how each client I have engaged with is eager to work collaboratively with me to help them grow in their lives. It is my job not only to listen to the needs the clients may have, but to provide a sense of calm in this new normal. I convey comfort when my clients hear me say "you got this" or "we are all here for you". I speak with a smile on my face and I know the clients can feel my positive energy even over the phone.

## **Ryan Soto** - Program Director, Gillespie Center & Hoskins Place

I am proud to be the Director of the Gillespie Center & Hoskins Place and I love what I do. My strength has been tested by this pandemic and I am doing my best to accomplish the goals that we have set out to complete as an agency. Housing our guests and making sure food is available to our local community has become our greatest priority. I cherish the work that I do for Homes with Hope and I will continue to do my best for the Westport and greater Norwalk community.

## **Lauren Wachnicki** - Case Manager, Emergency Shelter & Supportive Housing

My main focus during this pandemic is to ensure that my clients' basic needs are being met (i.e. food), that they are able to stay on top of their health as best they can, and that they know we are here to support them during this difficult time. Ryan and I have found new and creative ways to engage clients, while simultaneously thinking of ways to house them and move them on from the shelter. I am very grateful for the Westport community and how they've continued to support our agency despite these difficult times. Without their support we wouldn't be able to supply bags of non-perishable food and other household essentials to community members in need.

## **Jaylen Williams** - Case Manager, Rapid Re-Housing

Starting with the agency last summer in the middle of the pandemic was such a big transition in such an unpredictable time. The work we have done has shifted due to the pandemic, but the agency and all the staff have been so supportive. I have observed how we all have been here for one another attempting to navigate our work and COVID-19 safety precautions. It is a pleasure to work at such an adaptable and compassionate agency.

# BY THE NUMBERS

We are grateful for strong partnerships with our generous donors, the Town of Westport, local businesses, residents, and surrounding communities. Although this past year tested public resolve, the unprecedented generosity and donor support exemplify the care and concern we have for each other. We are united through compassion.

The Covid-19 pandemic affected Homes with Hope physically and strategically, requiring investment in facility upgrades and increased business model flexibility to support our clients with uninterrupted services. We were fortunate to participate in the Federal Government’s CARES Act for small business relief, including the Payroll Protection Program (PPP).

A vision of continuous improvement leads the year ahead. Our strategic focus ensures program participants receive the highest quality service throughout their journey from homelessness to self-reliance. The delivery model we follow is nationally recognized as best practice.

Our financial forecast for FY2021 is cautiously optimistic, reflecting ongoing economic uncertainty and financial challenges reported from many partners and funders.

Homes with Hope, Inc. has attained a 4-star Charity Navigator rating for demonstrating strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency. This is the highest possible rating and indicates that our organization adheres to sector best practices and executes our mission in a financially efficient way. This rating also verifies that Homes with Hope, Inc. exceeds industry standards and outperforms most charities in this area of work.



## Support our Work

Donate online at [hwhct.org/donate](http://hwhct.org/donate)

Contact Helen McAlinden at [hmcalinden@hwhct.org](mailto:hmcalinden@hwhct.org) to learn more about Homes with Hope.

Your tax deductible donation supports Homes with Hope’s mission dedicated to ending homelessness in Fairfield County. Homes with Hope maintains an IRS 501(c)(3) designation, EIN 22-2534326, and all contributions are tax-deductible.

## Financials

Revenues	2018	2019	2020
Private	2,054,000	2,305,436	2,281,625
Government	940,503	1,051,370	1,048,845
Other	360,307	494,799	557,789
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>3,345,810</b>	<b>3,851,605</b>	<b>3,888,259</b>

Total private contributions from fundraising and in-kind remained strong in 2020 in support of our positive impact on homelessness, diversion and supportive housing.

**Private donations comprise over 59% of our annual revenues.**

Expenses	2018	2019	2020
Program	3,087,294	3,162,138	2,979,899
Management	324,762	273,733	264,966
Fundraising	350,749	440,000	312,094
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>3,762,805</b>	<b>3,875,871</b>	<b>3,556,959</b>

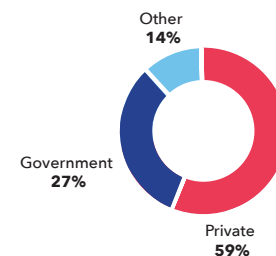
Homes with Hope increased operating efficiency in 2020 through employee training, technology enhancements and process improvements.

**Over 84% of all funding is spent directly on programs and services for our clients.**

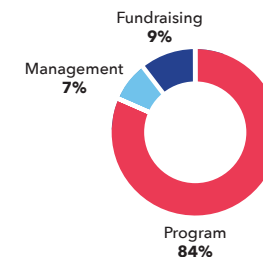
Assets	Current Assets	Net Assets
Beginning	685,277	2,201,748
Ending	1,256,798	2,533,048

Homes with Hope's net assets increased in 2020 reflecting the positive trend in private donations, government support, program revenue and investment income. The increase enables additional funding for operating reserves and implementation of strategic goals.

2018 3,345,810  
2019 3,851,605  
2020 3,888,259



2018 3,762,805  
2019 3,875,871  
2020 3,556,959



# FRIENDS OF HOMES WITH HOPE

Abbey Nevin  
 Ability Beyond  
 AIGA-CT  
 Alan Spierer, Esq.  
 Alex Horton  
 Amanda Thaw  
 Amy & Dan Devore  
 Angela Edwards  
 ASF Sports & Outdoors  
 Assumption Church  
 AWARE  
 Baker Graphics  
 Balducci's Market  
 Bayberry Property  
 Management & Leasing of CT  
 Ben Howard  
 Betsy Cronin  
 Bill Harmer  
 Bombas  
 Bridgette Hogan  
 Bridgewater Associates, LP  
 Bruce Borner and 06880  
 Cares Group  
 Christ & Holy Trinity Church  
 Church of the Assumption  
 Coldwell Banker  
 Connie Manna  
 Conservative Synagogue  
 (The)  
 Cornell Club Of Fairfield  
 County (The)  
 CVS  
 Dan Woog  
 Dave Matlow  
 Double L Market

Drew Friedman Community  
 Arts Center, Inc.  
 Elaine Daignault  
 Elayne Prince  
 Elizabeth DeVoll  
 Ellen Redgate  
 Emmanuel Church  
 Fairfield Country Day School  
 Faith Sargent  
 Field Trip  
 Filling in the Blanks  
 First Selectman Jim Marpe  
 Fleet Feet  
 Food Rescue US  
 Fortuna's Deli and Caterers  
 Georgette Geller  
 Gold's Delicatessen  
 Greens Farms Academy  
 Green's Farms Church  
 Gruel Britannia  
 Hayley Buckman - SHS HwH  
 Club  
 James Dobin-Smith  
 Janet Rogers  
 Jean Vince  
 Jeff Scanlan  
 Jennifer Seideman  
 Jerry Sprole  
 Jill Streisand  
 Jillian Levin - SHS HwH Club  
 John Karrel  
 Kate Weber  
 Keaveney Construction  
 Lauren Kreter

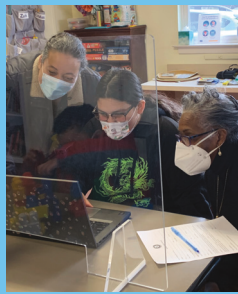
Lisa DesMarteau  
 Lisa Marriott  
 Livio Sanchez  
 Loren Pace  
 Lori Cochran-Dougall  
 Louis D'Onofrio  
 Marisa Zer and Westport  
 Masks  
 Mathias Family  
 Mid-Fairfield County  
 Association of Realtors  
 Miggs Burroughs  
 National Charity League (NCL)  
 Neat Capital  
 Nick Visconti  
 Nicole Straight  
 Nordstrom  
 Norfield Congregational  
 Church  
 Northeast Community Church  
 Norwalk Community Health  
 Center - Mobile Medical Bus  
 Nutty Bunny LLC  
 Pam Dedona  
 Pullman & Comley, LLC  
 Randi Cannon  
 Randy Herbertson - The Visual  
 Brand  
 Restore Hyper Wellness &  
 Cryotherapy  
 Riverside Realty Group Ltd.  
 (The)  
 Rye Ridge Deli  
 S.C.A. Commercial Property  
 Maintenance

Saugatuck Congregational  
 Church  
 Service League of Boys  
 (SLOBS)  
 Siobhan Crise  
 St. George Greek Orthodox  
 Church  
 Stacy Gendels  
 Stanley Witkow and the  
 Virtual Bingo Group  
 Staples Boys Lacrosse Team  
 Staples Culinary Club  
 Staples Girls Golf Team  
 Stephanie Webster  
 Stop & Shop  
 Tauck  
 Temple Israel  
 Town of Westport  
 Tracy Porosoff  
 Trader Joe's  
 Undies Project (The)  
 United Methodist Church  
 Videler Photography  
 Virginia Jaffe and Westport  
 Masks  
 Wakeman Town Farm  
 Weston Kiwanis  
 Westport - Weston Chamber  
 of Commerce  
 Westport Downtown  
 Merchants Association  
 Westport Farmer's Market  
 Westport Garden Club  
 Westport Housing Authority  
 Westport Lifestyle Magazine

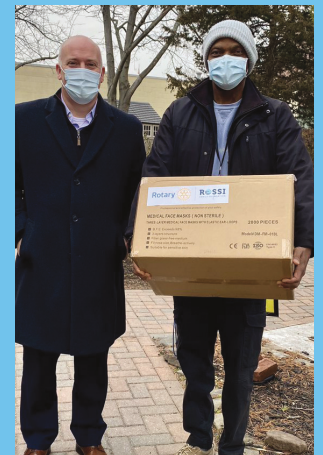
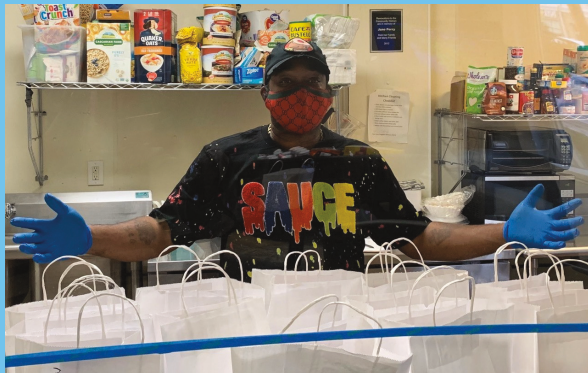


**Thank you to ALL of our Community  
 Kitchen Volunteers! Because of you  
 we were able to provide nutritious  
 meals daily throughout the  
 challenges of 2020.**

Westport Moms  
 Westport Police Department  
 Westport Public Library  
 Westport Public Schools  
 Westport Rotary Club  
 Westport Sunrise Rotary Club  
 Westport Woman's Club  
 Westport Young Woman's  
 League  
 Westport-Weston Health  
 District  
 Westport-Weston YMCA  
 Whole Foods Darien  
 William Raveis Real Estate  
 Wilton Kiwanis  
 Wilton Quaker Meeting  
 Y's Men of Westport/Weston  
 Y's Women (The)  
 Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.,  
 Alpha Alpha Rho Zeta Chapter




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**Homes with Hope**  
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