On Tuesday, June 10, the Natchaug Joshua Center Northeast YouthWorks program presented Spirol International Corporation chairman Jeffrey Koehl with a 16-foot bridge, designed and constructed by the students for the company’s campus green walkway.

Spirol, a global manufacturer headquartered in Danielson, has been a long supporter of Joshua Center Northeast. The company’s $12,000 donation in 2010 funded the purchase of the Haulmark cargo trailer that was transformed into a portable workshop for the YouthWorks vocational skills program at Joshua Center Northeast and Joshua Center Thames Valley in Norwich.

“They got in touch with us at the beginning of the school year and told us about the new green walking trail they had added to their campus for their employees, and asked if we would be willing to build a bridge for it,” said JC Northeast Clinical Day Treatment School principal David Heg.

The materials were paid for by Spirol, but the design and execution of the project was handled by YouthWorks vocational program, visit www.natchaug.org/schools.
spacing, created a material list and priced it out, looked into different designs, profiles, install techniques and types of fasteners, and eventually created a detailed plan to follow.

“The actual building process was really production style; we became very efficient. We had people set up making the balusters, people plat- ing railings, people drilling holes,” Maines said. “The project really reinforced partnerships and teamwork, even with kids who maybe don’t really like each other.”

The finished bridge weighs between two and three tons, Maines estimates, and is made entirely from locally sourced materials purchased at Danielson-area stores including Boudreau’s Welding Company, Sigfridson Wood Products and O.L Willard Company.

“That’s really key to this whole project — it all goes back into the community,” Heg said.

For the students involved in the project, the presentation ceremony was especially meaningful.

“The students were really excited to be photographed and recognized for something they did for the community, something that they con- structed themselves,” Maines said. “The issues that bring them here kind of stay behind when they’re being recognized.”

Cassandra, who is in her first year at Joshua Center Northeast and hopes to someday pursue a career in construction, took pride in the group’s accomplishments.

“It felt good because it’s not only making us happy, it’s making many people happy when they walk across it and know that somebody put a lot of work into this,” Cassandra said.

Drill keeps sites prepped for patient surge

While our staff have drilled and prepared for events like mass causalities and deadly pandemics, patient surge is something we experience every day.

This summer the Hartford HealthCare Emergency Management Team is conducting exercises at all entities across the system to help prepare and coordinate care in the case of a catastrophic patient surge. Drills were held this week at Natchaug and Rushford simulating an evacuation at Hartford Hospital that required the transfer of patients to each facility. Incident Command Centers were set-up and members used their huddle boards to create plans to find space, staffing and supplies to handle the surge.

Drills were also held at Backus, Wind- ham and Hartford hospitals and Hartford HealthCare Medical Group last week. The Hospital of the Central Connecticut and MidState Medical Center will conduct surge exercises on July 17. A system-wide drill will be held on Sept. 12.

“We do surge across healthcare everyday whether it’s for flu or an unexpected rise in surgical volume. However, these exercises throughout the summer focus on a catastrophic patient surge when all of our beds are 100 percent filled and we need staff to dig much deeper to find extra space that we typically wouldn’t use for those everyday surges,” said Patrick Turek, System Director of Emergency Management.

Turek said that while emergency management plans can be rigid, patient surge calls for a little creativity at times.

“In healthcare emergency manage- ment, sometimes it’s important that we improvise and get outside of the box and not follow the exact order set to help accommodate and ensure the safety of the patients,” said Turek. “These exercises allow us to flex our muscles, and under the strain we become much stronger in preparing for the worst.”

About BHNews

BHNews is published every other Friday. Story ideas or submissions may be sent to amanda.nappi@hhchealth.org or susan.mcdonald@hhchealth.org. Articles must be submitted as a Microsoft Word document. Every effort will be made to run the article in its entirety, but due to space constraints and style requirements, editing may be necessary.

The deadline for the next edition of BHNews is Tuesday, July 10, at noon.
Joshua Center Thames Valley principal Lamirra Simeon hugs a new graduate while clinician Diana Hutchinson comforts him at the JCTV graduation and awards ceremony Friday, June 15, at the East Region System Support Office in Norwich. Six senior graduates were recognized for their many accomplishments and the eighth graders were honored during a Promotion Junior High School part of the event.

Rushford at Durham’s graduation/field day was held at Chatfield Hollow State Park. Shown at the park are, from left, Deb Faulkner, Ellen Cecchini, Jen Davies, Joshua Center Shoreline graduate Tory, Stephanie Brucher and Katie Gomes.

Nine students from the Grace S. Webb School at the Institute of Living graduated on Friday, June 22. Hank Schwartz, MD, IOL psychiatrist-in-chief, back row left, delivered the commencement address, encouraging students to foster critical thinking by learning from separate realities, choosing curiosity over judgment and initiating courageous conversations.

Above: Graduates decorated their caps for the occasion and enjoyed their final moments together as classmates.

Left: Clinician Kellie Hougasian attempts the Oreo cookie face race at Durham’s graduation/field day.
While for many, school is almost over, it’s back-to-school time at HHC. The annual required learning period opened April 23 and ends July 1. The good news is with new earlier deadlines, you can complete your classes before heading out for summer vacation.

This is the second year that Hartford HealthCare employees will complete annual required learning on a consistent schedule with the same expectations no matter where you work in our system. But based on your feedback, we are offering different curricula for clinical and non-clinical employees this year. This will help ensure that completing the online classes is a more meaningful investment of your time. If you believe you have been assigned the incorrect material (e.g. you are a nurse and you received the non-clinical courses), please submit a ticket through the online ITS Help Desk portal (after you log in click “Report a Problem, ”then the HealthStream icon) and the assignment will be fixed.

The deadline to complete your assigned courses is July 1. The consequences of failure to complete the requirements are consistent with the flu vaccination policy and include suspension for up to two weeks until the courses are completed and termination if the courses are not completed two weeks after the deadline. Employees hired after April 22 will complete their assignments during orientation.

Required clinical courses are:
- Compliance and Privacy
- Rapid Regs Common Elements Clinical
- Rapid Regs Clinical Part I
- Rapid Regs Clinical Part II

Required non-clinical courses are:
- Compliance and Privacy
- Rapid Regs Common Elements Non-Clinical Part I
- Rapid Regs Non-Clinical Part II

These courses are designed to be interactive, engaging and brief, so they can be completed quickly. With each of us completing annual required learning at the same time, on the same platform, we can ensure that we are all equipped to provide the safest, most coordinated care the patients, families and communities that depend on us.
Treating opioid addiction with medical marijuana nixed in CT

A lack of scientific evidence thwarted efforts to add opioid use disorder and opioid withdrawals to the approved list of indications for access to Connecticut's medical marijuana program, a decision earning support across Hartford HealthCare.

“In terms of curtailing cravings, we just don’t have the evidence,” said Jonathan Kost, MD, director of the Hartford Hospital Pain Treatment Center, in a Hartford Courant article after the June 25 announcement. “It’s just too open; it’s just too unknown.”

The decision was handed down by the nine-person board — made up of Department of Consumer Protection Commissioner Michelle Seagull and eight physicians, including Dr. Kost — that serves as a gatekeeper of the state's medical marijuana program.

Had the request, one of the first nationwide, been approved, Connecticut would have become the third state after New Jersey and Pennsylvania to allow medical marijuana as a treatment for opioid addiction.

Board members noted that while some patients reported marijuana helped ease their symptoms of opioid withdrawal, no actual research exists supporting its effectiveness. In fact, members asserted that the use of marijuana as an effective treatment for chronic pain should be separate from discussion of its use by opioid abusers.

Samuel Silverman, MD, Rushford Medical Director of Addiction Services, cautioned against “recommending something we really don’t understand,” according to the Courant. “To suggest that marijuana plays any role in sustained recovery is bewildering,” he noted in submitted written testimony.

The board’s move was also supported in the Connecticut State Medical Society’s position paper co-authored by J. Craig Allen, MD, medical director of Rushford and a board-certified addiction medicine doctor. The paper, according to the Courant, indicates an individual using only marijuana to help wean themselves off opioids could face “disastrous” results “leading to relapse, overdose and even death.”

Approving medical marijuana for opioid withdrawal and opioid use disorder could steer people away from evidence-based, FDA-approved medication-assisted treatment which, he says, is already “highly underutilized.”

“Medications such as Suboxone or Vivitrol provide protection from overdose at the level of the opioid receptor. Marijuana doesn’t do that. Without this protection, people are at a much higher risk of relapsing, overdosing and dying,” Dr. Allen said.

A study in the January edition of The American Journal of Psychiatry also concluded that marijuana use appears to increase rather than decrease the risk of developing nonmedical prescription opioid use and opioid use disorder.

“As is the case with most proposed medical uses of cannabis, more research needs to be done in order to determine efficacy and safety,” Dr. Allen said. “At this point, we need to be cautious and collect more information before moving forwards with any decisions about opioids and medical marijuana.”

For more information on treatment for opioid and other addictions, go to www.matchrecovery.org

How can you help HHC save up to $1 million a year?

It’s easy. Think before you print!

Here are some ways to save:

- View agendas, emails and presentations on a screen
- Print double-sided
- Print in black and white

For more information about the Hartford HealthCare’s print policy, visit the Managed Print Services page of HHC Connect.

Every dollar we save helps make care more affordable.
Grant will fund study exploring estradiol and cognitive skills

Hannah Levy, PhD, has received a grant for her study of the relationship between endogenous estradiol, a female sex hormone which fluctuates over the course of the menstrual cycle, and the acquisition of cognitive restructuring skills in people with anxiety disorders.

The aim of the grant is to examine whether estradiol impacts anxious patients’ ability to learn cognitive restructuring skills, which involves generating alternative thoughts to negative or unhelpful thoughts about feared stimuli.

For example, for a patient with fear of spiders, changing the thought “that spider will come after me” when seeing a small house spider to a thought that better reflects the evidence, like “most spiders are safe” or “a house spider like that has never hurt me.”

Estradiol level has been shown to affect fear reduction in rats and healthy females, so Hannah’s work is looking to expand this by examining anxiety disorders patients and cognitive restructuring learning.

Hannah will be working with Dr. David Tolin, director of the Anxiety Disorders Center, and Dr. Jessica Mullins, an OB-GYN at Hartford Hospital, on this project.

“Broadly speaking, I am interested in ways to increase the efficacy of treatments for anxiety disorders,” Hannah said. “Specifically, I have examined biological, behavioral, and cognitive mechanisms of anxiety disorders, with the goal of improving current treatments by targeting these mechanisms.”

Mental Health First Aid classes found on HealthStream

In an effort to standardize BHN registration for trainings, Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training schedules and registration are now found on HealthStream.

MHFA training is offered at the Institute of Living on the third Friday of each month from now through September 2018. A minimum of 10 participants must be registered in order for the course to be run.

If you are interested in scheduling a training outside of the Hartford region, contact MHFA coordinator Patricia Graham at patriciac.graham@hhchealth.org.

Help available for those who need financial assistance

Do you know a patient who is in need of financial assistance? Hartford HealthCare can provide help to patients in need.

Learn more about the program at https://intranet.hartfordhealthcare.org/inside-hhc/patient-support.
Family Resource Center Support Groups

The IOL Family Resource Center (FRC) holds regular support groups. All programs are free of charge and, unless otherwise noted, are held in the Massachusetts Cottage, First Floor Group Room at the IOL Campus, 200 Retreat Ave., Hartford. The upcoming IOL FRC Support Group schedule is as follows:

- **Support Group For Those Coping With A New Or Chronic Medical Condition.** June 29, July 13, 20, 27, Aug. 10, 17, 24, 31. (Every Friday except the first of the month), 1 - 2 p.m. in the Center Building, First Floor Conference Room. For young adults ages 17-26 struggling with a new diagnosis, chronic medical conditions, physical symptoms or limitations. The group will help with difficult losses and limitation due to a medical condition, and build a positive, future-oriented focus with realistic goals. To RSVP, please email marissa.sicley-rogers@hhchealth.org.

- **Depression Bipolar Support Alliance Group (DBSA).** July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, Aug. 6, 13, 20, 27. (Every Monday), noon – 1 p.m. in the Todd Building, Bunker Room, July 11, 18, 25, Aug. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29. (Every Wednesday), 7 - 8 p.m. in the Commons Building, 2nd Floor, Litchfield Room. Peer run support group for those who have been diagnosed with depression or bipolar disorder.

- **Dementia Support/Educational Group Meeting.** July 3, Aug. 7, Sept. 4. (First Tuesday of each month), 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Donnelly Conference Room, First Floor. Please join us as we bring together experts and those who want guidance, direction, and support. Space is limited — reservations are required by calling 860.545.7665.

- **It's Hard To Be A Mom.** July 5, 19, Aug. 2, 16, Sept. 6, 20. (First and third Thursday of each month), 10 - 11:30 a.m. Peer-led group that acknowledges the inherent challenges with modern-day mothering and offers an opportunity for mothers to come together, share experiences, and support each other. This group welcomes expecting mothers and mothers with babies to discuss any and all challenges associated with motherhood. Babies welcome! Please RSVP to Laura at 860.545.7324.

- **Hearing Voices Network (HVN).** July 5, 12, 19, 26, Aug. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30. (Every Thursday), 5 - 6:30 p.m. in the Todd Building, Bunker Room. Peer run support group based firmly on a belief of self-help, mutual respect and understanding where people can safely share their experiences of voices, visions, unusual sensory perceptions. The groups offer an opportunity for people to accept and find meaning in their experiences that help them regain power over their lives.

- **Support Group For Families Dealing With Major Mental Illness.** July 5, 19, Aug. 2, 16, Sept. 6, 20. (First and third Thursday of each month), 5:15 - 6:30 p.m.

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**IOL Backpack and School Supply Drive**

The Institute of Living is seeking donations of **backpacks** and **school supplies** to give away to children in need from Greater Hartford.

**Donation ideas include:**

- Backpacks
- Pens & pencils
- Erasers
- Highlighters
- Notebooks
- Crayons
- Markers
- Glue Sticks
- Index cards
- Rulers
- Calculators
- Spiral bound notebooks
- Paper (lined & unlined)
- Kid-friendly scissors
- Calculators
- Pocket folders
- Pencil cases
- Erasers
- Index cards
- Kid-friendly scissors
- Calculators
- Pocket folders
- Pencil cases
- Notebooks
- Calculators
- Pocket folders
- Pencil cases
- Donated items may be dropped off at two locations: the IOL Assessment Center, located in the lower level of the Donnelly Building, at any time, or at the Carolina Cottage, in the Family Resource Center office on the second floor, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Donation deadline: 4:30 p.m. on Friday, August 3**

For more information, contact Laura in the Family Resource Center at 860.545.7324 or Minka or Sayonara in the Assessment Center at 860.545.7200.
in the Center Building, First Floor Conference Room. For family and friends of individuals who have schizophrenia, bipolar or other related disorders. Learn to care for yourself while caring for others.

- **Al-Anon Parent Group.** July 5, 12, 19, 26, Aug. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30. (Every Thursday), 7 - 8 p.m. One hour topic discussion.

- **Managing Schizophrenia.** July 10, Nov. 6. 6:30 – 7:45 p.m. This presentation will discuss the impact that symptoms of schizophrenia have on everyday activities, and provide tips on what you can do to make things better at home. To attend, please RSVP to Laura at 860.545.7324.

- **Social Support Group — LGBTQ Issues (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Questioning).** July 11, 25, Aug. 8, 22, Sept. 12, 26. (Second and fourth Wednesday of each month), 5 – 6:15 p.m. in the Center Building, Young Adult Service Group Room. Support group for 16- to 23-year-olds who identify LGBTQ issues as being prominent in their lives. The goal is to discuss support strategies to manage life challenges.

- **Substance Use Educational And Support Group.** July 12, Aug. 9, Sept. 13. (Second Thursday of each month), 4 – 5 p.m. For family members impacted by loved ones with substance abuse.

- **Dementia Lecture: An Introduction.** July 24, Nov. 20, 6:30 – 7:45 p.m. This program is for family members and friends of individuals who have dementia or a related disorder. It will present a basic understanding of the disorder, its treatment, along with specific suggestions to help family members and friends better cope with the illness. To attend, please RSVP to Laura at 860.545.7324.

- **Depression: An Introduction To The Disorder.** Aug. 7, Oct. 16, 6:30 – 7:45 p.m. This program is for family and friends of individuals who suffer from depression. It will present a basic understanding of major depression, its treatment, and ways family members might better cope with the illness. To attend, please RSVP to Laura at 860.545.7324.

If you are a student that needs to observe a group for a class assignment, you must contact the Family Resource Center by emailing Laura Durst at laura.durst@hhchealth.org two weeks prior to the group you would like to attend. Please note, not all of our groups are open for observers and it is up to the facilitator and group members themselves.

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### Dietary department rises to ‘give back’ challenge

The dietary department was challenged to complete a project to give back to the community as part of the Compass “Be-A-Star” program. The staff sponsored a very successful clothing drive with the collected items donated to a local charity, exhibiting discretionary effort and great leadership by everyone involved.
Yoga therapy classes at Meriden prove positive

In January, the Adult Partial Hospitalization and Intensive Outpatient programs in Meriden received a grant from the Main Street Community Foundation Women’s & Girls fund for $8,000. The grant was the largest awarded by the foundation this year and was given to Rushford to fund alternative therapies for women with a dual diagnosis of both mental illness and addiction.

To implement the grant, Meriden partial hospital and intensive outpatient programs partnered with Advocacy Unlimited to bring instructors to run meditation, yoga and qigong classes twice a week for clients in the women’s dual diagnosis program. These alternative therapy classes began in March and will continue for the remainder of the year.

Women participating in the grant-funded classes are surveyed weekly and have reported learning skills for relaxation and stress management, an increase in their ability to implement these skills in their daily lives outside of the treatment setting, and have enthusiastically requested more classes each week and that the classes continue indefinitely.

Do you have a family member that is or has been treated at Rushford?

Our clients have support but do you? Are you feeling stressed or like no one understands?

Join us for a weekly family support group to:

• Connect with others whose family or friends are battling addiction
• Create a support network to promote your own healing
• Learn ways to support your loved ones in recovery

Tuesdays, 7-8 pm
Rushford at Middletown Cafeteria
1250 Silver Street

For more information, contact Lauren Galarneau, CAC, CADC, at 860.852.1089 or lauren.galarneau@hhchealth.org.

Score Runs for Recovery with Rushford

Sunday, Aug. 12 | 5:05 pm
Bowie Baysox vs. Hartford Yard Goats.
A portion of each ticket sold supports Rushford, a Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network partner.
Order Tickets Online:
https://groupmatics.events/event/Hartfordhealthcare
SMART groups offer help for young adults

Are you a teen or young adult struggling with an addiction? In the weekly Rushford Self-Management And Recovery Training (SMART) group, teens and young adults work to gain independence from addictive behavior, including:

- Alcoholism
- Drug abuse or addiction
- Eating disorders
- Gambling addiction
- Self-harm or injurious behavior
- Addiction to other activities

Group meetings are held at the following times and places:

- **Rushford at Glastonbury, 110 National Drive:** Tuesdays, 6-7 p.m. — family and friends group; Fridays, 2:30-4 p.m. — 16- to 18-year-olds; Fridays, 4:30-6 p.m. — 19- to 24-year-olds.
- **Rushford at Meriden, 883 Paddock Avenue:** Thursdays, 2:30-4 p.m. — 16- to 18-year-olds; Thursdays, 4:30-6 p.m. — 19- to 24-year-olds; Thursdays, 4:30-6 p.m. — family and friends group (separate group)

No registration or cost to participate. For more information, contact Krystle Blake at 203.238.6800 or krystle.blake@hhchealth.org.

Great work, Lauren

I would like to send a congratulations to Lauren Kupper, RN at Rushford, for passing her Certified Addictions Registered Nurse (CARN) certification exam. The certification is a prestigious one through the International Nurses Society on Addictions. Lauren is leading the way for others to become specialized in addictions at Rushford. She joins an exclusive group at Rushford, including Michelle Liss, Jennifer Rodriguez, Katherine Stella and Elizabeth Vasileff.

— Justin Sleeper, MSN, RN, Nurse Manager at Rushford

How does your garden grow?

On Friday, June 15, employees from Rushford and across the Behavioral Health Network dressed down for suicide awareness. The Out of the Darkness t-shirts were sold for $20 each and worn to work, with proceeds benefiting the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

Rushford case managers, staff and clients from the Friendship club spent time cleaning and weeding the garden at Paddock Avenue to get it prepped for planting new vegetables.
Rushford Summer Outing

Saturday, Aug. 18, 2018
10 am-5 pm

Holiday Hill
43 Candee Road
Prospect, CT

- Unlimited buffet all day long
- Rowboats, kayaks, canoes on the lake
- DJ with music for games and dancing
- Activities for kids and adults, including basketball, volleyball, ping-pong, mini golf, pony rides, arts and crafts, air brush tattoos and face painting, rock climbing walls and more!

Adults/Children 3 and older - $20 (FREE for children under 3)
Cash only. Limit 5 tickets per staff. Tickets are non-refundable.

To purchase tickets, contact:
Paddock - Anu (anubhuti.baghel@hhchealth.org)
Silver Street - Sheila (sheila.gosselin@hhchealth.org)