



SHINING STAR

HHC's Karen Kangas immortalized with ornament on D.C. Christmas tree. • [PAGE 3](#)



FOR BODY AND SOUL

IOL scientist says exercise sharpens your mind as well as your physique. • [PAGE 6](#)



SOLID AS A ROCK

Joshua Center Mansfield kids get artistic, spread goodwill. • [PAGE 9](#)

Hartford HealthCare 
Behavioral Health Network

BHINews

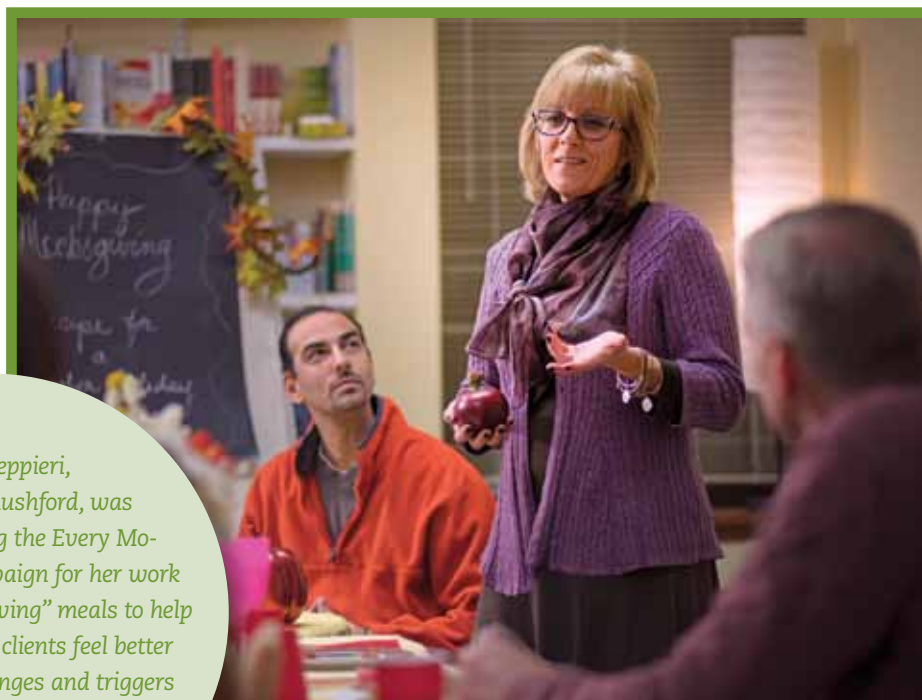
Navigating the holidays

The end of the year can be a tricky time for those in recovery

For those in recovery, whether it's been a week or decades, the holiday season can be a stressful and dangerous time. Holiday gatherings associated with alcohol, volatile family situations, busy schedules, feelings of isolation or being away from one's support system can be triggers that threaten recovery.

Rushford in Avon Clinical Supervisor Michelle Voegtle, M.Ed., LPC, said there are ways to prepare for the season to successfully maintain sobriety.

■ **Always plan a support system.** Voegtle said have someone from your support system — your sponsor or a trusted family member or friend — attend potentially stressful holiday events with you. She recommends setting des-



Laura Zeppieri, a clinician at Rushford, was recognized during the Every Moment Matters campaign for her work organizing "mocksgiving" meals to help her substance use clients feel better prepared for challenges and triggers they might encounter at holiday and family get togethers.

ignated "timeouts" at the gathering to check-in with your support to help keep you grounded.

■ **Be aware that the holidays can be an emotional "minefield."** Everyone feels at least a little stress during the holiday season. The stress causes grudges and past resentments to be amplified.

"Families are complicated and we

all have roles that we play within them. Parents and siblings see us through their own lenses, not necessarily the person we've become. Our buttons can be easily pushed," Voegtle said.

She said being aware of these potential situations can help prevent you from being defensive and help foster forgiveness.

■ **Avoid situations that make you feel vulnerable.** "Remember you always

..... *Continued on page 2*

Voegtle: 'Treatment is the best gift you can give to yourself and your family.'

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have the power of choice," Voegtle said.

She said one strategy is to always be a little late for a function that you think might threaten your sobriety.

"You don't want to be the first one there. You're nervous. The host is nervous. Offering you a drink is a good icebreaker."

Also, Voegtle said it's important to have an exit strategy. She said to drive separately to the function, if possible, or make sure you have a plan in place to leave if others you come with aren't ready when the time comes to leave.

■ **Focus on helping others and express gratitude.** "Our addictive brains get us stuck in self-pity. It's pretty much

guaranteed that the holidays will make you feel some anxiety, some depression and some self-pity," Voegtle said. "Focusing on others helps to bring in the recovery principle of service. The more that we can get outside of our heads to think of others the less we'll get trapped in that isolation."

Voegtle said focusing on what you're grateful for will also help prevent isolating thoughts. She suggests making an alphabetical list, assigning one thing you are grateful for each letter.

■ **Limit sugar intake.** You might think that loading up on Christmas cookies and fruity non-alcoholic punch is a safe alternative to drinking liquor during the holidays. That's not always the case, said Voegtle.

"Be cautious of the sugar. It's often something people in addiction crave and can really impact their moods. If someone has too much sugar it can amp them up, they crash and can get depressed," she said.

She recommends bringing a bottle of seltzer or a healthy dessert to holiday parties to ensure that you'll always have a non-alcoholic, non-sugary option.

■ **Take care of yourself.** "People that

are successful in recovery know how important this is especially this time of year," Voegtle said.

While time might be tight during the holidays, Voegtle urges those in recovery to try to maintain consistency with their 12-step meetings, exercise and diet.

"Try attending a morning [12-Step] meeting in if that fits into your holiday schedule better or if you normally do 60 minutes of exercise, you can scale it back to 30 minutes. But the key is keeping that consistent routine," she said.

Voegtle urges clients to remember the HALT (Hunger, Anger, Loneliness and Tiredness) recovery tool.

"If you feel any of these, it should be a red flag," she said.

If a person is struggling with recovery, Voegtle said they shouldn't hesitate to seek treatment during the holidays.

"People are sometimes afraid to seek treatment during this time of year. They think that it's supposed to be a happy time and that they might be ruining their loved ones' holiday. Actually, getting treatment is the best gift you can give to yourself and your family," Voegtle said.



Kiss your e-mail Good-bye (The Sequel)

Effective Nov. 15, 2017 all Hartford HealthCare e-mail will automatically be deleted after:

- Seven years for directors and above
- Three years for managers and below
- Deleted items folders will continue to be emptied once a week

Mid-2018: Six-month e-mail retention policy strictly enforced. All e-mail auto-deleted after six months.

For information and instructions for saving and storing your important business documents, visit the Information Technology page of HHC Connect.



This notice reflects stricter enforcement of Hartford HealthCare's existing e-mail retention policy. Non-compliance and improper storage of business documents may create business and regulatory risks.

First snow of the season



The entrance to the Institute of Living was blanketed with snow last week as winter made its first appearance in Connecticut.

White House Christmas tree ornament honors HHC's Kangas

Karen Kangas is proud to be a pioneer in the field of mental health, well known in the profession for her work promoting the rights and skills of those in recovery by sharing her own story of success following treatment for bipolar disorder and alcohol addiction.

But she never expected to be recognized alongside of civil rights icons such as abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe.

Yet there she is, or at least there is her likeness, displayed on a handcrafted ornament now on display on the White House lawn as part of the Pathway of Peace surrounding the national Christmas tree. The walkway surrounding the national tree features 56 state and territory trees decorated with handmade ornaments unique to each tree.

The ornaments on Connecticut's tree were created by Hamden artist Adam Chambers. With diversity as the theme, Chambers created small portraits in oil of Connecticut luminaries representing men and women, young and old, from as many races and backgrounds as possible. The paintings are encased in clear plastic bulbs, and emblazoned with the words DIVERSE-CT.



Among 11 Connecticut representatives featured in the ornament collection are Emma Fielding Baker, a Mohegan medicine woman and Native American historian who lived from 1828 to 1916; Harriet Beecher Stowe, the author and abolitionist; Caitlin Cahow, an Olympic ice hockey player and LGBTQ activist; and Kangas, a professor and mental health and disability advocate, who is now Director of Recovery and



The theme of the Connecticut Christmas tree, which is part of a national display in Washington, D.C., is DIVERSE-CT. The ornaments honor state figures who have had a hand in helping to advance civil rights.

Family Affairs for Hartford HealthCare.

Like other civil rights crusaders, people with mental illness have had to fight for their rights, she said. And finally, people in recovery are being hired to bring their unique perspective into the field of mental health treatment.

"We had to fight really hard," said Kangas, who defied a doctor's admonition that she would never work again.

The ornament will be on display outside the White House through Jan. 1 and Kangas said she is considering taking the train to Washington with her daughter and three grandchildren to see it.

"It's just such a neat thing that mental health would be included," said Kangas. "And then when I heard that Harriet Beecher Stowe [was among the honorees] I thought, 'oh my gosh, that's a thing.' "

Multiple blood drives planned for this winter

The Red Cross will host a pair of blood drives at BHN sites in the upcoming months.

The Institute of Living will have an event on Tuesday, Dec. 19, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Clark Social Room. As always, sandwiches will be provided by IOL catering. Appointments are scheduled at 15-minute intervals.



American Red Cross

Natchaug Hospital will follow on Tuesday, Jan. 23, from 11:15 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. in the Community Room.

You can reserve a time by calling **1.800.RED.CROSS (1.800.733.2767)** or going to **www.redcrossblood.org**. Please be aware these events are also open to the community. If you have any friends or family who would like to donate, please invite them to come along.

Have you heard the news?

Introducing Hartford HealthCare's news hub
Hartford HealthCare's new online health news site delivers lively, informative and useful health news in a whole new way. Look for print, video and audio stories produced by HHC's News Service, as well as timely tips on nutrition, fitness, health and wellness, and medical innovations.

Don't miss a single story!
Read the latest health news or sign up for our e-newsletter at:

healthnewshub.org



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Conversations crucial in avoiding suicide

'13 Reasons Why' discussion series reaches teens, parents at NFA

A team of experts from Hartford HealthCare's Behavioral Health Network (BHN) hosted a town hall discussion at Norwich Free Academy regarding the Netflix series "13 Reasons Why." The series, in which a teenage girl commits suicide, leaving behind cassette tapes detailing the way people in her life let her down or hurt her, has sparked numerous conversations surrounding teen suicide.

One of the most honest moments in the episode, which included the graphic suicide, is when Clay Jensen, the series protagonist and reason number 11, says, "The way we treat each other and look out for each other — it has to get better somehow."

"It's important to have conversations because this is what our kids are watching," noted BHN Vice President James O'Dea, PhD, MBA, who moderated the viewing and panel discussion at Norwich Free Academy on Nov. 30. "If we engage with them, we can really have an impact on our children's lives."

"13 Reasons" instantly became binge-worthy among American teenagers when it aired earlier this year, but Paul Weigle, MD, associate medical director at Natchaug Hospital and a child

and adolescent psychiatrist, said that's actually positive.

"It has brought up for discussion topics we find difficult to talk about," he said. "Five thousand teens a year commit suicide — what can you do if a friend talks about it?"

He suggested:

- Taking all threats seriously.
- Letting people know, even if that means the friend who threatened suicide gets mad.



Weigle



Saunders

the Institute of Living, said "13 Reasons" is helping people understand depression more and working to erase the stigma surrounding all mental health issues.

"Being depressed is not your fault. Being assaulted is not your fault," she said, referring to an incident of sexual assault that also happened in the series.

It's important, she continued, for friends and family to ask direct questions without worrying that they will "plant" the idea of suicide.

"It doesn't put the idea in a person's head, it's already there," she said. "It might actually be a relief so they know they can talk about it. Ask how they're doing. Then ask again. Eventually, they'll know you're a resource for them."

When starting that conversation, Weigle suggested being prepared to hear that the person feels hopeless or beyond help. Pressing on to find the person help is important because treatment is extremely effective.

Conversations can be informal and spontaneous or planned as part of a nightly dinner ritual, something Saunders said is rare today.

"There is research into the value of the family dinner," she said. "It lowers drug use and suicide rates. We are losing our basic social skills with the increased use of technology, so it's even more important to gather the family as often as possible."

There is also a direct relationship between depression and the time teens spend online, which has doubled since 2000, Weigle added. Screen time pulls teens away from activities they enjoy, socializing and sleep, which all impact their frame of mind.

For more information, visit <https://hhcbehavioralhealth.org/>.

Next issue of BHNews is Jan. 12

- There will not be an issue of BHNews printed for Friday, Dec. 29. Enjoy the holidays!

About BHNews

BHNews is published every other Friday. Story ideas or submissions may be sent to amanda.nappi@hhchealth.org or steve.coates@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, Jan. 9, at noon

Accepting gifts from clients is prohibited

A one-question quiz from the Compliance Department on how to handle gifts from clients during this holiday season.

A new client is admitted to your unit. During her stay you strike up a great relationship. On the day of discharge you bring her to discharge, where her spouse is waiting. The spouse says he cannot thank you enough for all that you have done and hands you a wrapped gift as an expression of appreciation. You indicate you cannot accept the gift. He tells you it is an expensive watch, and it is from him, not his wife. He insists, saying it is a holiday gift and that makes it alright to accept.

Do you...?

a) Accept it and head to the pawn shop for Christmas shopping money. It is the holidays and money is tight.

b) Indicate you appreciate the intent however, you politely explain that HHC policy prohibits you from accepting it.

c) Go back to your unit and ask your supervisor if you can accept the gift.

d) Take the gift directly to your car and don't mention anything to anyone.

To find the answer, click on <https://myhhc.hhhealth.org/OCI/Policies/Forms/Compliance.aspx> and read the section on Gifts Between Patients, Patient's Families or Visitors and the HHC Community Policy.

Mental Health First Aid classes now 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 patriaciac.graham@hhhealth.org.

Do you have a Gold Medal Manager?

The Gold Medal Manager recognition spotlights managers who model the H3W leadership behaviors, demonstrate excellence in managing their teams and deliver high-quality results.

Selected managers will be honored quarterly.

For details about the program and to nominate a manager, visit [HHC Connect](#).



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Join Me at HHC

Do you know someone who would love working at HHC? Refer an external candidate for one of the following positions and receive a bonus of up to \$3,000:

- Nurse Practitioner (APRN) / Physician Assistant (PA-C)
- Nurse Manager
- Specialty Registered Nurses (Operating Room, Emergency Room, Critical Care, Homecare)
*One-year experience required
- Physical Therapist / Physical Therapy Assistant
- RN Case Coordinator
- Speech Language Pathologist
- Medical Technologist/ Cytotechnologist/ Histotechnologist
- Licensed Clinicians (LCSW, LPC, LMFT, LADC)
- Licensed Clinical Psychologists (PhD, PsyD)
- Surgical Technologist

Learn more on [HHC Connect](#).
hhconnect.org

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Can a game of ping pong improve cognition?

At IOL Grand Rounds presentation, senior scientist Jimmy Choi says it can

Could a few minutes of ping-pong, basketball or walking help improve cognition and symptoms of mental health disorders? According to Jimmy Choi, Psy.D., senior scientist at the Institute of Living's Olin Neuropsychiatry Research Center, the answer is yes.

"We all know physical exercise is good for us, but it is still hard for us to do," Choi said during a recent IOL Grand Rounds presentation. "There is a mountain of evidence for this."

Exercise improves cognition and is an effective treatment for depression and anxiety. Physical exercise leads to fewer and less severe symptoms, and better overall mental status. The Institute of Living has long integrated exercise into its treatment offerings.

"The individuals who first formulated treatment plans at the beginning of the Institute of Living talked about the importance of exercise and fresh air," said Dr. Godfrey Pearlson, director of the Olin Neuropsychiatry Research Center at the Institute of Living. "We've come back full circle to those recommendations."

What are the key elements of an effective exercise program, according to Dr. Choi?

■ **Intrinsic motivation.** "One of the strongest mediators of physical exercise outcomes is internal motivation to do the treatment without external reinforcement. It seems like the rest of the scientific world is kind of catching up to the IOL. We've been doing exercise for decades, and now exercise is becoming a big part of psychiatric rehabilitation programs all over."

■ **Choice.** "When you give people a menu of choices, it increases engagement in exercise and improves their adherence. And when people exercise on a regular basis, they're already supposed to do different things each time to reduce injury and muscle fatigue — so the idea of choice is actually good exer-



Jimmy Choi, PsyD, senior scientist at the Institute of Living's Olin Neuropsychiatry Research Center spoke about the mental benefits of exercise at a recent Grand Rounds session.

cise physiology as well."

■ **Volitional exhaustion.** "Volitional exhaustion is the point when you get your heart rate to a level that makes the exercise beneficial to your cardiovascular system and to your brain. When you reach volitional exhaustion, through walking, a game of basketball, or even ping-pong, your muscles release a protein that makes its way to the brain and improves brain function. This provides a target for making an impact on symptoms and cognition."

■ **Integration with other treatments.** "Merging exercise with other therapies encourages synergistic benefits. Different therapies inform each other. For example, volitional exhaustion creates a window of opportunity, usually within a couple of hours, when the brain is more receptive to learning."

■ **Consultation with experts.** "We have the privilege of having a very well-known exercise physiologist right here at Hartford Hospital, Dr. Beth Taylor. Exercise science can inform us and experts help us provide the best physical exercise program for our patients."

IOL store seeks to stock shelves for holidays

Throughout the year, the Institute of Living Child and Adolescent Outpatient Clinic provides a "shop" where families facing financial hardship can select gifts for the holidays as well as for their children's birthdays, graduations, and special occasions. Families are not charged for anything they select.

Please consider supporting our families by donating a gift item or adopting a family this holiday season.

Drop off location: IOL campus, Braceland Building, second floor, Child and Adolescent Outpatient Clinic, front desk **ext. 5-7239**. Contacts: Glenda Baez at **ext. 5-7296** or Suzanne Femino at **ext. 5-7717**.



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.** Dec. 15, 22, 29, Jan. 12, 19, 26, Feb. 9, 16, 23. (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).** Dec. 18, Jan. 8, 15, 22, 29, Feb. 5, 12, 19, 26. (Every Monday), noon – 1 p.m. in the Todd Building, Bunker Room and Dec. 20, 27, Jan. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, Feb. 7, 14, 21, 28 (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.
- **Bipolar: An Introduction To The Disorder.** Dec. 19, Feb. 20, May 29, 6:30 – 7:45 p.m. For family members and friends of individuals who have bipolar 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**.
- **Autism Spectrum Support/Educational Group Meeting For Parents.** Dec. 20, Jan. 17, Feb. 21, March 21. (Third Wednesday of the month), 6 - 7 p.m. Providing a place for parents of children on the autism spectrum, or another related disorder, to come together and get support and information. Monthly, peer-run support groups interspersed with special guests and speakers to offer additional guidance and perspective. Please RSVP to Goviana at **860.560.1711** or gmorales@spedconnecticut.org.
- **It's Hard To Be A Mom.** Dec. 21, Jan. 18, Feb. 1, 15, March 1, 15. (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 in a safe and open-minded space. Babies welcome! Space is limited. Please RSVP to Laura at **860.545.7324**.
- **Support Group For Families Dealing With Major Mental Illness.** Dec. 21, Jan. 4, 18, Feb. 1, 15, March 1, 15. (First and third Thursday of each month), 5:15 - 6:30 p.m. in the Center Building, First Floor Conference Room. For family and friends of individuals who have schizophrenia, bipolar or other related disorders. Share your success and struggles. Learn to care for yourself while caring for others.
- **Al-Anon Parent Group.** Dec. 21, 28, Jan. 4, 11, 18, 25, Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22. (Every Thursday), 7 - 8 p.m. One hour topic discussion.
- **Social Support Group — LGBTQ Issues (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender/Questioning).** Dec. 27, Jan. 10, 24, Feb. 14, 28, March 14, 28. (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.
- **Trauma Support Group.** Dec. 27, Jan. 10, 24, Feb. 14, 28, March 14, 28. (Second and fourth Wednesday of each month), 6-7 p.m. A peer-led group that offers a supportive environment for individuals with any type of trauma history. Attendees will discuss relevant topics and educational materials will be available. To attend, please RSVP to Laura at **860.545.7324**.
- **Dementia Support/Educational Group Meeting.** Jan. 2, Feb. 6, March 6. (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**.
- **Hearing Voices Network (HVN).** Jan. 4, 11, 18, 25, Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22, March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29. (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.

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Child and Adolescent unit collecting coats, food

In this holiday season, we welcome your support in providing not only food to families in need, but also outerwear to protect them from the cold weather. Families would benefit from:

- Non-perishable food items for a holiday dinner (e.g. stuffing, canned goods, etc.)
- Monetary gifts or supermarket gift cards (Stop & Shop, Big Y, Wal-Mart, etc.) so that turkeys may be purchased
- New or very gently used hats,

gloves, scarves and coats

■ Other donations of food, household items and toys

Items may be donated until Thursday, Dec. 21. Please bring all items to the PHP/IOP hallway located in the Braceland Building on the first floor. Freely hang all items (hats, gloves, scarves, etc.) on the giving tree. There

will also be a box for large items. Please place all food items in the designated food bin.

If you have any questions please contact: Elizabeth Conlon at **860.696.0025** or Alexa Palasky at **860.696.0041**.

Thank you for your generosity and enjoy your holiday season.

Family Resource Center Support Groups (continued)

- **Managing Schizophrenia.** Jan. 9, April 3, 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**.
- **Substance Use Educational And Support Group.** Jan. 11, Feb. 8, March 8 (Second Thursday of each month), 4 – 5 p.m. For family members impacted by loved ones with substance abuse.

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.

Find us online at instituteofliving.org

BrainDance Awards for Student Projects on Mental Illness

The Institute of Living at Hartford Hospital is sponsoring an academic and art competition designed to decrease the stigma of mental illness. The BrainDance Awards encourage high school students to gain knowledge about psychiatric diseases and develop a more tolerant and realistic perspective toward people with severe psychiatric problems. The competition also aims to promote students' interest in careers in mental health care. **Back after popular demand: A panel discussion featuring different mental health disciplines.** To receive a BrainDance Award, a student must submit an academic project or an art project on themes related to severe mental illness. Projects must be submitted using a flash drive or dropbox format only (WLMF files or project files are not accepted). Acceptable video formats are .WMV or MPEG 4. Awards up to \$1,000 will be given to the best submissions.

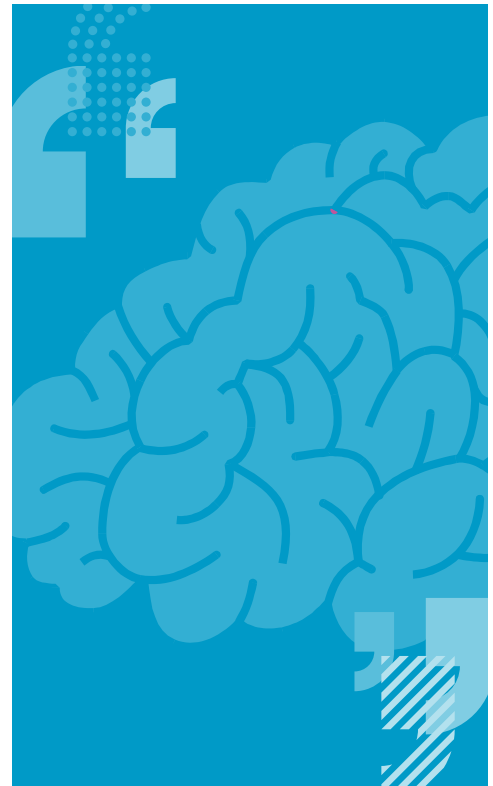
The projects will be judged by expert clinicians and researchers in the field, based on:

- Relevance to the issue of stigma
- Creativity
- Accuracy of information
- Scientific rigor

Projects on any theme related to severe mental illness will be considered for an award.

The Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network

is comprised of the Hartford Hospital Institute of Living, Natchaug Hospital, Rushford and the behavioral health departments of the Hospital of Central Connecticut, MidState Medical Center, and The William W. Backus Hospital. For more than a century, the members of the Hartford HealthCare Behavioral Health Network have been connecting people with services including inpatient and outpatient services in a variety of settings for children, adolescents and adults with mental health or substance abuse issues.



The categories are: Academic, Art, and Mixed Media.

All applicants, their teachers, families and classmates will be invited to an awards day celebration hosted by the Institute of Living on April 26, 2018. This day is designed to be an educational extension opportunity and will include a lecture by a national expert on mental illness, an awards presentation, a visit to our Myths, Minds & Medicine museum on the history of mental healthcare and a tour of our neuro-imaging research center and a panel of experts in the mental health field. Winners are encouraged to present a brief synopsis summarizing their projects. The student lecture and presentations are designed so all participants can cite their BrainDance projects on future school or job applications.

To apply for the awards: please log on to: www.nrc-iol.org and follow the link to BrainDance for application forms, information and procedures. Submission deadline is February 1, 2018.

The awards are coordinated by: Godfrey Pearlson, MD, Director, Olin Neuro-psychiatry Research Center and Nancy Hubbard, LCSW, Director of Outpatient & Ancillary Services.

For more information: contact Nancy Hubbard at **860.545.7665** or nancy.hubbard@hhchealth.org

JC Mansfield kids paint kindness rocks

Joshua Center Mansfield therapist Lara Goldstein, MA, LPC, who is originally from Cape Cod, brought a “kindness rock” initiative to the program that originated in West Barnstable.

Kindness rocks — colorful painted rocks with messages of encouragement and inspiration — are left at beaches across the Cape for those who may want to take one, share one or even add one. Children in the JC Mansfield PHP program created their own kindness rocks and were encouraged to leave them for people to find, gift them to friends or hold onto them for inspiration.



Natchaug chili cook-off will tempt your taste buds

Save the date for the inaugural Natchaug Hospital Chili Cookoff on Wednesday, Jan. 17, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Natchaug Hospital Conference Room. More info will be sent out about the event, which is sponsored by the H3W Friends workgroup.

For more information, contact katherine.mcnulty@hhchealth.org or carol.smith@hhchealth.org.



Tickets now available!

Natchaug Hospital

Holiday Party

Saturday, January 13, 2018* • 6-10 p.m.

Elks Club • 198 Pleasant Street • Willimantic, CT 06226

Join us for a great night of dancing and socializing with fellow Natchaug Hospital staff. Dress to impress!

The event includes appetizers, dinner, dessert, door prizes, DJ, and cash bar.

Tickets: \$10 per employee and \$10 for one guest (18 or older)

Tickets may be purchased on-line with a credit card on Natchaug's website: <https://natchaug.org/giving/donate-now> (Select "other" amount and "other" designation) or via Donna Hendry with cash. Please obtain your tickets no later than **Friday, January 5, 2018**.

**In case of inclement weather, cancellation will be communicated by a Natchaug-All email and on Natchaug's Facebook page.*



State map of prescription drug dropboxes unveiled

The state Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) has launched a new tool to help community members locate the nearest prescription drug drop box in the state.

The DCP website now contains an interactive map where people can zoom into their town and see the closest place to safely dispose of their unneeded medication.

“We’re working to improve the resources we have to promote safe drug disposal every day,” said Consumer Protection Commissioner Michelle H. Seagull. “We know that every little bit counts, and every unneeded medication safely disposed of could be saving a life.”

In 2016, families in Connecticut disposed of more than 33,000 pounds of

unneeded medication, and the program currently has 84 drop boxes located at local and state police stations.

Natchaug Pharmacy Director Jose Scarpa, RPh,BCPP, said the new web page is an excellent resource. He said his pharmacy student was readily able to navigate it to provide a list of drop off area addresses in Eastern Connecticut for staff and the community.

“It’s important for community members to properly dispose of their old medications. For people who do not discard medications they no longer use, particularly the elderly, they could

end up taking the wrong medication or dose or an expired medication that is ineffective. Additionally, there might be medications left around that have the potential for abuse,” said Scarpa. “There are also ecological consequences for flushing medications down the toilet or throwing them in the garbage.”

The new map is available at <http://www.ct.gov/dcp/cwp/view.asp?q=501922>.

The link can also be used to view DCP videos about how to safely dispose of medications at home. The information is available in English and Spanish.



JC Northeast helps for America Recycles Day

Students and staff at Joshua Center Northeast participated in America Recycles Day on Wednesday, Nov. 15.

Collections were taken up for gently

used clothing, books and plastic shopping bags. The clothing (mostly



baby clothes) was donated to a family displaced from the hurricane in Puerto Rico who gave birth to a baby boy the day they arrived in Connecticut. The books were donated to a local donation box and the shopping bags were taken to be recycled at a local supermarket.

The current recycling rate in the United States is only 34 percent and the students at JCNE encourage everyone to create less waste and to recycle more often.

Annual Staff Campaign

Include Natchaug Hospital in your year-end giving!



Things to know:

- All donations stay local to Natchaug Hospital and support its programs and client needs.
- No donation goes towards wages/salaries.
- Weekly drawings give you the chance to win multiple times.

Donations and pledges of \$25 or more can win Amazon.com gift cards!

The earlier you donate/pledge, the more chances you have to win!

Weekly drawings:

For donations/pledges received by 8:00AM:

Nov. 13: \$50 Amazon gift card

Nov. 20: \$25 Amazon gift card & bonus
Mystery Card donated by Tom King

Dec. 27: \$25 Amazon gift card

Dec. 4: \$25 Amazon gift card & bonus
Mystery Card donated by Pat Rehmer

Dec. 11: \$50 Amazon gift card

Dec. 18: \$75 Amazon gift card & bonus
Mystery Card donated by Deborah Weidner, MD

The Donation/pledge form is available on the Natchaug intranet or email Sherry.Smardon@hhchealth.org

* Your pledge will automatically renew. If you wish to cancel your pledge you must do so in writing.

** Payroll deductions will begin in the first pay period of January 2018

How will my donation be used?

Your tax-deductible donation supports the programs and services at Natchaug Hospital. You make a difference every day, by helping people with mental illness and substance use disorders recover and find new beginnings. Unfortunately, many of the wonderful services you and your peers provide are not reimbursed by insurance. In fact, many of our most successful programs rely on your generosity for support.

So what does that mean?

It means that your donation may help give a child a new set of clothes when they have none. Your donation might provide our day programs with new gym equipment or give a young girl the chance to heal through trauma-informed yoga. Every day we work to improve the lives of our clients and your generous donation is one more way to help!

Can I get more information?

Sure! Contact Sherry Smardon at the Development and Community Benefits Office for more details at 860-465-5910 or Sherry.Smardon@hhchealth.org.



Rushford Academy students toured a number of Hartford landmarks during their trip on Monday, Dec. 11. Left: The group got to see the sights from on, above and behind the stage at the Bushnell Theater. Above: The day ended with a spin around the rink at Bushnell Park.

Stonegate students enjoy trip to Bushnell Theater, Park

Rushford Academy students and staff had a great time on their field trip to Hartford on Monday, Dec. 11.

The first stop was The Bushnell Theater where they were given a tour of the entire facility, including up top where the lights shine onto the stage, across the theater stage, inside the “green room” where the stars get ready for their shows, the second theater inside the building, and much more.

Bushnell tour guide Clint offered the students and staff much insight into the gorgeous and timeless theater.

The last part of the trip was ice skating in Bushnell Park. It was a gorgeous day and not to mention a beautiful sight with the snow still on the ground.

Thank you to all the staff who helped make the trip possible!

Winter care donations sought for the homeless

The homeless are in need of hand/feet warmers, gloves, hats, socks, scarves, blankets, personal hygiene items such as toothpaste, toothbrush, soap, baby wipes, and feminine needs.

These packages will be distributed to the homeless in our city by the health, fire and police departments, Hunter’s Ambulance and the Rushford Homeless Outreach program.

All donations can be brought to Rushford or collected in your department and we will gladly pick them up. All donations will be picked up by the end of December.

For any questions please call Jessica at **203.634.7416**.

Rushford 
Connect to healthier.™

New Year’s Celebration

Saturday, Jan. 20, 2018
6-10 pm

Il Monticello Banquet
577 S. Broad Street, Meriden, CT

Join us in celebrating the New Year with an evening of dinner and dancing.
Cash bar available.

Cost: \$15 per person (staff member and 1 guest)

Purchase tickets by Friday, Jan. 5, 2018 from:
Sheila Gosslin (Middletown)
Anivette Cruz (Meriden)

Durham decorates for holidays

Rushford Academy School in Durham has been decorated for the holiday season with lights, tinsel, a menorah, a manger scene, wreaths, and — as has become tradition — 26 snowflakes to pay respect to Newtown.

In the next week, students will present their research projects on holiday celebrations/observations across the globe. They have researched many different holidays including Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Three Kings Day, Yule/Saturnalia, Boxing Day, Omisoka, Fiesta of Our Lady of Guadalupe, St. Nicholas Day, and St. Lucia Day.



Yoga classmates provide meals for the holidays

Susan, a participant in the Yoga For Family Members class, along with a close friend are paying it forward this holiday season by delivering homemade lasagnas to families also struggling with addition.

In a note she leaves with the gift, she writes, "The holidays are difficult for me and by doing this, making and distributing lasagnas to you and others who may be struggling with a similar pain beyond the depth of your smile, I truly am smiling with all my heart. So, for that I thank you for accepting my gift. May you find some peace during this holiday season."

Susan says she got the idea from her best friend you suggested that giving to others who are struggling would help her find happiness this holiday season.



Town Hall Meetings

Connect with your Senior Leadership Team at one of two upcoming Town Hall Meetings.

- *Share feedback on your work environment*
- *Celebrate wins and recognitions*
- *Address gaps in the organization*
- *Hear updates on our external environment*

Monday, Dec. 18, 3-4 pm

Paddock Ave. Cafeteria

Tuesday, Dec. 19, 3-4 pm

Silver Street Cafeteria

Can't make it? Join by VMR:

meet.rushfordmedical@video.hhchealth.org

Call in: 860-972-6338 Access code: 787436733

**If you have questions, contact
Laurie Clinton at 203.238.6894 or
laurie.clinton@hhchealth.org.**

