



**The Rotary Club of the Torrington and Winsted Areas**

## **Rotary Matters!**



### **Last Week's Program:**

This week our own Deirdre DiCara organized an insightful and important presentation which addressed the upcoming acute need for a cold weather shelter for the homeless and a greater overall discussion of the growing problem of homelessness locally and statewide.

First to speak was Deirdre herself as the executive director of FISH/Friends in Service to Humanity of NWCT, who spoke of the long history of concern that many in the greater Torrington area have had for the homeless in Northwest Connecticut and particularly the perennial need for an overflow shelter for extreme weather conditions during the winter. She took us through a little bit of the history noting that for the longest time, the task of housing and caring for homeless people when the weather turned bad was shared amongst several downtown churches but COVID put an end to that. In the several years since, different strategies have been employed, with the most recent having been Trinity Church who last year offered up their space staffed by a team from the YMCA. But Deirdre explains that that "it is all about to change again." That is because the funding associated with the state's COVID response is about to run out. Hereafter, the state has no budget in place to handle overflow shelter needs. Deirdre notes that in order to shelter the state's homeless on the coldest night, \$5 million would be needed. She finished her comments by putting a human face on the need noting that as of late with the cost of rents going up, she's meeting couples in their 80s who have lost their homes. She notes that fully half the people in shelters now are senior citizens and that in Torrington presently there's 8 children who are homeless and there's 35 people housed at FISH.

Anne Giordano from EdAdvance was next to speak. She explained, in particular, the impact of homelessness on kids. She notes that homeless kids suffer much more than just the effects of poverty alone. Her statistics support the fact that the most likely population to be homeless are infants younger than one year old and the next most likely population are single pregnant mothers. 2021 to 2022 data establishes that 1.1 to 1.2 million children are homeless in the United States. She reports that in Connecticut there's approximately 4000 kids presently enrolled in the school systems in various municipalities who are homeless and she explains that what's significant about these figures even is that they believe that homelessness is underreported. In Torrington, 53 kids were homeless last year. During this school year 10 children reported to be homeless deriving from 3 families presently living in tents are attending schools in the Torrington public school system. The impact can be far-reaching. She cites graduation rates among the homeless to be approximately 60% while people who are securely housed graduate at a rate of 86%. To that point, it's very well established that the lack of the diploma is the greatest predictor of homelessness.

Julia Scharnberg from the Northwest CT Community Foundation was next to speak as she addressed the societal barriers to fixing homelessness. She noted that there are assumptions many hold about homelessness which are hard to fight against. She notes that there are interagency debates at the state level as to who is responsible and which budgets are applicable and it becomes difficult for case managers to figure it out as to which State Department is meant to help. She notes that there remains a low inventory for affordable housing. The historical strategies that greater Torrington employed are now insufficient. She explains that philanthropy alone is inadequate to fix the problem and that faith-based solutions no longer suffice as they suffer a lack of capacity. She projects that in the city of Torrington for this year's emergency overflow shelters at least 40 beds will be needed.

Nancy Cannavo representing The Gathering Place (New Beginnings) and CHH/HHC spoke next and explained her organization to us. The Gathering Place" to be an opportunity for coordinated access to the homeless population by organizations who try to intervene and help. She notes that it is a homeless drop-in center, a place where mail can be received by homeless people, where they may get a shower, and receive information that they might avail themselves of. She reports that in the last year, 566 people stopped into The Gathering Place identifying themselves as NEWLY homeless and in the last year, The Gathering Place served 1968 individuals. The staff at the gathering place also helps homeless folks get on the list for shelters which can be a very long wait given the lack of space. She notes that all told it takes about a year for someone who is so motivated, to secure housing.

Leo Ghio representing the Northwest Hills Council of Governments was last to speak. He as well discussed the fight that needs to be undertaken against stereotypes noting that many who find themselves homeless include seniors and children who "haven't done anything wrong." He notes that there needs to be practical steps taken to reduce the stigma associated with homelessness and housing low income individuals which would go a long way towards increasing the inventory of affordable housing for these people are trying to get themselves out of homeless.

It was an an eye-opening discussion and explained in detail why such important efforts need to be undertaken. We think these individuals for their time in coming to present to us and for the work that they do serving this at-risk population.



**This Week's Program:**

This week, Brenda DiCarlo will be introducing Rachel Lenda, State of CT Director of Tourism.

She's be speaking about the projects in the Office of Statewide Marketing & Tourism and specifically will be focusing on promoting Connecticut in strategic marketing.



As a Rotarian, there's no excuse not to be informed and included: Members can join in the meeting either by their direct attendance or by Zooming in. Feel free to participate either way... and know that if you don't participate, you won't fulfill your requirement to attend at least 60% of the meetings of the Rotary Club of the Torrington and Winsted Areas. Being busy is not an excuse to not attend ... Being busy has been an attribute of active, involved, impactful Rotarians from the Northwest corner for more than 100 years.

If you intend on joining via Zoom, please contact Matt ahead of time ([mnpdc@outlook.com](mailto:mnpdc@outlook.com)) so that you can get the link for the meeting and further instructions in that regard.

## **Scheduled Committee Meetings:**

- Board meeting, Thursday, November 14, 2024, at 8am via Zoom. Board members will receive an email with the contact info.

## **Torrington/Winsted Rotary News and Reminders:**

- NO WINNER LAST WEEK! It might interest some of you to know that the chance to win big is STILL increasing each week! There's only 10 cards left in the deck and the progressive

weekly jackpot stands at \$1242. You can't play if you're not at the meeting! Come see if you can draw the Ace of Clubs!

## For Your Edification:

Just in time for Halloween. This Looney Tunes short!

Absolutely one of the best: "Scaredy Cat" - 1948

[https://youtu.be/O\\_3j402pHss?si=t7CA9AjrSTgshiWl](https://youtu.be/O_3j402pHss?si=t7CA9AjrSTgshiWl)



## Birthdays:

Bingham, Dustin.....01 October

Malanca, Rista.....02 October

Fusco, Jeanne.....October

King, Robert.....13 October

Emery, Christina.....13 October  
Hall, Lee.....20 October  
Cerruto, Gladys.....25 October  
Ryan, William.....26 October  
Childs, Starling.....30 October

## **Club Anniversaries:**

Langlois, Sarah.....10/01/13.....11years  
Capobianco, John.....10/04/23.....1 year  
Rougeot, Paul.....10/07/08.....16 years  
Michalowski, Gerald.....10/12/84.....40 years  
Burrows, Gina.....10/26/23.....1 year

## **Upcoming guest speaker responsibilities:**

Brenda DiCarlo .....22-Oct-24  
Christina Emery .....29-Oct-24  
DISTRICT GOVERNOR .....5-Nov-24  
Jessica Gueniat .....12-Nov-24  
Jeffrey M Geddes .....19-Nov-24  
Maria Gonzalez .....26-Nov-24  
Jessica E Gueniat .....3-Dec-24  
Lee Hall .....10-Dec-24  
William G. Harding..... 17-Dec-24  
CHRISTMAS EVE: NO MEETING .....24-Dec-24  
NEW YEAR'S EVE: NO MEETING .....31-Dec-24

If you've scrolled down this far, you're one of my favorite people! Please remember to watch this space weekly so that you can appropriately plan for when it's your time to provide the club with a

program/speaker. All of us working together in this regard makes for more interesting meetings and a better, more informed club!

If your presenter will require the projector and the screen to be set up, please let Matt know ASAP. Also, please let your presenter know that if there's any concerns about the functionality of their presentation, an option is for them to email any presentation they may have to Matt ahead of time who can install their presentation on his laptop to minimize potential complications.

It is your responsibility to introduce your speaker.

Please inform the speaker of the following guidelines of The Rotary Club of the Torrington & Winsted Areas:

- They will have at most ½ hour to do their presentation. Including time for questions.
- It is not the policy of the Club to donate funds raised from the Sergeant-at-Arms presentation to the organization represented by the speaker on the day of the presentation.
- Further, an invitation to make a presentation to The Rotary Club of the Torrington & Winsted Areas does not suggest that the Club endorses the presenter's views - political or otherwise.
- The Rotary Club of the Torrington & Winsted Areas does not provide an honorarium or reimburse a speaker in any way and a presentation to the Club should not be made with an expectation of financial support.

## Torrington/Winsted Rotary Links:

Website: <http://twrotary.org/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TWRotary/>

Rotary Web-Photo Albums: [Web Photo Albums](#)

“Be more kind than necessary, for everyone you will meet today is fighting some sort of battle.”

-K. Purcell

Respectfully submitted, your temporary scribe,

Matt Pagano

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