



ALLIANCE
FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Facing the Future

Together



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MISSION STATEMENT

Alliance for Community Empowerment's sole mandate is to assist the underserved. Alliance for Community Empowerment concentrates its efforts and resources on identifying and eliminating the causes of poverty rather than only dealing with its effects. Alliance for Community Empowerment's actions are directed towards promoting appropriate institutional change and enabling the underserved to become self-sufficient contributors to society.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Folson Almezy
 Rev. Fred Belcher
 Karen Bracey
 Rev. Dr. Lindsay E. Curtis
 Lamond Daniels - Secretary
 Solomon Danquah
 Zenida Gonzalez
 Laurel Gross

Jessica Johnson
 Ralph Jowers - 1st Vice Chairperson
 Jeff Mullins - Treasurer
 Dean O'Brien
 Sharon Skyers-Jenkins - Chairperson
 Shelley Sylvia Tomey
 Keith Williams - 2nd Vice Chairperson

Executive Statement

Last year, together, we initiated a recovery phase in our communities. In 2020 we were in triage helping our communities to survive the global pandemic and in 2021 we lifted ourselves from the figurative rubble. Heroically, our partners assisted during this phase of restoration. While we may be in the early stages of recovery it is the beginning of an optimistic chapter. As our theme suggests we are Facing the Future Together. Yes, we responded and for that we are forever indebted to our partners, and I know our clients are appreciative, they tell us so every day.

I am most proud of the resiliency of my staff for their ability to be nimble, flexible, and innovative enough to allow us to fill gaps that we didn't even know existed. Whether it was helping distribute food, providing Early Learning services for parents going back to work, access to job readiness training, or simply listening to clients to understand how we can best help, Alliance is, more than ever, there for our neighbors. I too am grateful for this job that fulfills the needs of our clients as well as fulfilling us with the honor of being able to serve others.

All my best,

—DR. MONETTE FERGUSON



Dr. Monette Ferguson
Executive Director

Message From our Board Chair

"The purpose of life is to contribute in some way to making things better." —ROBERT F. KENNEDY

This quote embodies our dedicated Board of Directors. As our neighbors adapted to changing circumstances, we felt this impact. Through these times, Alliance remained an integral part of families and communities. This past year the Board demonstrated resilience, dedication, and perseverance in its focused leadership. Despite these uncertain times, the Board has consistently provided support and encouragement to staff. Moreover, Dr. Ferguson's steady leadership has been instrumental in advancing the continued wide footprint of the agency. Her vision and foresight instill hope and optimism for the future.

As Board Chair, I am appreciative of the front row seat I have to witness the progress. The Board, committed to assisting Alliance in its strategic plan, brings a palatable enthusiasm and interest to this work. I am proud to serve this great organization. Alliance is unwavering in its commitment to the underserved by creating innovative ways to empower individuals toward self-sufficiency. Despite the extreme times, neither the board nor the staff are deterred; rather, the agency has experienced growth through expanded sites, additional community partnerships, and increased community advocacy.

Given the present trajectory, the skillful leadership, and the support of the Board of Directors, I am encouraged that Alliance will continue to positively impact our children, families, and communities.

—SHARON SKYERS-JENKINS



Sharon Skyers-Jenkins
Board Chair

Facing the Future

Together

For 58 years Alliance has built community relationships that allow us to help our neighbors in need. Moving forward we are looking to build on that trust. We will continue to pride ourselves in our responsive, seamless services that serve needs and help lift an entire region; from rural communities

such as Easton, the suburbs of Trumbull and Monroe and urban centers such as Norwalk and Bridgeport. Add to that Stratford and Westport and you have a variety of communities with diverse needs. We look forward with great appreciation for the welcoming nature of these communities and their willingness to provide access to the people who need services.

We anticipate beyond our regular programming, developing new programs that impact work development to help folks evolve out of poverty and continues to strengthen early learning.

But all of this will not be possible if resources are simply flowing in one direction. In 2022 we, together, must continue our pre-pandemic ways of volunteerism and the provision of in-kind services. With your generous contribution of time and resources together we will soon see a year of peace and provision.

ALLIANCE STAFF

Dr. Monette Ferguson
Executive Director

Harold Gaines
Maintenance Coordinator

Indi Hayes
Director of Finance

Linda Kirkland
Executive Secretary /
Director of Youth Services

Tanya Lloyd
Director of Early Learning

Zeljka Trivunovic
Director of Operations

Yasmine Rodriguez
Acting Director of HR

Honoring Mrs. Alterine Green-Johnson



Mrs. Alterine Green-Johnson, affectionately know as “Mama J” has been employed with Alliance for nearly half a century. Mrs. Johnson began her professional journey with Alliance (Back then ABCD) in January of 1975. She was first employed as an assistant teacher at Saint John’s Church, which was known as Inner-City Children’s Center. From assistant teacher she became a teacher for the Rabbit Room with a group of 21 students in the mornings and 21 students in the afternoons. Our very own Dr. Monette Ferguson was one of her students. Mrs. Johnson transitioned from a teacher at Park Avenue to a lead teacher at Johnson Academy in Stratford. She later became Lead teacher / Head teacher and site manager for both the Johnson Academy and South End Community Center sites. She is currently the site manager for the South End Community Center in Stratford where she serves 51 children and their families, and a phenomenal staff of twelve.

After all these years Mama J is still about the business of giving of herself and making a positive and lasting impression on everyone she encounters. Mrs. Johnson rolls out the welcome mat for every person. At her current site she is referred to as the “sister of love” and she has no problem spreading love wherever she goes. This is evident even in her monthly parent meetings as she passionately ends each one with her famous quote:

“live life to the fullest, laugh and smile every day, and love beyond words!”

Mrs. Johnson firmly believes that every child should be nurtured and loved with respect because in her words, “You never know when you are shaping and molding the mind of the next president, doctor, lawyer, scientist, CEO, or director of the company you may one day be employed by.”

Early Learning Division

The goal of Head Start is to increase school readiness and social competence in young children. Alliance’s Early Learning Division Head Start and Early Head Start programs allow children to participate in a variety of educational activities that reflect best practices in early childhood education. Providing high quality services to pregnant women and children ages 0-5, Alliance focuses on ensuring children are nurtured in a learning environment that develops cognitive, social emotional, and physical skills.

Evidenced-based curricula prepares children and families for continued educational success. Comprehensive services include health screenings for both vision and hearing, access to physical and dental exams, developmental and behavioral assessments, referrals to local community resources and parenting information.

Directly responding to the COVID 19 pandemic, Alliance quickly adapted and maintained continuity of providing high-quality early childhood education and comprehensive services at each of the 14 early learning centers located throughout the greater Bridgeport area.

KINDERGARTEN PREPARATION

Alliance continues to lead the early childhood field by ensuring that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for our children. Child assessments report that the majority of children who transitioned to Kindergarten were on target and meeting expectations. At the end of 2020-21 program year, 189 children successfully transitioned to kindergarten. Virtual and in-person meetings as well as individualized sessions were held to ensure a smooth transition process. Families were also supported with generous donations of book bags, school supplies, and school uniforms.

2021 EARLY LEARNING IMPACT

Alliance’s Early Learning Division provided services to a total of 589 children in all funding sources during the 2020-21 program year.

	Early Head Start	Head Start
Funded Enrollment	160	661
Cumulative enrollment of children & families served	108	380
Average monthly enrollment	67%	72%
Percentage of eligible children served	96%	91%
Percentage of children who received medical exams	94%	99%
Percentage of children who received dental exams	24%	37%
Percentage of children with health insurance	91%	99%

ENGAGING FAMILIES

COVID 19 has changed how Alliance engages with families, but it did not stop family engagement. Using alternate methods, including the increase of virtual programming, parents continue to be a vital part of the program. Alliance engages families around children’s learning and development by providing learning opportunities that enhance natural parenting skills. Our focus this year has been on the well-being of families and ensuring access to local resources. Alliance strongly believes that children perform at a higher level when they are part of a thriving family. Our family engagement program focuses on culturally and linguistically responsive relationship-building with key family members in a child’s life and is also inclusive of pregnant women and expectant families, mothers, fathers, grandparents, and other adult caregivers.



Energy Assistance

The Energy Assistance program is designed to assist households with their heating costs, for their gas, electric and deliverable fuel heating sources. This program also assists with heating system repairs, or replacements, and yearly maintenance costs. Any households within Alliance's catchment area can apply. The award is based on family size and income level. In 2021, Alliance started assisting with water and sewer cost to eligible households.

Since COVID-19, more households are seeking assistance due to loss of income, increase in their heating and utility bills, and change in their family dynamics. Alliance took the initiative to notify the public that the energy program is still available during the pinnacle of the pandemic. Alliance canvassed clients by utilizing outreach programs, phone calls, and mailing lists to provide information on how to apply for energy assistance in the eight towns served by Alliance (Bridgeport, Trumbull, Stratford, Easton, Fairfield, Monroe, Norwalk and Westport). Alliance has continued to serve our senior community by outreach appointments for those who are homebound.

2021 ENERGY ASSISTANCE IMPACT

10,000

HOUSEHOLDS OBTAINED HEATING ASSISTANCE

1.84

MILLION GALLONS OF FUEL DELIVERED

11,500

FUEL DELIVERIES MADE

Self-Sufficient Supportive Services

Alliance Supportive Services Department provides help for eligible households and individuals who reside in Bridgeport, Easton, Monroe, Fairfield, Trumbull, Stratford, Norwalk, and Westport. The Supportive Services Department provides a holistic approach that uses case management to assist individuals and families in setting and achieving goals while obtaining the tools needed to become self-sufficient. Alliance partners with over 200 organizations in Connecticut to provide clients with support in the areas of housing, transportation, employment services, education (GED), child support, and much more.

2021 SUPPORTIVE SERVICES IMPACT

250+

FAMILIES AVOIDED EVICTION THROUGH HOUSING ASSISTANCE

200+

FAMILIES AVOIDED UTILITIES SHUT OFF

200+

INDIVIDUALS OBTAINED STATE BENEFITS

500+

HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVED FOOD ASSISTANCE

75

INDIVIDUALS PARTICIPATED IN FINANCIAL LITERACY

204

TAX RETURNS COMPLETED THROUGH VITA (\$1,069,269 IN CLIENT TAX REFUNDS)

Lighthouse in the Community

Alliance continues to serve as a provider for the City of Bridgeport's Lighthouse before school (seven sites), after school, and summer programs located at ten schools throughout the city of Bridgeport: Blackham, Black Rock, Cesar Batalla, Curiale, Discovery Magnet, Geraldine Johnson, Hallen, Jettie S. Tisdale, John Winthrop, and Roosevelt; serving over 1,600 students throughout the year. The Bridgeport Youth Club - Inspire Motivate Prepare Accelerate Creative Teens (BYC IMPACT) for 7th and 8th grade students is a popular component of the program.

Family Engagement sessions take place at least once a month with diverse activities such as Health Wellness & Nutrition, Line Dancing, Canvas Painting, Zumba, Themed Arts & Crafts, Literacy / Science / Math Nights, etc. Each activity ends with a healthy family meal, accompanied by entertainment.

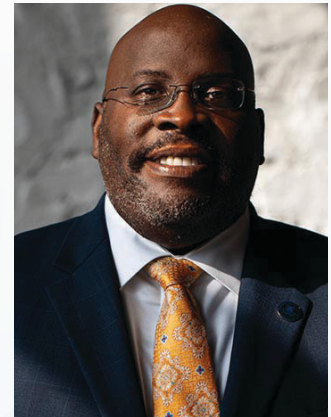
Friday Night Live – a free program funded by the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch Court Support Services Division (CSSD) and the City of Bridgeport (Police / Youth Services / Board of Education Departments) takes place at Bassick and Central High Schools. It is a drop-in center offering structured educational assistance, recreational activities (basketball, game room, fitness classes), a lounge, media center (computer classes), theater arts, movie nights, and educational trips. A social worker is on site for assistance with health / social issues students may be experiencing. The program operates on Tuesdays / Thursdays from 2:30 – 5:30 pm and Fridays from 6 – 10 pm. Bus tokens are available for students using public transportation. Family Engagement activities are also held.



Keynote Speaker

Dr. Dwayne Smith, CEO of Housatonic Community College in Bridgeport, Connecticut has more than 38 years of progressive administrative and faculty experience in higher education. He is well-versed in student access and success, curriculum development, accreditation, enrollment management, strategic planning, faculty and staff development, increasing the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) pipeline, and obtaining external funding. Under his leadership, Housatonic received its largest gift – one million dollars to establish the Housatonic Community College Peter Werth Entrepreneurship and Innovation Center. In addition, Housatonic was awarded \$1 million to expand its Advanced Manufacturing Technology Center, through federal appropriation. The Housatonic Community College Equity Project was launched last fall with a \$10,000 pledge from Dr. Smith. This pledge has motivated other individuals and organizations to give. Thus far, more than \$150,000 has been collected.

Dr. Smith is a Fulbright Scholar with the U.S. Department of State, served as Board Chair of the Higher Education Consortium which represents 20 two- and four-year higher education institutions and civic organizations in the St. Louis region. Though he has been in Bridgeport for only one year, he has endeared himself to the community, serving on the boards of Bridgeport Regional Business Council, the Adams J Lewis Academy, and the Workplace of Bridgeport, CT. He has collaborated with regional organizations to promote access and opportunity to higher education in Bridgeport. He served as a Marshal for the 2021 Fairfield County Juneteenth Parade and Celebration and was recently inducted into the 2021 Class of 100 Men of Color of Connecticut. His other honors include Who's Who in the Midwest, Who's Who in America, and a member of the national honor societies, Phi Kappa Phi and Kappa Delta Pi. He is a proud 40 plus year member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., in which he served as an area director and was awarded the chapter Brother of the Year and Missouri Brother of the Year awards. Dr. Smith is a member of Sigma Phi Fraternity (Boule).



Dr. Dwayne Smith
CEO of HCC

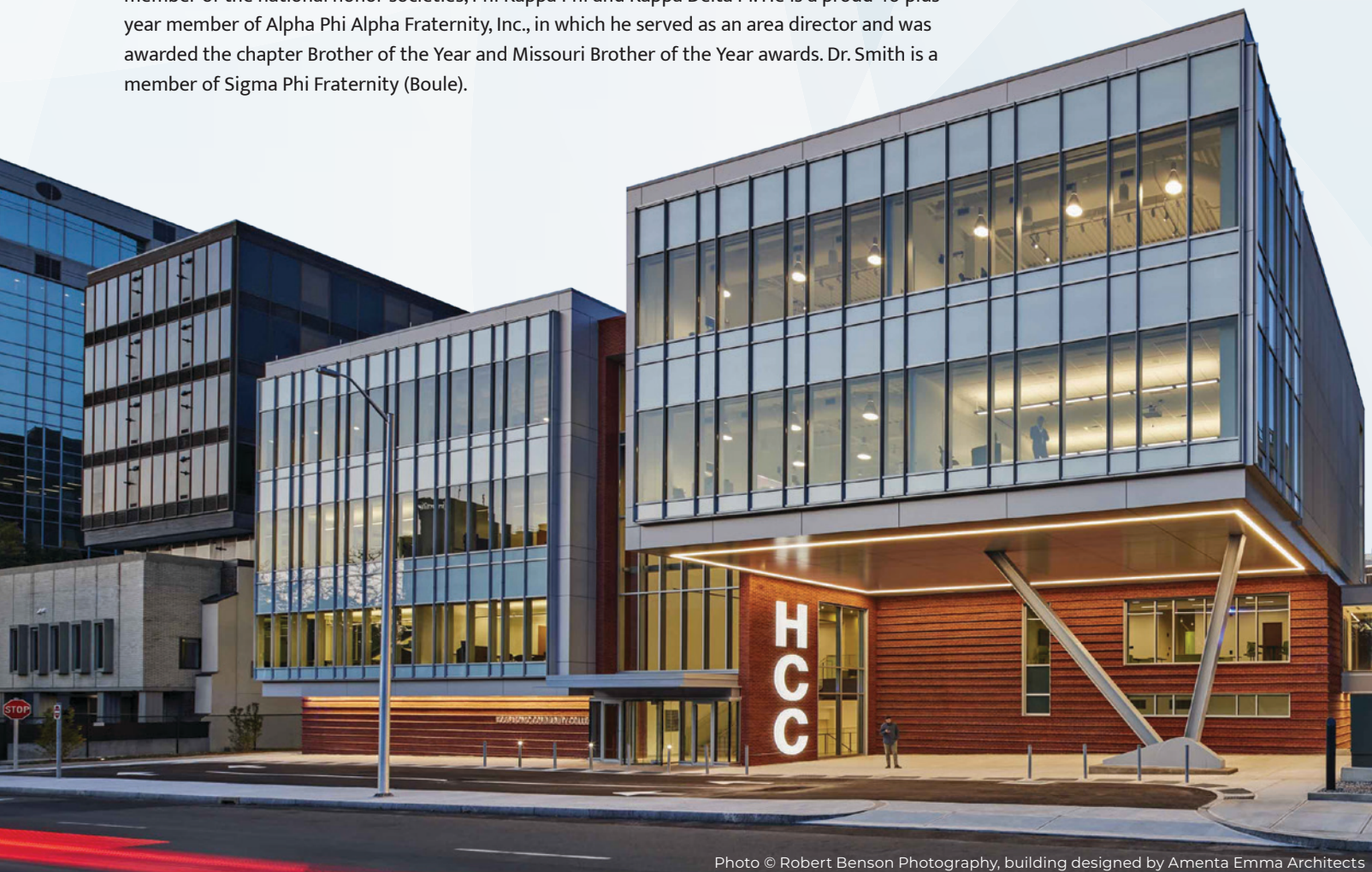


Photo © Robert Benson Photography, building designed by Amenta Emma Architects

Community Awardees



LIZ GOLDEN, Emergency Response Team Member, Norwalk Health Department

Liz Golden has been a member of the Emergency Response Team at the Norwalk Health Department since early 2019. During that time Liz has been supportive of every effort the Health Department has asked for volunteer assistance with – from Fodor Farms "Growing Gardens-Growing Health" to a wide range of COVID-19 related programs. From drive-through food distributions to food deliveries to families isolated and otherwise impacted by COVID, Liz has willingly given her time and resources to support efforts to address the food insecurity issues during the challenges of the COVID pandemic. Liz has assisted with the Vaccine Call Line to help seniors secure appointments for COVID vaccinations. Additionally, Liz facilitated vaccination clinics, mask collection and COVID test & mask distribution to the community. Liz has driven senior client's home from NHD vaccination clinics when their taxi cabs didn't arrive to take them home! Liz has been genuinely happy to help.



REV. NANCY KINGWOOD, President, Executive Director, GBAPP

Rev. Nancy Kingwood has received various community awards including Bank of America Local Hero Award, 100 Professional Women of Color 2018, Sojourner Truth Community Service Award / Rev. Nancy Kingwood Day / City of Bridgeport, Her Haven Project, Beacon of Hope Award, Bucks for Bud, and a Legislative Citation for her work in underserved communities. She is a member of the Women of Color Congressional Briefing Committee and the National Black Women's HIV Network. Nancy holds certifications on the National Human Services Board, the Women of Color Leadership Institute, National Minority AIDS Council, HIV Prevention Counselor, SAMHSA Train the Trainer Trauma-Informed Approaches, and is a member of the National Organization of Human Services. She also serves as an associate minister at Mount Aery Baptist Church. She is the visionary of the Nia Alliance for Women of Color and the Healing Place, Inc.



MOLLIE MELBOURNE, President & CEO, Southwest Community Health Center

Mollie Melbourne is the President / CEO of Southwest Community Health Center, a non-profit organization located in Bridgeport, CT. Southwest Community Health Center offers culturally competent, comprehensive medical, dental, mental health and substance use disorder treatment services, specialty care, as well as case management, program entitlement enrollment and WIC services to the city's residents who are most vulnerable – the people without insurance and those living in poverty – who otherwise do not have access to primary health care. Prior to joining Southwest, Mollie was the Chief Operating Officer of the Community Health Center Association of Connecticut (CHCACT), an organization that advances and aligns the work of health centers, with stakeholders, to improve the health and wellness of all. Mollie says she is proud to lead an organization that is committed to the dignity and inherent worth of every human being.

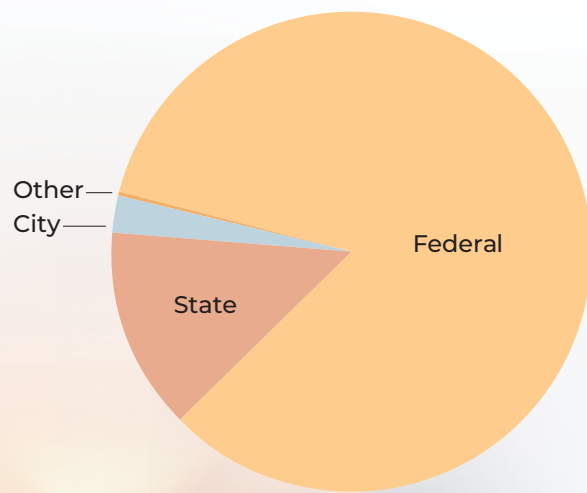


ALEX RAMOS, President & Executive Director, Square Up For Others

Alex A. Ramos is the Founder & Executive Director of Square Up For Others. He is a Bridgeport native and has a heart to see his city changed beginning with those who have nothing to give. His organization targets the homeless community and its sole purpose is to restore dignity by helping them establish a healthy livelihood with a step-by-step support system. This organization was birthed in the trenches, where Alex Ramos was able to identify the gap between the community and the resourceful organizations within the city. With much success, Square Up For Others, has been able to assist in getting 90 people off the streets, into homes, and helped in transitioning them into becoming productive citizens. Through the power of community, Square Up For Others has been able to get well known organizations to partner by providing their resources in the immediate need, to involving popular mom and pop businesses to prepare hot meals to keep this going.

Agency Budget

2021—2022



FEDERAL

CT Energy Assistance Program (Passed through The State)	\$16,741,626
Community Services Block Grant (Passed through The State)	\$1,991,988
Social Services Block Grant (Passed through The State)	\$103,979
Human Services Infrastructure (Passed through The State)	\$224,534
FEMA (Federal grant passed through The United Way)	\$60,702
CDBG / ESG Grants (Federal grant passed through The City)	\$30,000
Head Start	\$7,965,238
Trumbull / Monroe	\$325,826
Early Head Start	\$3,332,718
TOTAL	\$30,776,611

STATE

Human Services Infrastructure	\$502,276
State Head Start	\$496,277
Therapeutic Child Care	\$309,049
Child Day Care	\$2,420,099
School Readiness	\$1,298,328
TOTAL	\$5,026,029

CITY

Youth Services Program	\$865,000
TOTAL	\$865,000

OTHER

Southern CT Gas Company	\$75,000
TOTAL	\$75,000

Community Partners

Administration for Children and Families
ADP, LLC
Adrienne Kirby Family Literacy Project
ADT
Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater
American Red Cross
American View Productions
Arthur J. Gallagher & Co.
AT&T
BAYC / United Way
BBT Partners
Bigelow Tea
Bridgeport Board of Education
Bridgeport Caribe Youth Leaders
Bridgeport Department of Social Services
Bridgeport Fire Department
Bridgeport Health Department
Bridgeport Hospital
Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust, Inc.
Bridgeport Rescue Mission
Captains Systems
Cardinal Shehan Center
Career Resources
Caroline House
Catholic Charities of Fairfield County
Child and Family Guidance
Child First
City of Bridgeport
City of Bridgeport - Housing & Community Development
City of Norwalk
Colonial Life
Concentra
CT Association for Community Action
CT Association of Foster & Adoption Families, Inc.
Connecticut Head Start Association
CT Institute for Refugees and Immigrants
CT Food Bank
Dress for Success
Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (ECCP)

Easton Senior Center
Eisenhower Senior Center
Fairfield University
Fairfield University School of Nursing
Fones School of Dental Hygiene
Gallagher & Co.
Grace Baptist Church, Norwalk
Gross Family Fund
Hall Neighborhood House
Hartford Healthcare
HITN (Hispanic Information and Telecommunication Network)
Housatonic Community College
Info Line 211
Jamie A. Hulley Arts Foundation
Job Corps
LifeBridge
Literacy Volunteers
Local 38 Sheet Metal Workers Association
M&T Bank
Me & The Boyz
Minority Business Association
Monroe Senior Center
Music Together
NAACP National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company
New Hope Missionary Baptist Church
nOURishBridgeport
Operation Hope
Optimus Health Care, Inc.
PEER (Partnership for Early Education Research)
People's United Bank
Person to Person
Principal Financial
RYASAP - Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership
Sacred Heart University
Securitas Security Co.
Sikorsky
Sikorsky Credit Union

Social Security Administration
Southern Connecticut Black Chambers of Commerce
Southern Connecticut Gas Company
Southwest Community Health Center
SS&H Attorneys at Law
State of CT Dept. of Children & Family
State of CT Dept. of Social Services
State of CT - DSS Child Support Enforcement
Stratford Board of Education
Stratford Health Department
Stratford Parents Place
Stratford Public Library
Stratford South End Community Center
Taes' Lounge
TD Bank
The Center for Family Justice
The Connection Inc.
The Trust
The United Illuminating Company
The Workplace, Inc.
Thought Partner Solutions
Town of Westport
TRIO Community Meals
Trumbull Board of Education
Trumbull Social Services
United Way
University of Bridgeport
University of Massachusetts (Amherst, MA)
US Dept of Health and Human Services
Verizon Wireless
Verizon Wireless Foundation
Voya Financial Company
WB Mason
WC McBride Electrical Contractors, LLC
Workers' Compensation Trust
Yale Hospital
Yale University
YMCA Alpha Community Services (Norwalk/Westport)

Thank You!





WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTIONS MADE TO ALLIANCE
FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT BY THE FOLLOWING:

Goldman Sachs	Derwin K. Hill	New Hope Missionary Baptist Church
Lindley Food Service, Gallagher and The Gross Family	DiBella's Subs	NUOVO Packaging
5 Star Pizza	Edward J. Dillon & Son Florists	Olivia's Juice Bar
American View Productions	Edwin Rivera	Optimus Health Care
A-Preferred Roofing and Contracting	Elements of Illusion	Porky's Cafe
Bagel King of Bridgeport	Frankie's Diner	Prestige Cleaning Service
Baker-Isaac Funeral Service	Fruta Juice Bar	Securitas
Becker's School Supplies	Hip Hop 1001 Program	Service Rite Electric
Bigelow Tea	Hub and Spoke	Showcase Cinema
Blumshapiro	Hunan Pan	Southern Connecticut Ice and Oil
BNT	IT Direct	Stress Factory
Boys & Girls Village Inc.	Kiffy Naturals	The Klein Memorial Auditorium
Bridgeport Caribe Youth Leaders	Kyocera	The Work Place
Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative	Lakeshore	Valvoline
Cardinal Shehan Center	Leisha's Bakeria	Vazzano's Four Seasons
Cater Fresh	Maritime Chevrolet	VCL Consulting Group, Inc.
Chester & Kinya Kennedy	Merit Rentals, LLC	Wade's Dairy
Crunch Fitness	New England Recreation Group	WB Mason



ALLIANCE
FOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

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