



109 Legion Avenue
New Haven, CT 06519

www.continuumct.org

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Damian Henderson
Rose Jackson
Andrea Randlett
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“You are allowed to be both a
masterpiece and a *work in
progress*, simultaneously.”

- Sophia Bush

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A DREAM COME TRUE

Letter from the President



It feels like home. That is what I tell everyone who asks me how I like our new headquarters! How lucky we all are to work in such beautiful surroundings every day; to have health and exercise activities offered on site; computer training labs; and enough conference rooms to house countless activities simultaneously. Most of us are tickled pink to have a choice of parking space! This is a dream come true.

I am so grateful to all of Continuum’s supporters and employees for making our grand opening a spectacular success! The words of Mayor Toni Harp, Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, Tony Rescigno, Matt Nemerson and Peter Sargent make me proud to lead such a well-respected and vital organization. I thank all who worked so hard to prepare and welcome our guests and “show off” with great personal pride all that is important here at 109 Legion Ave.

Soon we will be opening our final addition to our new home – the deli/café, which will provide a fabulous eating experience for the community while also providing job training and employment opportunities for those we serve. We hope to be open for business early next year. Imagine being able to get breakfast and lunch delivered right to your office, and with an employee discount to boot! All suggestions for the deli regarding your menu wishes are welcome.

You can email them to me at pwalker@continuumct.org.

Sincerely,

Patti Walker, MSW
President & CEO



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50 YEARS OF REBUILDING LIVES

As the sun set over New Haven Harbor, 300 guests arrived for Continuum's 50th Anniversary Celebration Dinner at Anthony's Ocean View.

Those who attended left with a greater sense of what we mean when we say, 'Continuum rebuilds lives.' First-hand testimonials given by one of our clients and by Mark Loughridge, a father of another client, provided a clear sense of the significant turnaround and rebuilding of lives that occurs here at Continuum.

If ever there was a story of hopelessness, it could have been that of our keynote speaker, Liz Murray. At least that's what most might expect of a young girl who lived on the streets of New York, eating out of dumpsters and hanging with the "wrong" crowd. But, the lessons learned from Liz's story of triumph were numerous. Her speech inspired admiration, inspiration, and self-reflection.

Liz described her parents' severe addiction to cocaine and the impact it had on the family. The addictions led to homelessness, theft, abandonment, and ultimately the death of both parents from AIDS. At first Liz saw herself as a rebel and a victim. Uneducated, straggly and homeless, she said she was one of those people that many turn their heads away from.



But then she had an epiphany. "Like my mother, I was always saying, 'I'll fix my life one day.' It became clear when I saw her die without fulfilling her dreams that my time was now or maybe never," she said.

Rather than resentment, Liz chose love. Rather than defeat, Liz chose to turn her life around. She went back to high

school, graduated in two years, and then obtained a scholarship and graduated from Harvard.

Along the way, various people inspired and supported



her – people who did not turn their heads away, but instead noticed and cared. Today, Liz helps others to rise above their circumstances, believe in themselves, and build or...rebuild their lives.

The 50th Anniversary Celebration raised almost \$90,000, thanks to the generosity of those who attended, sponsored, or donated money or auction items. We are deeply grateful to everyone who had any part in the evening as it was an incredible success!

A special mention goes to our sponsors. The evening was generously presented by the Loughridge-Williams Foundation and the First Niagara Foundation. Platinum sponsors were Merit Insurance and W.B. Mason. CapitalOne, Connecticut Mental Health Center and Svigals+ Partners were the Gold Sponsors, and C.M. Smith Agency, People's United Bank and Yale-New Haven Health were our Silver Sponsors. There were dozens of table sponsors as well.

A sincere thank you to everyone involved in this wonderful event.



MEGHAN'S MIRACLE

Meet Meghan.

At the age of two, Meghan was diagnosed with the severe seizure disorder Lennox-Gasaut Syndrome. On any given day, she would experience seizures too numerous to count. She also exhibited significant behavioral and cognitive deficiencies which are associated with Lennox-Gasaut. Her condition was so severe that eventually it became unsafe for Meghan to live at home or function in a public school setting. After much research, her parents brought Meghan to live at a specialized neuro-behavioral institution in Texas.

As Meghan became a young adult, heartbreaking issues arose concerning Meghan's care, and her seizures and behaviors became increasingly more difficult. Her parents needed to remove her from the institution, but because of her complex medical condition and tremendously challenging psychiatric behaviors, several organizations refused to admit Meghan.



Today, Meghan is thriving both medically and emotionally.

Where do parents of a budding adult with such serious medical and psychiatric challenges like Meghan's turn?

Meghan's parents were referred to Continuum of Care's supportive living program. Continuum's Vice President of Developmental Disability Services flew down to Texas to meet Meghan and her parents and assess her situation. In light of Continuum's expertise and compassion with some of the most challenging individuals, it was agreed that Meghan would move to Continuum.

Our staff worked with Meghan's parents, doctors, case managers and behaviorists on plans to ultimately manage her seizures and other medical issues, as well as change her negative behaviors. Initially, she was physically aggressive, threatened suicide, obstinate about taking medications and going to her day program, and, on occasion, she was hospitalized for severe seizures. But the team refused to give up on Meghan.

When Meghan came to our program, we were told that it would be a miracle if we could help her to live a productive life. Today, Meghan is thriving both medically and emotionally.

Thanks to the coordinated work of the team, Meghan has not had a psychiatric hospitalization for three years, and has not had any serious seizures for one year. Meghan regularly attends her day program and has many friends now. Her staff members respect and treat Meghan like the young woman she is, and her parents have complete confidence that Meghan is thriving because she is in Continuum's care.

Won't you consider a gift to Continuum so that we can continue to help rebuild the lives of other deserving individuals like Meghan?

Visit www.continuumct.org/donate to find out how your donation can help someone like Meghan.

SPECIAL DATES/NEED TO KNOW

November: Continuum is participating in **Giving Tuesday**, the global day of giving back, on **November 29**. We look forward to another successful fundraiser that will help Continuum rebuild more lives. Please 'like' and follow us at [Facebook.com/ContinuumConnecticut](https://www.facebook.com/ContinuumConnecticut) and [Twitter.com/Continuum_CT](https://www.twitter.com/Continuum_CT), and visit www.continuumct.org/giving-tuesday for more information and to join our Giving Tuesday contest.

November is also **National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month**. Alzheimer's is a neurological disease that is the most common form of dementia, and the sixth leading cause of death in the U.S. It's best to find a loved one who is diagnosed with the condition extra support, like a professional caregiver or other in-home health care provider who is dedicated to providing the personalized care that people experiencing memory loss require to live full and comfortable lives. Continuum Home Health is specially experienced in helping patients with dementia to live at home as long as possible. **November 11** is **Veterans Day**, a time to honor people who served in the U.S. Armed Forces and risked their lives for our freedom. Sadly, their sacrifice often comes with a cost. Nearly 1 in 4 active duty members showed signs of a mental health condition (according to a 2014 JAMA study), which is also a leading cause of hospitalizations for them. About 8,000 veterans are thought to die by suicide each year – about 22 per day – due to untreated mental illness. Continuum's Veterans Crisis program cares for Veterans in a home-like environment, tied to a clinical and community support system, as an alternative to psychiatric hospitalization. We are looking to expand the program further.

December: Wednesday, December 21, 2016 will mark the 26th year of **National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day**, observed annually on the first day of winter and longest night of the year. It is a time to reflect on and honor the lives of people who have died while living on the street. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 20 to 25% of the homeless population in the United States suffers from some form of severe mental illness. Continuum rescues about 250 people from homelessness each year.

Smile... the Holidays are Coming!: Using **AmazonSmile** to do your holiday shopping, or any shopping throughout the year, is a simple and automatic way for you to support Continuum of Care every time you shop.

To shop at AmazonSmile, simply go to smile.amazon.com. The site has the exact same prices, selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to Continuum, at no cost to you. Your Amazon and AmazonSmile account settings are also the same, as is your shopping cart, Wish List, and wedding or baby registry.

On your first visit to smile.amazon.com, you need to select a charitable organization (Continuum of Care) to receive donations before you begin shopping. AmazonSmile will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a donation. Only purchases that are made through smile.amazon.com will count.

You may also want to bookmark smile.amazon.com to make it easier for all of your Amazon shopping to go through AmazonSmile.

Shopping at smile.amazon.com means helping someone to rebuild his or her life. Thank you for making a conscious effort to make a difference.

Vote for Continuum at Blue State Coffee:

Blue State Coffee donates a percentage of their sales to local non-profit organizations voted on by customers. You can vote for Continuum **ONLY at the 276 York Street shop until December 31.**

Visit bluestatecoffee.com for their menu.



THEIR WORLD DOES NOT LOOK LIKE OURS

People who have intellectual disabilities or are on the autism spectrum see the world differently.

Many are over- or under-sensitive (or both) to sensory information – sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, balance and body awareness.

A sensory room is a designated area where individuals with intellectual disabilities or folks diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder can experience things like

lights, movement, photos, and tactile items that help them understand the world around them and encourage experimentation.

Rooms are uniquely designed around the residents' needs. The items in the rooms are intended to accent the senses that are different for each individual.

Two of Continuum's programs have sensory rooms for residents as well as for others who could benefit from using them. Some sensory room items at the North Colony and Marion Avenue Programs include hammock-like chairs in which residents can swing to calm down, disco balls, nature murals, a television, a radio to play music, and walls made of soft materials or chalkboard to write on.

The rooms are kept quiet, free from outside distractions and regulated at comfortable temperatures. Staff at the Marion Avenue Program take residents to the sensory room to help them calm down when they are anxious or experiencing seizures. At North Colony, the sensory room has a crash pad if residents need something to hit when frustrated.

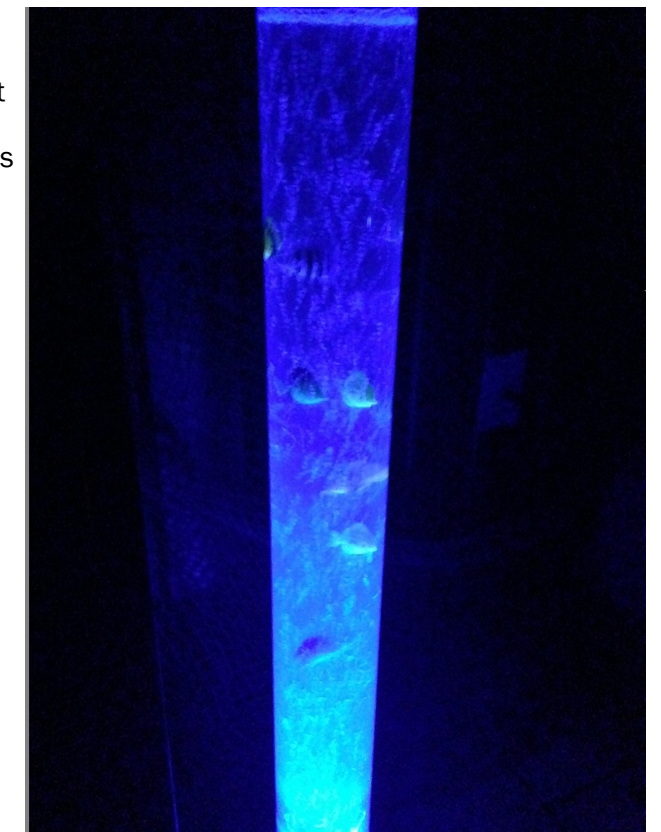
Sensory rooms can also be used as Calming Rooms by toning down the bright lights with soothing colors and soft music, making them a spot for relaxation. For example, North Colony's ocean-themed room has a light that bathes the room in a calming blue glow.

Feel free to contact the North Colony or Marion Avenue Programs if you would like to get some ideas for developing a sensory area for your residents.

Marion Avenue Program: Kelly Antonio, Interim Manager, 860-621-6924

North Colony Program: Elizabeth Cowen, Program Manager, 203-935-0293

Go to [Facebook.com/ContinuumConnecticut](https://www.facebook.com/ContinuumConnecticut) to see more of our sensory rooms.



OH, THE PLACES WE'VE BEEN!



Bushnell Park was covered in Continuum blue on Saturday, May 21 during the **NAMI Connecticut Walk 2016**. It was great teambuilding and exercise, while supporting mental illness awareness (left).



"I have been going to the casino for the past 3 years on my birthday. I enjoy being able to spend time with staff at a place I enjoy visiting. I hope to be able to keep this birthday tradition going."
- Danyeal P., W.I.S.E. program



This May, Continuum put on a full program of events to celebrate **Mental Health Month**. Residents and staff got creative at Paint Night, displayed their talents at a showcase, practiced meditation and yoga, and had movie night at the main office — complete with a popcorn machine!



Between the Continuum residents and staff, there are quite a few **green thumbs**. Check out the lovely garden at the **Extended Living Program/Blake Street** (above left) and the squash and string beans that the **Sylvan Avenue Program's garden** has yielded (above right).



Residents of the **New Haven Halfway House** put on a **talent show** recently and performed songs, poetry, rap, comedy and dance for an audience. They had a program, refreshments, and a stage to perform on. Everyone had an amazing time and the residents were so happy!



Continuum Home Health's booth at the **Christian Community Action fair** was a hit! They had attendees doing relaxation techniques like blowing bubbles, popping bubble wrap, and coloring a photo of our new building. Guests loved the gift baskets (creatively made from Continuum lunch bags) full of first aid items that we raffled off.

CONTINUUM HOME HEALTH ANNIVERSARIES

July 2016

- Vida Ampofo, 7 years
- Edna Sowah, 7 years
- Sandra Ntreh, 4 years
- Vitealya Vereen, 3 years
- Rosa Carbon, 2 years
- Amy Ann Griffin, 2 years
- Christine Lemay, 2 years
- Shawnee O'Donnell, 2 years
- Sairomel S. Gulde, 1 year

August 2016

- Mary Anne Bernardo, 11 years
- Sabrina Moncrease, 8 years
- Prentiss Carl Tomlin, 6 years
- Kerri Sweetman, 5 years
- Patricia A. Pedone, 3 years
- Nkechi Asoh, 2 years
- Taheera Wali, 2 years
- Denique C. Edwards, 1 year
- Barbara Goodwin, 1 year

- Tiara N. Harris, 1 year
- Fai Lam, 1 year
- David Miller, 1 year

September 2016

- Patricia Yashenko, 11 years
- Eileen Tweed, 10 years
- Alexis Hines, 5 years
- Jeffrey Dela Cruz, 2 years
- Jacqueline Foster, 2 years
- Gabriela Madureira, 2 years
- Annie Owen, 2 years
- Michael E. Honhongva, 1 year
- Phuoc K. Nguyen, 1 year
- Jynelle Yvonne Smith, 1 year

October 2016

- Sarah Gomez, 9 years
- Vickie Gray, 8 years
- Nichole Dill, 7 years

- Dora Gomez, 7 years
- Donna Tomlin, 6 years
- Carol Sabo, 5 years
- Anita Benton, 3 years
- Angela Asamoah, 2 years
- James Barakos, 2 years
- Tiffany Elder-Moore, 2 years
- Susan Kelly, 1 year
- Latoya Marie Patterson, 1 year
- Vida Raskevicius, 1 year
- Mahogany Tyson, 1 year

November 2016

- Lauretta Young, 11 years
- Ishmael Masoperh, 9 years
- Daniel Barnes III, 7 years
- Claudine Lee, 5 years
- Tonya Holmes-Pickett, 4 years
- Tyquasha L. Harvey, 3 years
- Natasha Pearsall, 2 years
- Jane D. Campo, 1 year

- Michael Dekpor, 1 year
- Elaine Fiemister, 1 year
- Laquvia Jones, 1 year
- Latisha A. Pearson, 1 year
- Kathleen Taylor, 1 year

December 2016

- Carmen Rivera, 10 years
- Natasha Spearman, 6 years
- Ernesha Gatling, 3 years
- Tia Rose Means-Murray, 3 years
- Janet Manchester, 2 years
- Joann Staiano, 2 years
- Estelle Gabriel, 1 year
- Bryon Duval Rodriguez, 1 year

Letter of Appreciation for Continuum Home Health

N

9/15/2016

To Whom It May Concern:

I was employed with The Connection Inc. from 2010 until 2016. During this time I collaborated with Continuum on several client cases in order to set up the most beneficial treatment plan according to their needs. These needs included both nursing services and Home Health Aides. The staff of Continuum provided services above and beyond our expectations and their care for our clients showed through their constant communication and desire to meet any needs we may have needed.

We were capable of serving our clients more effectively due to the teamwork of Continuum staff and their flexibility and creativity in meeting the needs of our clients as well as our agency. It is because of their work and collaboration that we were able to provide the services and care to our clients.

Sincerely,

Amanda Nunez



CONTINUUM OF CARE ANNIVERSARIES

July 2016

Regina W. Bok, 20 years
James Farrales, 17 years
Catherine Marie Cook, 14 years
Shyntel McCarter-Knox, 14 years
David Timmons, 14 years
Desiree Taylor, 13 years
Myron J. Benton, 12 years
Myra Greene, 10 years
Desmond Cooper, 9 years
Sarah Mount, 9 years
Jeremy Kokoszka, 8 years
Marlene Bittle, 7 years
Charles Bellino, 6 years
Latoya Antunes, 4 years
Angela Dease, 4 years
Sakinat Ibn Yusuf, 4 years
Bobbie Maebray, 4 years
David Mc Nerney, 4 years
Angela Avery, 3 years
Monica Brown, 3 years
Clinteshia Crockett, 3 years
Beverly Felder, 3 years
Jamarr Hailey, 3 years
Shanta Jackson, 3 years
Sunhee Malinowski, 3 years
Lea Thames, 3 years
Samuel Brown, 2 years
Juan Calzada Colon, 2 years
Brianna Curtis, 2 years
Wesley Forbes Sr., 2 years
Cristal Hawthorne, 2 years
Aisha Jones, 2 years
Kevin McLaughlin, 2 years
Julia Phillips, 2 years
Milagros Romero, 2 years
Courtney Sutherland, 2 years
Yesenia Wallace, 2 years
Jammie Walsh, 2 years
Eric Wilks, 2 years
Tacara Campbell, 1 year
Jetta Cooper, 1 year
Kyla Johnson, 1 year
Ryan Klein Schmidt, 1 year
Kristina Lopez, 1 year
Joshua Mendez, 1 year
Jasmin Murphy, 1 year
Melissa Queen, 1 year
David Samaroo, 1 year
Dashonda Young, 1 year

August 2016

Heidi Spaman, 15 years
Lynda E. Stannard, 14 years
Nina Wallace, 12 years
Jeffrey Anderson, 10 years
Saundra Carr, 10 years
Mark Serafin, 10 years
Andre Wilson, 10 years
Latoria Tyson, 7 years
Kim Wynkoop, 7 years
Debra Sticht, 6 years
Sonya David, 5 years
Ashlei Garrett, 5 years
Claude Greene Jr., 5 years
Kandis Cannon, 4 years
Takima Robinson, 4 years
Peter Baylock, 3 years
Desiree Knox, 3 years
Simon Minor, 3 years
Carla Wiggins, 3 years
Jamila Bello, 2 years
Raheem Duncan, 2 years

Sajayda Farmer, 2 years
Krystal Harris-Williams, 2 years
Erika Henley, 2 years
Lisa Samuel, 2 years
Dana Albert, 1 year
Stefanie Bradley, 1 year
Quitara Chapman, 1 year
Tyquasha Harvey, 1 year
Tyla Johnson, 1 year
Jan Knapik, 1 year
Lionel Mccullough Sr., 1 year
Alexis Miller, 1 year
Alexis Phelmetta, 1 year
Louis Santiago, 1 year

September 2016

Edward Mattison, 17 years
Dennis Tinney, 17 years
Lauren Goldberg, 12 years
Cecilio N. Sealey, 11 years
Reginald Slade, 11 years
Shawn Elder, 10 years
A'isha Frank, 10 years
Myra Lewis, 9 years
Tylise Bethea, 7 years
Sergio Izzo, 7 years
Rachel Registe, 7 years
Michelle Caffé, 6 years
Shumra Chambers, 6 years
Estelle Dent, 6 years
Latandra Echols, 6 years
Deborah Jackson, 6 years
Luis Rodriguez, 6 years
Janielle Saddler, 6 years
Jennifer Gleason, 5 years
Amy Ann Griffin, 5 years
Tiffinie Jones, 5 years
Yamilette Perez, 5 years
Lorain Stokley, 5 years
Timothy Charles, 4 years
Daniel Mathieu, 4 years
Jennifer Santiago, 4 years
Christine Solecki, 4 years
Cristina Zurlis, 4 years
Dominique Coleman, 3 years
Corey Cotton, 3 years
Sarah Kennedy, 3 years
Chante Franklin, 2 years
Janique Clayton, 2 years
Sheila Jeffress, 2 years
Camille Roach, 2 years
Gina Suggs, 2 years
Adessa Williams, 2 years
Rachel Adams, 1 year
Brianna Dickey, 1 year
Crystal Ellis, 1 year
Edmund Everetts Jr., 1 year
Jodyan Gaynor, 1 year
Samantha Michon, 1 year
Erika Pearce, 1 year
Brian Ralph, 1 year
Britney Thomas, 1 year

October 2016

Patti Walker, 33 years
Dominique Coleman, 18 years
Ernest Odom, 11 years
Melody Mensah, 11 years
Eric Alvey, 10 years
Jeffrey Green, 10 years
Patricia Brown, 8 years
Edna Bowman, 6 years
Jewel Chestnut, 6 years

Anthony Cooper, 6 years
Cheryl J. Davis, 6 years
Gwen Duggan, 6 years
Brenda Shields, 6 years
William Antrum Jr., 5 years
William Bailey, 5 years
Kanayah Smith, 5 years
Tashima Baker, 4 years
Brian DeLauro, 4 years
Catherine Hammie, 4 years
Alicia Taylor, 4 years
Simona Williams, 4 years
Tatiana Cardona, 3 years
Renee Chambers, 3 years
Kimberley DeMayo, 3 years
Nicholas Oliver, 3 years
Melanie Santos, 3 years
Keenan Armstrong, 2 years
Nadraka Carruthers, 2 years
Devin Davis, 2 years
Lamont Dixon, 2 years
Samuel Erskine, 2 years
Dominique Hayden, 2 years
Robert Ruzinsky, 2 years
Jehan Abdur-Raheem, 1 year
Sergio Bradley, 1 year
David Brown, 1 year
Travis Canady, 1 year
Stephen Cox, 1 year
Anderson Curtis, 1 year
Eric James, 1 year
Briana Leary, 1 year
Victoria Molta, 1 year
Maribel Oyola, 1 year
Shawn Rembert, 1 year
Nikeysa Wright, 1 year

November 2016

Timothy Bennett, 12 years
Gary Lloyd, 11 years
Keith Belford, 10 years
Marjorie Powers, 10 years
David Russo, 10 years
Lakeshia Caster, 9 years
Erika McLean-Nixon, 9 years
Shawn Wood, 9 years
Michael James, 6 years
Chante Franklin, 5 years
Matthew A. Lyga, 4 years
Karen Ortiz, 4 years
Raquel Overstreet, 4 years
Theresa M. Sanders, 4 years
Philip W. Thomas, 4 years
Jessica Tirado, 4 years
Michelle Lyde-Smith, 3 years
Kristy Sinkovich, 3 years
KarlyRose Taylor, 3 years
Raheem Ahmed, 2 years
Mason Bush, 2 years
Montaya Cheeks, 2 years
Shawnte Heath, 2 years
Tiasha Jones, 2 years
Stacey Littlejohn, 2 years
Monique Maxwell, 2 years
Glenn Paige Sr., 2 years
Ta'Quana Spearman, 2 years
Wendy Sufra, 2 years
Paul Virgo, 2 years
Trishena Waters, 2 years
Kendra Andrews, 1 year
Valerie Barnett, 1 year
Timothy Brown, 1 year
Gregory Brunson, 1 year

Keith Dauch, 1 year
Shelia Hilton, 1 year
Brooke Hungerford, 1 year
Jamell Ivester, 1 year
Michelle Milner, 1 year
Joy L. Rice, 1 year
Reginald Richardson, 1 year
Marquet Sutton, 1 year
Javon White, 1 year

December 2016

Gretchen Elder, 14 years
Eric Albizu, 10 years
Mary Hall, 10 years
Jalita Manning, 10 years
Brian Johnson, 7 years
Melanie Reddick, 7 years
Sharon Mitchell, 6 years
Christina McMillan, 4 years
Robert Mumford, 4 years
Elizabeth Acevedo, 3 years
Robert Bulls, 3 years
Justin Malik, 3 years
Deija Sanders, 3 years
Corey Woodson, 3 years
Quashea Hanna, 2 years
Karlinda Jones, 2 years
Kevin Moreland, 2 years
Seleka Clark, 1 year
Karrel Fletcher, 1 year
John Frederick, 1 year
Kade Gibbs Jr., 1 year
Arthur Jackson, 1 year
Terrence Jackson, 1 year
Lakeisha Kinsey, 1 year
Janee Lennox, 1 year
Matthew Markowicz, 1 year
Taylor Martin, 1 year
Angela Mounds, 1 year
Amy Nagle, 1 year
Brian Peters, 1 year
Nakima Reece, 1 year
Antonio Rigual, 1 year
Matthew Rosello, 1 year
Minecia Scott, 1 year
Ian Smyth, 1 year
Janea Snipes, 1 year
Dawn Stephenson, 1 year
Gary Stewart, 1 year
Willa Sutton, 1 year
John Thomas, 1 year
Sammy Woods, 1 year

Visit [Facebook.com/ContinuumConnecticut](https://www.facebook.com/ContinuumConnecticut) for the full photo albums.



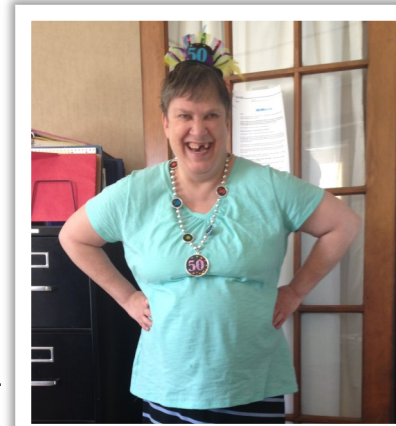
This year's **Employee Appreciation Dinner** was quite the scene! If you add up all the years of service that the night's honorees have spent with Continuum, it wouldn't be a stretch to say that this Agency truly inspires dedication in its staff.



Residents had a blast doing outdoor activities this summer. **Mental Health Services' Resident Council** (first in 2nd row) had their annual cookout at Lighthouse Point Park and **Developmental Disability Services** took residents for their yearly weekend-long adventure at **Camp Harkness** (pictured above).



Competitive game of volleyball at the **Resident Council cookout**.



Nifty, nifty. Look who's 50! "I feel great about turning 50. I had a party with my friends and I was the life of the party. Woo hoo!"
- Julie, Maple Street program



The guys at the **Michael Street Program (MSP)** explored different **career paths** by visiting the East Haven Police and Fire Departments. The Fire Dept. was so impressed with MSP's enthusiasm and questions that they said they may go to MSP to present again.



At **Developmental Disability Services' advocacy meeting**, residents discussed the importance of equality and treating others how you would want to be treated. Group members wrote about their dreams and wishes, then pasted them to a poster board. Everyone enjoyed explaining the importance of what they wrote (above & bottom right).



Mental illness is often associated with chronic medical conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and obesity due to lifestyle and medications. People with serious mental illness tend to die 25 years younger than the general population due to these critical health issues. Continuum established the Health and Wellness Department in November 2015 to directly address this health crisis afflicting the people we serve.

Continuum's Health and Wellness department provides health and nutrition consultations and trainings as well as smoking cessation and fitness classes (yoga and bootcamp) to Continuum clients, staff, and outside agencies in the Greater New Haven area that serve the mentally ill and homeless populations.

The team also offers monthly Wellness Wednesday workshops in the administrative office to teach staff how to model a healthy lifestyle for residents, discuss health-related topics and share tasty, healthy food samples.

MEET OUR HEALTH AND WELLNESS DEPARTMENT

Over the past year, the Health and Wellness Department has been responsible for quite a few successful lifestyle transformations. People have lost significant amounts of weight by increasing physical activity and following the plans offered in one-on-one diet consultations — someone lost 15 pounds in two months.

A few people were even able to get off of their diabetes medication as a result of recommended diet modifications and bootcamp class attendance. [See Gary's Story on the next page.]

If you need help resisting the urge for comfort foods, want some workout tips, or need guidance on your wellness journey, please feel free to reach out to the Health and Wellness Department. They are always available to offer inspiration and motivation.



Shelley Halligan, Director of Health & Wellness
shalligan@continuumct.org
 Pete Schmid, Wellness Coordinator
pschmid@continuumct.org
 Lindsay Slosser, Health & Wellness Specialist
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Gary Stewart was lying in his prison bunk in 2008 when he found himself unable to move, though he needed to use the restroom desperately.

GARY'S STORY

A diabetic attack had temporarily paralyzed him.

The diabetes diagnosis was yet another addition to the series of setbacks Gary had experienced in his life up to that point.

A former high school and college football star who went on to play at the professional level for a couple of U.S. Football League teams, Gary eventually made it all the way to the NFL in the 1980s. He played five games for the Miami Dolphins before breaking his ankle in 10 places.

A few years after his career-ending injury, both of his parents died in close succession and he lost his will to live. He found solace in drugs and alcohol but those vices led him to jail. Gary's depression worsened with diabetes being added to his burdens.

After incarceration, several drug treatment programs, and many relapses, Gary eventually got supportive housing through human services nonprofit The Connection. He was later hired as a Recovery Support Specialist through Continuum's South Central Peer Services.

One day, Elsa Ward, assistant director of South Central Peer Services, had to send him home from work because of diabetes-related complications. He was in such bad shape that he could not come into work the following day. Elsa insisted he speak to Shelley Halligan, director of Health and Wellness.

"Before, I would dread getting up. Now, I get up ready for life."

"I tell anyone who talks to me about Continuum that I love them dearly because they have given me my life back. Shelley [Halligan] and Elsa Ward – it started with them."

Shelley put Gary on a diet plan that required cutting back on unhealthy foods like fried chicken, and incorporating more greens. She encouraged him to walk and exercise more. He began attending the Health and Wellness team's bootcamp classes regularly. Then he took charge of his own health – reading food nutrition labels, cutting out sugar, and creating his own fitness plan inspired by his old football workouts.

A month into his lifestyle change, Gary's shirts fit him like dresses. "Now, I need a new belt," Gary laughs.

Four months later, he was able to get off of his diabetic medication. After six months, the doctor said he may no longer need any diabetic treatment at all and that he should continue watching his sugar and doing what he's doing.

"I'm so excited about all this because you hear about exercise and diet change and it sounds like a broken record. I'm living proof that it's not a fluke. It works."

Now, Gary is heavily involved with Narcotics Anonymous and does work that enables him to give back, a lifelong dream. He serves as a role model to the men he works with as a Recovery Support Specialist at Continuum's A Common Bond Program. He has inspired some of the men to work out at the track. They now walk to places to where they previously asked for rides. One man joined a gym.

Gary credits his healthy lifestyle with his new positive mindset. "Before, I would dread getting up. Now I get up ready for life."

