



Connections. Community. Mental Wellness.

PATHWAYS

Prime Time House Newsletter

Fall 2024

PRIME TIME HOUSE ANNOUNCES AFFILIATION

The Board of Directors of Prime Time House is pleased to announce that the agency has affiliated with The Connection Inc., in Middletown, to create a strategic alliance. This alliance aims to strengthen Prime Time House's infrastructure and address the growing mental health needs of the community. Pooling resources and expertise will provide more comprehensive and effective mental health services, enhancing the overall well-being of Prime Time House members and the greater community.

program profiles, and community culture. One of the most important goals was the development of relationships/partnerships to support membership growth, strengthen programming, and increase financial sustainability. Toward this end, the Board of Directors hired consultant Anne Ruwet, in January 2024, to lead a Transition Committee to explore several potential agencies that would best fit the agency's future, including a clear understanding of the value of its existing programs and its members. Of equal importance was the need for financial



The Connection

Prime Time House Board President Jeff Geddes stated: *"This is an exciting and vital juncture for Prime Time House, as this affiliation will capitalize on growth opportunities to meet the community's increasing mental health needs while continuing to support the overall well-being of our current members."*

This affiliation was a result of a three-year strategic plan, completed in June of 2023, which highlighted specific initiatives for Prime Time House such as sustainability,

stability, familiarity with the community, ability to provide strong and effective leadership, and a willingness to invest in the future of Prime Time House. This diligent exploration led to the selection of The Connection Inc., which possesses a shared focus on mental health, is experienced with a similar target population, and offers complimentary services that will enhance the overall impact of this affiliation.

A Letter of Agreement signed by both agencies on September 16, initiated this



The Connection

much anticipated partnership. Prime Time House will retain its name, location and non-profit status. More importantly, 100% of donations will continue to be used for Prime Time House programs.

The Connection mission is building safe, healthy, caring communities and inspiring people to reach their full potential as productive and valued citizens. With 45 unique programs, throughout Connecticut, the Connection has developed operational systems to ensure that services are high quality and effective. With Quality Improvement teams in place, they continuously monitor outcomes, and client satisfaction. Interventions for improvements are immediately put in place should deficiencies be noted.

Their diverse range of services include eight residential and community-based Behavioral Health programs; nineteen Housing and Homeless Services, which includes the operation of supportive Housing for Families in the Torrington area.; five Family Support Services, both residential and community based; and twelve Community Justice, work release and community based programs.

Under the leadership of Chief Executive Officer Lisa Dematteis-Lepore, The Connection operates with a strong financial stability of \$60 million, and has a diverse stream of funding from 60 state, federal, town and foundation grants.

It's robust internal support departments include Property Management, Quality and

Risk Management, Management Information Systems and Information Technology, Finance, Human Resources, Training and Consultation, Communications and Development which will all be available to enhance Prime Time House's current operations. As well, its clinically skilled, long-tenured staff will be accessible and present to support Prime Time staff.

“On behalf of The Connection board of directors and our entire staff team, we are truly excited with this wonderful opportunity to affiliate with Prime Time House! Prime Time House and The Connection share a unified Mission in Connecticut, serving the most vulnerable citizens.



From the moment I stepped into the PTH Clubhouse, the environment of a safe, caring and home inspired environment truly touched my heart, and I knew then that together our organizations would align. Together we will combine our resources and expertise to enhance our overall impact in our beautiful state.”

- Lisa Dematteis-Lepore

The agency was formed in Middletown in 1972 by social advocates Kätchen Coley and Nancy Flanner, as a community response to the need for continued safe housing for people after exiting treatment programs. Even in 1972, our founders recognized that long term recovery requires on-going, multi-faceted support.

THE NORTHWEST CORNER GAVE!

20 generous donors raised a total of \$5,280 during the Northwest Corner Gives 2024 campaign. This was matched with \$5,000 by the Northwest CT Community Foundation, who organized this social giving platform, held from July 8 through the 28.

These funds will enable us to expand our art therapy program here in our clubhouse. Two years ago Northwest Corner Gives enabled us to raise \$10,000 to offer art therapy classes at Five Points Center for Visual Arts, ending with an exhibition at Five Points Annex. Despite this resourceful partnership, transporting attendees to Five Points proved to be difficult. Having to leave our campus was problematic for many members who wanted to participate.

On the heels of this successful year of art therapy we decided to create an art studio equipped with the supplies and workspace in our Clubhouse. Art Educator & Therapist Jenna Gonzalez will teach classes here, in continuation to the classes she offered at Five Points. These classes enable those challenged with mental health disorders to engage in a weekly art therapy class, where they can explore their emotions in a safe and healing environment while also developing self-esteem, communication skills, and trauma-processing capabilities.

We are very appreciative to our generous donors and to the Northwest CT Community Foundation for partnering with us on this program.

“Giving is most blessed and most acceptable when the donor remains completely anonymous.” - Maimonides



ANGELS AMONG US

During the time frame of the Northwest Corner Gives campaign, a phone message returned resulted in the generous gift of \$10,000 to be used for our art therapy program. The donor expressed the desire to make this anonymous gift directly to us and not through the Community Foundation. Because of this selfless act of generosity, our art therapy program will help members for years to come. Our heartfelt gratitude to this benevolent donor.

ENHANCING MENTAL WELLNESS THROUGH SUMMER FUN

Prime Time House offers social, recreational, wellness, and advocacy programs encouraging members to develop healthy relationships and social skills to support their recovery, health, and wellness. These activities are meant to improve mood, reduce stress and anxiety, and help with sleep. Many help with cognitive function, self-esteem, and coping ability.

Summer was a particularly social season at Prime Time House, which hosted various recreational activities to ease the everyday

stresses of life, reduce anxiety and encourage camaraderie and friendship. Noteworthy events on campus included picnics on Memorial Day, 4th of July, and Labor Day, a talent show, a Staff Appreciation Day, and a summer dance. Away from campus, members went to MT. Tom and Burr Pond, went bowling and mini golfing. Wellness activities included a creative writing group, art classes, yoga, hiking, baking, movies & popcorn, mindful movement, nutritional cooking, meditation, forest bathing, gardening, and bingo!



Summer Picnics



Fourth of July



Outdoor Activities



Staff Appreciation Day



Talent Show



Burr Pond



PRIME FINDS Home for the Holidays 2024

LOURDES IN LITCHFIELD WELCOMES US BACK



Pilgrim Hall at Lourdes in Litchfield will once again be transformed into a holiday shopping bazaar filled with donated treasures. Opening this year for our ninth year, the store has become a Litchfield County holiday tradition.

November 16 - December 29
Tuesday - Saturday: 10 am - 4 pm
Sunday: 11 am - 4 pm
Closed Thanksgiving Day
Christmas Eve: 10 am - 1 pm
Closed Christmas Day

**LOURDES OF LITCHFIELD LOCATED
AT 83 MONTFORT ROAD (RTE. 118)
LITCHFIELD CT**



JOIN US AT

PRIME FINDS Home for the Holidays

Donate gently used, high quality furniture, home & holiday décor.

Sponsor the store. Sponsorship is a great way to get the store off to a great start and demonstrate your support for our organization who is at the forefront of caring for those struggling with their mental wellness.

Volunteer as a Sales Associate or Cashier at the store. It is rewarding and a wonderful way to demonstrate your care for those struggling with their mental wellness.

Shop unique goods at great prices. 100% of the proceeds benefit the programs at Prime Time House.



For schedule updates and special events check www.facebook.com/primefindslitchfield

SPONSORS WHO JOINED AS OF SEPT. 19, 2024

Presenting Sponsor:



Location Sponsor:



Storage Sponsor:



Tree Sponsors: John & Luce Jakimetz

Candle Sponsors: Northwest Hills Chrysler, Jeep LLC | SoundWorks & Security LLC

Wreath Sponsors: IAAB | Barron Financial Group LLP | Burlington Construction Co., Inc. | Jerry & Bette Geci | Michael Kovalchik & Susan Vontell | Northwest Hills Credit Union, Inc. | Sue Rea | Anne Ruwet Consulting Services | Kathi Weinstein

Friends of Prime Time House: Judi Armstrong | Ken & Cara Blazier | Bowen Medicare Division of Brooks, Todd & McNeil, Inc. | Brooks, Todd & McNeil, Inc. | Lucy Dobson | Doyle's Medical Supply, LLC | Eastside Electric, Inc. | Lisa Ferris & Lance Leifert | Thomas & Susan McGowan | Thurston Rowe Funeral Home Inc.

SUPPORT US AS A SPONSOR

Join our generous sponsors above to advertise your business and demonstrate your community support for an organization who is at the forefront of caring for those with mental illness.

To sponsor visit www.primetimehouse.org, scan the QR code, or contact Kathi Weinstein at kweinstein@primetimehouse.org



Scan to sponsor

DONATIONS ACCEPTED

We know what sells and what doesn't. **People want items in pristine condition, free of stains, cracks, chips, holes and tears.** Because there's no accounting for taste, consider re-gifting items you received but are not to your liking. This brand new merchandise often sells instantly!

Please do not drop off items at our storage site or store location when unattended. For a complete list of what we accept please visit our website www.primetimehouse.org/prime-finds-popup/. If you have a question about an item, please send pictures to kweinstein@primetimehouse.org.

IT IS FUN TO VOLUNTEER!

No matter your talents or how few hours you can offer, we could use your help. **The pop-up store is mainly successful because of the dedication of volunteers who give their time and talents during the busy holiday season.** To keep the store open is no easy task. Beginning November 1, we have two weeks to set up the store. This involves hanging garlands and lights, trimming Christmas trees, moving the goods from storage to Pilgrim Hall, unpacking, cleaning, pricing, and staging the items. A superb and talented group led by Jeff Geddes is engaged in doing this. This group continues to price and stage as new donations arrive when the store is operating. Once open, we must staff the 206 hours, needing three volunteers per shift. Volunteers walk through the store to ensure everything is in order, cash-out customers, accept donations, tidy the displays, greet shoppers, and help with purchases.

All volunteers are required to attend a brief training before they work. If you would like to volunteer, please reach out to **Roberta Witty** at rjwitty43@gmail.com, or call 860-921-7250.



We Will Miss You Jackie

When the idea was proposed ten years ago to run a pop-up store, the 100 Million Dollar Question was, “Who will find all the volunteers, and who will schedule them?” Prime Time House Advisory Committee member Jackie Miller volunteered to take on this formidable task. Earlier this year, Jackie shared that she and her husband Phil were moving, so 2023 would be her last year. Jackie, being the consummate volunteer, even recruited Roberta Witty to be our new Volunteer Coordinator. Thank you, Roberta, for following in such capable footsteps. Jackie, you will be missed more than you know. We wish you and Phil continued health, new adventures, and happiness as you nest in Pennsylvania.



THANK YOU TO OUR POP-UP VOLUNTEERS AND SPONSOR

On June 27, we gathered to celebrate, appreciate, and thank all who contributed to the success of our 2023 pop-up store. We raised \$67,918 in gross sales with an additional \$19,616 in sponsorship, netting \$79,576 for the year. During the eight years of running this event, over \$310,000 was contributed to support the programs at Prime Time House. The pop-up has not only raised much-needed funds but has also created awareness about our programs. Of equal importance are the relationships we have established. With nearly 50 sponsors providing the seed money to cushion the store before we sold our first item, we are incredibly grateful to Torrington Savings Bank for being our presenting sponsor; to O&G Industries for their generous donation of storage space, to Lourdes of Litchfield Shrine for welcoming us to Pilgrim Hall; and to Berta Andrulis Mette for coordinating her friends with trucks to completely empty the storage space, bringing the goods to Pilgrim Hall.;

Steve Jobs said, "Great things in business are never done by one person. They're done by a team of people." This amply



applies to this six-week endeavor held during the height of the holidays. A Pop-up Planning Committee was formed to take on the many tasks of volunteer recruitment, training, publicity, sponsorship solicitation, and handling donations. The collective effort of the Planning Committee, with each member contributing their unique skills and dedication, was instrumental in the success of the 2023 Pop-up. From coordinating events to keeping the store beautifully staged, all happened because of the talents of this committee.



The 2023 Pop-up Committee consisted of **Judi Armstrong, Christina Emery, Jeff Geddes, Luce Jakimetz, Pat Kral, Laura Lasker, Pucci McGill, Susan McGowan, Jackie Miller, Kathy Minck, Sue Rea, Nancy Rogers, Julith Sink, and Kathi Weinstein.**

Also acknowledged were the host of volunteers who staffed the store, not to mention those who worked behind the scenes to process donations and keep the store beautifully staged. ***Our heartfelt thanks to all of them.***



A DEMONSTRATION OF CARE AND COMPASSION



Amanda King, of Litchfield, was an intern at Prime Time House over the summer, before entering her senior year at UCONN, where she is majoring in Psychology. While here, she became touched by the plight of a particular member who recently experienced homelessness. Using the backpack which saw her through high school, Amanda filled the bag with a refillable water bottle, snack foods like peanuts and beef jerky, socks, personal care products and a first aid kit. She dropped off this wonderful “care-package” at Prime Time House for the member. Thank you Amanda for this demonstration of care and compassion. We wish her continued success in her educational pursuits towards a masters degree in art therapy.

A GENEROUS BEQUEST TO FILL PRIME FINDS

Several years ago we were contacted by Zeus Goldberg of Litchfield who indicated that he would like to bequeath the contents of his entire condominium at 1 Emerson Court to Prime Time House to sell at our pop-up store. Zeus, a NYC restaurateur of three restaurants, a brilliant photographer, and explorer, passed away on June 9 at the age of 87. His home was filled with his photography and crafted folk art from his life’s worth of adventures. Sorting through the goods is no easy task, however this year’s pop-up will benefit from his unique furniture and treasures. Take a peek at the pictures below. In addition to the items shown the cabinets were filled with Portuguese pottery, china, glassware, and cookware. We are extremely appreciative that Zeus thought to give this meaningful gift to us.



LEGACY GIFT

Continue your generous support beyond your lifetime through a legacy gift, making Prime Time House an important part of your life story. For information contact Kathi Weinstein, Director of Development, kweinstein@primetimehouse.org.

HONORING THOSE DEDICATED TO MENTAL WELLNESS

On July 27, Prime Time House celebrated our annual Garden Party. The party was held inside our air-conditioned dining room, providing respite from the day's humidity. Honored this year were **Turi Rostad** and member **Jennifer Hale**.

Turi dedicated herself to making the Litchfield Hills a better place to live and work. A beloved character in her hometown of Norfolk and throughout Litchfield County, Turi wears her heart on her sleeve and would give you the shirt off her back, which she did at an art auction when she donated her paint-laden work shirt for the auction.



Turi was so inspired by what healthcare workers did during COVID-19 that she began painting a series of “star” paintings. They were auctioned last year at “Hidden Stars Among Us.” The Norfolk community

rallied around her, as they always do, raising over \$21,000 for Prime Time House in a few short hours.

Turi served on the Board of Trustees and joined our Advisory Committee. Throughout her involvement with Prime Time House, she has been a stalwart ambassador who has inspired countless individuals through her commitment to improving the lives of those with mental illness. It was indeed an honor to recognize Turi for being a pillar of support for our mental health community.

In describing Jennifer, the metaphor of a “chrysalis” was used as it means a place or period in which someone or something is quietly, safely, perhaps invisibly, transforming into its authentic, final, fully developed self. This is what Jennifer did while at Prime Time House. She struggled when she first came to Prime Time House but emerged as a butterfly. Jennifer worked hard while here and never said no to a project. She is a take-charge doer and has inspired others to get involved. Jennifer is a strong advocate for herself and for those impacted by mental illness. She acts as a role model, mentor, advocate, and motivator to individuals in mental health and co-occurring substance-use recovery, bettering herself through education and determination to get there. She is employed as a Recovery Support Specialist by the Acute Behavioral Unit at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, where she provides support and encouragement to patients, never hesitating to share her personal mental health journey with them. Her extensive knowledge of state resources and calm and gentle demeanor enable patients and staff to trust and value her. Jennifer began as someone who needed daily support to someone who now gives daily support. As a wife and mother of four chil-

dren, Jennifer symbolizes hope and inspiration for all those struggling to succeed. It was an honor to acknowledge Jennifer, our beautiful red-headed monarch butterfly, for exemplifying Prime Time House's success as a chrysalis for transformation.

The celebration culminated with a special recognition. State Representative Michelle Cook presented citations from the State of Connecticut to Turi and Jennifer, acknowledging their significant contributions to Prime Time House and the mental health community.



PARTNERSHIPS TO SECURE OUR SUCCESS



This **grant of \$15,000** allowed Prime Time House to complete the final phase in its affiliation process with The Connection Inc. by providing us with additional financial resources to secure this partnership, which will strengthen our ability to better serve our members.



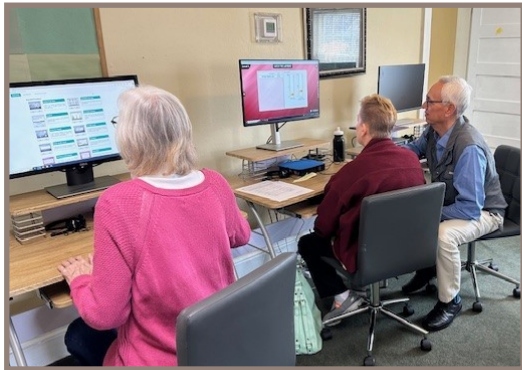
Since the outdoors is an extension of our Clubhouse during the summer months, this **\$1,500 grant** allowed us to purchase a new gas grill for outdoor gatherings. These summer gatherings are not just events but crucial for our members' well-being. Communal eating creates social interaction that can stabilize mood, help members feel grounded, and connect with each other.



This **\$10,000 grant** will allow us to help our housing clients with application fees and security deposits. Clients must apply through Prime Time House housing programs, and a committee will handle the awards process. Due to clients' low incomes and the shortage of affordable and available rentals, financial assistance will help in their search for safe and affordable housing.



A **\$1,000 grant** was awarded to support supplementary expenses incurred as members strive to meet their full capacity through education and employment. This grant plays a vital role in empowering our members to achieve their goals. Bus passes, educational course application fees and exams, stipends for work-related clothing, or the cost of obtaining a driver's license are examples of assistance needed.



SHARPENING COGNITIVE FUNCTIONS

The HAPPYneuron Method, called **Prime Minds**, here at Prime Time House, has been a welcomed addition to our Wellness Programs. This program stimulates the five main cognitive functions: memory, attention, language, executive functions (reasoning, logical thinking), and visual and special skills.

Sessions include personalized training, supervised sessions and is a progressive program. It includes a tracking tool to check progress, personalized guidance directing members to the most appropriate games based on their profile, and is motivational, as training should be conducted over the long time.

Initially only open to Prime Time members, community providers are encouraged to identify individuals who would benefit from this cognitive learning program. For further information contact: Linda Bellmar, Clubhouse Director, (860) 618-2479. This program was funded by the City of Torrington, Torrington Community Impact Grants & Partnership Projects.