



**Working
with
DESK**



**Food
for all.
Over 1000
meals**



**Dan's
garden
plan**

CONNECTIONS

Winter 2022

**INTERFAITH
VOLUNTEER
CARE GIVERS
OF GREATER
NEW HAVEN**



Holiday tree on New Haven Green just after sunset. (Photo: Richard Davies).

Welcome 2023

Giving. Gratitude. Gardens.

I hope that you and your family have enjoyed the holiday season.

In this issue of “Connections” we are putting a special focus on “Thanksgiving for All.”

As part of an extraordinary community collaboration on Thanksgiving morning, IVCG partnered with DESK (Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen), worked with more than a hundred volunteers, and delivered meals to over one thousand seniors in Greater New Haven.

The day was marked by a deep commitment to those we serve.



Volunteers at Temple Street about to deliver over 1,000 meals.

Appointments

In October the IVCG Board voted to appoint me as Executive Director. I'm honored to be a leader in our shared mission of giving care to seniors

throughout the Greater New Haven community.

We are also pleased to welcome Nate Bixby to the Board of Directors.

Garden plan

Our commitment to those we serve is growing and evolving, and I am proud to tell you more about an innovative new partnership with the Connecticut Garden Collaborative.

I have long believed that to explore a garden is to know our own humanity. One of my lifelong passions is to advance public horticulture as a way to improve the lives of many people.

“Advance wellness and mobility.”

The new garden program aims to advance environmental understanding and improve accessibility to Connecticut's beautiful parks and public gardens.

It will be part of a commitment to advance wellness and mobility for seniors in New Haven County.

In doing this work we acknowledge past inequities associated with public green spaces and believe that the garden collaborative will offer positive opportunities for

people to contribute and support ecological sustainability.

We have kicked off the 2023 program year with the “Senior Garden Experience”.

A group of seniors have already enjoyed several meetings with IVCG's first artist in residence, Doug Jones.

Participants will create art together as we work towards a spring garden tour and tree planting.

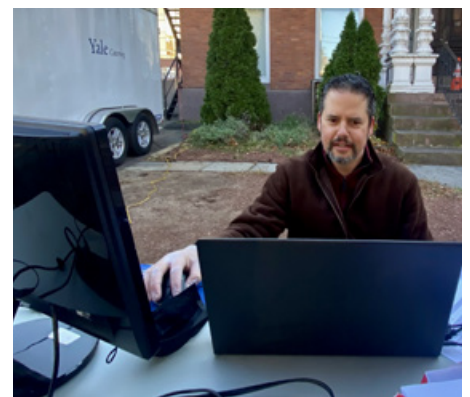
Strengthening

At IVCG we are also strengthening our commitment to existing programs, including Mae's Closet for durable medical equipment, Transportation Plus which assists with rides to and from medical appointments, Grocery Bag Delivery and incontinence product support for seniors in need.

These programs are all essential to who we are and what we do.

Wishing you all a Happy and fruitful New Year.

Dan.



Dan Camenga on duty Thanksgiving morning.

Thanksgiving

Helping hands

The work on Thanksgiving Day began early on a clear crisp morning.

Working with well over one hundred volunteers, IVCG Executive Director Dan Camenga and his partners at DESK, Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen in New Haven, pulled off an ambitious goal.

“Over 100 volunteers.”



Holiday Meals boxed up and ready for delivery.

They coordinated the preparation and delivery of over one thousand meals to seniors in the city and several nearby towns.

Among the scores of volunteers who showed up at our temporary headquarters under a bright blue marquee on Temple Street were Jere Sirkis and her family.

“It’s an annual tradition for us to deliver meals for people who need them,” she said.

“We’ve been doing this for seven years. We were looking for a new tradition to give back to the community when the kids were little.

It’s a nice feeling. We’ve met some really interesting old people.”

Jere and family personally delivered a dozen meals.



Jere Sirkis with her husband and kids. Thanksgiving for All volunteers.

Several organizations deserve a special mention.

First Congressional Church in West Haven distributed more than 300 meals.

Yale Hospitality provided 750 meals and Hopkins School baked more than a hundred pies.

“Coach” Bill DeRosa and his friends at the New Haven Athletic Club were a big part of the effort to make sure that many people who live alone and don’t cook for themselves had a special meal on Thanksgiving Day.

“I bought 350 delivery trays and we used every single one of them.” he said.

Bill and his energetic team of helpers worked out of the kitchen and front room that was generously donated by Knights of St. Patrick.

“Fifty people helped out.”

“We made special meals with turkey, yams, mashed potatoes, gravy, and mixed vegetables,” he said.

“IVCG gave us the names and addresses of people who needed them.



Bill DeRosa at Knights of St. Patrick kitchen on Thanksgiving Day.

Fifty people helped out with the meals and that didn’t include the drivers.

There’s a need and this is part of what we do as Americans.”

DESK friends

Working together with DESK

What we do has a great deal to do with the organizations we partner with.

DESK (Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen) New Haven is a good example.

During Thanksgiving for All and on food delivery programs through the year IVCG and DESK work together to improve the lives of clients.

Both our non-profit organizations care for and serve people who need help and are often forgotten by the community at large.



*Executive Director Steve Werlin
Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen.*

IVCG reaches out to homebound seniors and others who need a ride to a medical appointment or help with the daily essentials of life.

DESK's mission is "to serve people experiencing

homelessness or living in poverty by providing food assistance and services that promote health, community, and equity."



*DESK Volunteer Coordinator
Ashley Burkell.*

"In New Haven about a quarter of the population is living in poverty and one-in-five have self-reported that they experienced food insecurity or hunger," said DESK Executive Director Steve Werlin.

"The need is great. We know that people have trouble accessing food, especially healthy food, so it's important to connect with people."

DESK Volunteer Coordinator Ashley Burkell worked with volunteers on Thanksgiving morning to pack the meals and cars that delivered the food.

Asked if Thanksgiving for All was the biggest event of the year for DESK, she said: "100 per cent. We start talking about this in July to make

sure everything goes smoothly on the day."

"Our needs fluctuate throughout the year. Once it gets colder we see a spike in need. Once it gets hot we see the same thing.

We see fewer people on Sundays because a lot of Church organizations will handle meals those days."

"The need often depends where we are in the month, based on food stamps."

Thanksgiving for All with IVCG "gives us the opportunity to connect with homebound seniors who typically can't get down here for dinner," said Steve Werlin.

"The event originally began years ago as a way to fill in a gap that was left by Meals on Wheels which does not serve nutrition on federal holidays.

Basic need

This is a way to fulfill a basic need for those who are otherwise not getting food."

For both IVCG and DESK, Thanksgiving for All served as a magnet for new volunteers and donors. It's a good way to work with new helpers.

"Once we connect with them in efforts like this, we have a way of engaging the community more broadly in a way we haven't done before," said Werlin.

Hello Nate

Nate Bixby joins our Board

We're very pleased to welcome New Haven resident Nate Bixby to our board of directors.

He brings a wealth of experience and commitment to our leadership.

A father of one adult daughter, and a musician, Nate comes from a long line of social workers, clergy, farmers and nature lovers.

His involvement in the non-profit world has included elementary education, low-income housing and community development.



Nate Bixby at home in his garden.

Nate worked in development at Yale University, and spent 9 years as Membership Coordinator at the Peabody Museum of Natural History.

In 2003 he was a founder of Network for a Sustainable

New Haven, and currently works on projects to map and develop collaborative funding and action ecosystems for bioregional regeneration.

Nate is active as a home improvement contractor and serves on the board of directors of Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven.

"I'm pleased and honored to be joining the IVCG Board. I look forward to playing an active and constructive role in its growth," says Nate.

Volunteer with us

One of the most rewarding things about being part of our community is giving your time and receiving the gratitude of those you are helping.

Volunteer as a driver, grocery shopper or chaperone.

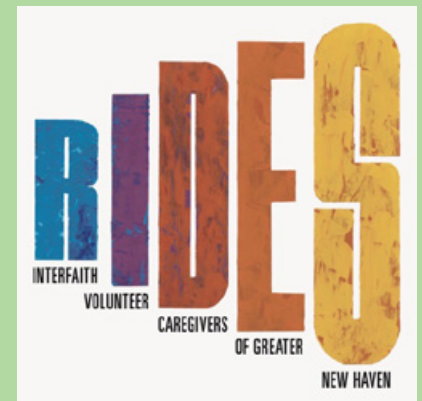
As one of our Board Members says:
"Offering rides and care to people is nourishing for the soul."

**To volunteer contact
Dan at the office:**

Phone: (203) 230-8994

**Email:
Director@carenewhaven.org**

What we do



INTERFAITH
VOLUNTEER
CARE GIVERS
OF GREATER
NEW HAVEN

30 Gillies Road,
HAMDEN CT
06517-2113

NONPROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE PAID
NEW HAVEN CT
PERMIT NO. 124

Or current resident.

**“How wonderful is it that nobody
need wait a single moment before
starting to improve the world.”**

Anne Frank

You may have thought about volunteering but wondered how you could help. Give Dan a call and you'll be surprised how you can lend a hand and start to improve someone else's world today.

Phone: 203-230-8994 today

Email: Director@carenewhaven.org

Website: www.carenewhaven.org