

INTERFAITH VOLUNTEER  
CARE GIVERS of GREATER NEW HAVEN  
WINTER 2021



## WELCOME

**Jane Ferrall**, Executive Director

Dear all~

What a challenging, yet rewarding year this has been. In 2021, volunteer service was more vital to our community than ever. Despite the many difficulties imposed by the pandemic, IVCG's dedicated team continues to provide rides, care and love—driving, calling and visiting many hundreds of people who need help and kindness in their lives.

We've helped maintain an incredibly important connection for our clients to the wider world, at a time when many other "service providers" either severely curtailed their activities, or left the field altogether. I am profoundly grateful to be part of a magnificent outpouring of generosity.

As I write this year-end letter, the omicron variant is impacting service, volunteering, and the wider economy. Perhaps the biggest change since March of 2020 is that IVCG must now rely, to a much greater extent than previously, on the services of paid drivers, in order to maintain the same number of rides. A significant percentage of our volunteers

had to stand down during the worst of the pandemic. While some have returned, others have not. Recruiting new volunteers for an in-person activity involving medical care can be trying in the best of times. Increased staff costs and the sky-rocketing price of gasoline are adding to the burden.

IVCG is one of about 850 "faith in action" volunteer caregiver agencies nationwide. The pandemic has forced a number of our fellow agencies to shut down, some permanently. We have been able, with creative use of funds and some increased contributions from temporary COVID relief, to stay on the road.

I very much hope that when you are thinking about where your donation dollars should go, you will think of us. We always say that we "make every penny squeak," but that's even more true right now. Please keep us in your prayers, now and in every season. It really helps!

I hope you have enjoyed this holiday season, and wish you all the best.

Fondly, *Jane*

### 2 | Connections

IVCG, together with our wonderful food partners, resumed a full Thanksgiving meal delivery program for this year's holiday (last year we limited deliveries to City of New Haven households).

Yale Hospitality, Christopher Martins restaurant, the New Haven Athletic Club, West Haven UCC, and the Community Dining Room in Branford cooked nearly 1100 traditional delicious Thanksgiving meals. Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen (DESK), our major partner in this project, collected hundreds of turkeys and other tasty foods— one big reason that all of the meals were free. Generous funding provided by the Marett Fund of the City of New Haven also underwrites the project.

DESK's downtown location on Temple Street once again served as the dispatch point for most of the meals. About 90 folks stepped up to volunteer to drive, arriving at DESK bright and early on Thanksgiving morning to receive their meals and drive their routes. Many of our drivers enjoy this activity every year and it's truly a family affair. Each driver received a list of 8-10 households and as many as 15 meals. Aside from a very few minor glitches, many hands made light work, and by 1 p.m. on Thanksgiving Day all the meals were delivered to appreciative households.

Being part of Thanksgiving for All is a blessing not only to those who receive, but also those who serve, as the following driver comments illustrate:

**Alison C.:** *"Thanks to you and all those who helped organize us on Thursday. You all do the heavy lifting – ours is the easy part! But easy or not, being able to pitch in even a little bit brightened the day for me. It was a joy to deliver meals, to see others get what they needed to make their day more manageable, perhaps even a bit special. With deep gratitude for all you do...."*

**Beth and Jim:** *"We loved participating from the start of meal pick up to the last delivery.*

*One daughter of a meal recipient in the Hill yelled her thanks out the door repeatedly and loudly as we made our way up the road to our next home delivery.*

*She was priceless...as is your ministry.*

*Happy Holidays to you and we look forward to next year!"*

**Rabbi Michael F.:** *"Thank you so much, as always, for making it easy to do a great mitzvah on Thanksgiving Day!"*

**Michelle D.:** *"Thanks for all that you do for others. It was an honor to assist, even though my involvement was very modest. Have a wonderful holiday!"*

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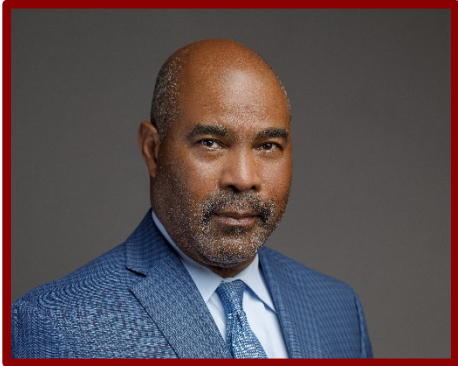
***"Thank you for being real salt of the earth New Haven people."***

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### 3 | Connections

#### Welcome, Hiram Brett!

Our latest Board member is **Hiram Brett**. We thought you might enjoy getting to know him a little bit!



Rev. Hiram hails from North Carolina and Virginia originally, but became a Yankee when he graduated from Williams College

in Massachusetts with a degree in political economy. While at Williams, Rev. Hiram was inspired by the words on the Hopkins Memorial Gate: "Climb High, Climb Far, Your Goal the Sky, Your Aim the Star."

After graduating from Williams, Rev. Hiram attended the Stanford Graduate School of Business, where he studied finance and international business. Although he enjoyed California, he returned East to be close to family. His decades-long career in business time as an energy consultant, serving as a telecommunications executive with MCI, when it was an upstart battling the giant AT&T. Eventually Hiram moved to Madison, Connecticut, where he worked for Southern New England Telecommunications in finance and strategic planning.

Rev. Hiram met his wife in Washington, D.C. early in his career, and the couple have two adult children. His faith journey began in his childhood Baptist church, moving to a Unitarian Universalist community, and

ultimately becoming part of the Dixwell Avenue Congregational UCC, where he served as a deacon and moderator.

While working at SNET's Science Park location, Rev. Hiram became acutely aware of Yale Divinity School, which was just down the hill from his office. Feeling less satisfied with the prospects of figuring out ways to sell more cell phones and service bundles, Rev. Hiram started exploring the possibility of attending the Divinity School, and after a year as a non-degree student, he embraced his call and went full-time to finish his M.Div. Rev. Hiram was ordained in the United Church of Christ. During this time, he and his wife also moved to downtown New Haven.

Rev. Hiram's first call in full-time ministry saw him become the pastor of Whitneyville UCC in Hamden. In October, 2020 he left Whitneyville to become Chaplain and Coordinator of Spiritual Care at Connecticut Mental Health Center. Rev. Hiram is a passionate proponent of self-care, which for him involves the enjoyment of music in all its forms, including live performance.

Rev. Hiram was attracted to serving on IVCG's Board because of the work we do serving vulnerable, marginalized and disadvantaged adults, while providing a sense of care and connection. Rev. Hiram hopes to lend both his business skills and spiritual background to our Board and its work. We are fortunate that this "double threat" decided to become part of our mission, and look forward to a long and fruitful relationship with Rev. Hiram.

## 4 | Connections

### Fun in 2021!

In early December, we gathered for our pre-holiday office celebration. All four of this year's IVCG interns (Carmen, Dieudonne, Dara, and Ja'nya) joined us, as did Ann and Bruce Levison and Marilyn Bergen of Mae's Closet. Rounding out the festive bunch were Nancy Elliott and Christina McLaughlin of our staff, Board Chair Marcie Dimenstein and Board Vice-Chair Richard Davies.

Celebrating the year's accomplishments with good friends and good food!



Guess who showed up at our Thanksgiving meal delivery to wish us well! Handsome Dan himself came to say hello to Katie Ferrall and the other volunteers helping on Thanksgiving morning.

Wearing our spiffy t-shirts featuring our cool new logos, IVCG volunteers and friends ran in the New Haven Road Races and did outdoor yoga this fall. Where will we see them next?!?



## 5 | Connections

### Thank You to Our Fall and Winter Donors!

The contributions of our friends, volunteers and riders touch our hearts. It's so good to know that so many of you care! Whether large or small, we know that you're making time to think about us and to show your appreciation. Our sincerest thanks to all who gave since the beginning of October:

#### Mae's Closet Donors

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