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What a Year!

It's been a wild year. In spite of everything, the songs of the holiday make me smile.

“Do You Hear What I Hear? Said the night wind to the little lamb,
Do you see what I see? Said the shepherd boy to the mighty king,
Do you know what I know? Said the king to the people everywhere,
Listen to what I say! Pray for peace, people, everywhere...”



It reminds me that we adjusted to an almost insurmountable challenge becoming fans of ZOOM. “Have you learned what I learned”? Read on for some of the highlights.

Major events to inform and celebrate:

- WOW! Virtually a great day!
- Annual Meeting with Governor Lamont as Keynote while inducting John Seagrave and the late Tim Pusch into the Chamber Hall of Fame
- 25 Days of Hope for the Holidays with WZBG
- Celebration of Success honoring Steve Reilly, Maria Gonzalez and KidsPlay

Exciting initiatives to improve the business community:

- A most effective Chamber that did not let any pandemic prevent us from helping you
- Enhanced presence on social media with far-reaching effects
- New ways to introduce you to your new best friends –Leads I, Leads II and Leads III, Small Business Council, Restaurant and Retail Coalition, Business With Breakfast, Government Relations all virtually
- Chamber leadership role as Director of the Workforce Investment Board's One-Stop Operation at American Job Center
- Member of the Board of Regents for Connecticut State Colleges & Universities

Strong affiliations to enhance resources for you:

- NW CT Economic Development Corporation
- NW Regional Workforce Investment Board
- CBIA and the Connecticut Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives
- Torrington Economic Development Corporation
- KidsPlay Children's Museum, American Mural Project
- Manufacturing Coalition, Health Council, Insurance Committee
- Connecticut State Colleges & Universities Board of Regents

Wishing you a joyful, healthy and safe New Year!

JoAnn Ryan is President & CEO of the NW CT Chamber of Commerce. You can reach her by email: joann@nwctchamberofcommerce.org or phone: 860-482-6586

THANK YOU!



25 Days of Hope for the Holidays

To provide some holiday cheer, we teamed up with FM 97.3 WZBG to award several prizes from sponsors of The Great Giveaway Business Showcase, by making it a virtual holiday promotion! Everyone needed some uplifting, support, and opportunity during these challenging times!

Each day, November 30– Christmas Eve, featured a different prize worth at least \$100. Folks were encouraged to enter to win at the NW CT Chamber's website, with an entry deadline later that day and the winner announced the next day on WZBG and Facebook. 25 very lucky winners were thrilled!

Participating businesses were given tons of publicity on FM 97.3 WZBG radio and Facebook page, as well as the Chamber's website and Facebook page.

THANK YOU TO THE COMPANIES WHO PARTICIPATED:

Nov. 30	Whiting Mills- \$100 Gift Certificate to the shops at Whiting Mills
Dec. 1	Northwest Community Bank- \$100 Gift Card to Big Y
Dec. 2	Torrington Savings Bank- \$200 Gift Certificate to Ski Sundown
Dec. 3	Hatfield & Co. Jewelers- Sterling Silver Bracelet
Dec. 4	Resource Development Associates- \$100 Gift Certificate to The Village Restaurant
Dec. 5	Venetian Restaurant- \$100 Gift Certificate to The Venetian Restaurant
Dec. 6	Brooker Memorial- Dental Gift Basket w/ Electric Toothbrush
Dec. 7	Northwest Hills Credit Union- Yeti Cooler, Travel Mugs & BBQ Set
Dec. 8	Litchfield Hills Nursery- \$100 Gift Certificate to Litchfield Hills Nursery
Dec. 9	Rowley Bar & Grill & Ollie's Pizza- 2-\$50 Gift Cards to Rowley Bar & Grill & 2-\$50 Gift Cards to Ollie's Pizza
Dec. 10	Berkshire Hathaway-Jade Athas- Lily & Vine Floral Arrangement
Dec. 11	Lowe's- Kobalt Tool Set
Dec. 12	Barron Financial Group- \$100 Gift Certificate to Litchfield Saltwater Grill
Dec. 13	Hickory Stick Book Shop- \$100 Gift Card to Hickory Stick Book Shop
Dec. 14	FM 97.3 WZBG- \$150 Gas Card courtesy of A&R Autobody
Dec. 15	KidsPlay Children's Museum- Family Membership to KidsPlay Children's Museum
Dec. 16	Staples- \$100 Gift Card to Staples
Dec. 17	Residential Resorts LLC- Kodak Waterproof Digital Camera
Dec. 18	Jersey Mike's- Bose Speaker
Dec. 19	Litchfield Bancorp- \$100 Gift Certificate to True Value of Litchfield
Dec. 20	Lowe's- Craftsman Tool Set
Dec. 21	Black Bear Music Festival- 6 Black Bear Music Festival Passes
Dec. 22	Servicemaster Albino- \$175 Gift Certificate for Carpet Cleaning
Dec. 23	SCORE- \$150 Gift Card to Saybrook Fish House & \$100 Bike Maintenance Package from Pedro's
Dec. 24	Torrington Municipal & Teachers Federal Credit Union- \$100 Gift Certificate to Catering by Gia

25 Days of Hope for the Holidays is Sponsored By:



Upcoming CHAMBER ZOOM EVENTS

Jan. 5	Small Business Council – 8 am	Jan. 19	Insurance Committee Meeting – 8 am
Jan. 6	WOW Advisory Committee Meeting – 8 am	Jan. 20	Health Council Meeting – 8 am
Jan. 7	Membership Committee Meeting – 8 am	Jan. 21	Restaurant & Retail Committee Meeting – 8 am
Jan. 8	Manufacturers' Coalition Meeting – 8 am	Jan. 25	Leads 1 – 12 noon
Jan. 11	Leads 1 – 12 noon	Jan. 26	Business with Breakfast – 8 am
Jan. 13	Leads 2 – 8 am	Jan. 27	Leads 2 – 8 am
Jan. 14	Government Relations Committee Meeting – 8 am	Jan. 28	Board of Directors Meeting – 8 am
Jan. 14	Leads 3 – 12 noon	Jan. 28	Leads 3 – 12 noon
Jan. 18	Chamber Closed for Martin Luther King Jr Day		

January 15 @ 8:00am – What you Need to Know Before the Vaccine Arrives Webinar

Guest Speakers, Ron Latorre, retired US Air Force Lieutenant Colonel, and M. Scott Furr, retired US Air Force Colonel, return to the Chamber for the second time to present a very important topic on COVID-19. They are co-founding partners of S2 Resilience Group, LLC. They have a combined 50 plus years of military leadership experience specializing in All Hazards/Emergency Response planning, training and overall resiliency.

Thank you to Arthur Mulligan of Senior Support Group and McKellan Group for introducing them to the Chamber.

New Year. New Branch!

We opened in Simsbury in late December and we are *oh-so-ready* to serve you through our drive-up window, ATM or inside by appointment. And as soon as it's possible, we will open up our beautiful new lobby with convenient hours. We look forward to meeting our new neighbors and seeing our loyal customers in Simsbury.

How can we help you? Remember, we can even make switching banks easier!



Collinsville Bank

A Division of Northwest Community Bank

Litchfield Bancorp

A Division of Northwest Community Bank

Simsbury, 741 Hopmeadow Street 860-394-2310

Avon, 101 Simsbury Road 860-677-2809

Granby, 33 Hartford Avenue 860-653-7228

New Hartford | Simsbury | Torrington | Winsted Main Office
Northwestern Regional High School Academic Branch

nwcommunitybank.com



DAVID

EMILY

LINDSAY

JAMES



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NEW STIMULUS PACKAGE



The federal government just approved a [\\$900 billion stimulus package](#) to deliver economic relief to small businesses and Americans impacted by the pandemic. The package includes the following support for businesses and employees:

- \$325 billion for small businesses, including \$284 billion in loans through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)
- Direct payment checks of up to \$600 per adult and child
- Enhanced unemployment insurance benefits of \$300 per week
- Extension of the eviction moratorium and \$25 billion for rental assistance
- Extension of the tax credit for employers offering paid sick leave

The new round of PPP funding provides a great opportunity for companies that did not receive a forgivable PPP loan earlier this year. It also allows businesses with 300 or few employees that experienced more than 25% revenue loss in the first, second or third quarter in 2020 to secure a second forgivable PPP loan.

The PPP will continue to be managed by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), and loans will once again

be secured through an SBA-approved bank, credit union or fintech. Here is a list of participating lenders.

I recommend you begin working with an approved lender now as there could be high demand for this program. For those companies applying for a second PPP loan, working with the same financial institution could speed up the application process for your business.

More information should be available on the [SBA website](#) soon, but in the meantime the Connecticut Small Business Development Center (SBDC) will host multiple webinars to help you understand what information you may need to apply for a PPP loan. [Click here to register](#) for one of the webinars.

The PPP has been a huge boost to Connecticut businesses that continue to struggle under the economic realities brought on by this pandemic. To date, Connecticut companies and nonprofits have secured almost 65,000 PPP loans worth approximately \$6.7 billion. I strongly encourage businesses and nonprofits to remain aggressive and take advantage of this worthwhile program without delay.

Sincerely,

David Lehman, Commissioner
david.lehman@ct.gov, (860) 500-2310



U.S. Small Business
Administration

RESOLUTIONS

Lester Louis Brown, an American journalist said, "Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss it you will land among the stars." This seems appropriate as we embark on this New Year, refreshed and raring to go, having survived a most challenging year.

Here are the Chamber's Resolutions to encourage and motivate you to do something you've always wanted to do but somehow just didn't fit into your schedule. These surely will help your business grow and make you a star.

Upgrade your business plan... We have become creative, innovative and flexible because of COVID-19. The world of work has changed and we must adjust to that reality. A sound business plan is essential for your business success in 2021. If you need help with its preparation, be sure to take advantage of SCORE for assistance.

Review the 2021 Legislative Agenda... Help us to Build Back Connecticut's Economy! In our effort to accomplish this goal, the Government Relations Committee is preparing the agenda with attention to the availability of the Vaccine, promoting a pro-business policy, pushing for broadband and attention to the arts and culture so prominent in the region.

Expand your mind... Watch for the schedule of Webinars on a variety of topics to assist with your responses to doing business virtually, in some cases with employees working from home. Join our Leads Teams that are also booming and zooming!

Improve your body... The Chamber Health Council vows to help you stay healthy in this precarious environment. True to our mission, we will continue to work with public officials to include you in on the zoom meetings with leaders in the healthcare field that will address the issues around health care.

Think optimistically... Remember that life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react. It is that positive, can do attitude even during this pandemic. We will continue to help with this resolution through the Small Business Coalition, the Manufacturer's Coalition, the Restaurant & Retail Coalition.

Collaborate... Together we can accomplish so much even under the current COVID-19 climate. We are fortunate to partner with vital organizations and businesses in

the private and public sector that make our initiatives possible.

Smile more... We are determined to achieve our goals with some humor. With all that we face as a region, state, country and world, let's resolve to work together to make 2021 healthy, peaceful and joyful.

Corporate

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Dymax Corporation
Eastside Electric, Inc.
FuelCell Energy, Inc.
Innovative Health Concepts
Litchfield Bancorp
National Iron Bank
Northwest Community Bank
Nuvance Health
Sharon Hospital
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THREE COMMUNITY BANKS TO OPERATE AS NORTHWEST COMMUNITY BANK

On January 4, 2021, three affiliated banks that have operated under the common ownership of Connecticut Mutual Holding Company became one bank. The resulting bank, Northwest Community Bank, continues to be a wholly-owned subsidiary of Connecticut Mutual Holding Company, and now operates all offices of Collinsville Bank, a Division of Northwest Community Bank; and all offices of Litchfield Bancorp, a Division of Northwest Community Bank. Branch staff will remain with each bank Division, and customer service will not be interrupted.



President and CEO of Connecticut Mutual Holding Company and Northwest Community Bank Stephen Reilly says, "This restructuring strengthens our ability to continue as a well-capitalized, locally-owned, mutual bank. As it has been with our individual banks, relationship banking will remain central to our mission, and community involvement is a core value of our bank." A charitable foundation will be founded to expand community support throughout the region.

Northwest Community Bank, has been headquartered in Winsted, Connecticut since 1860. The bank has branches in Avon, Granby, New Hartford, Simsbury and Torrington and an academic branch at Northwestern Regional High School in Winsted.

Litchfield Bancorp was founded in 1850. Litchfield Bancorp, a Division of Northwest Community Bank, operates in Litchfield, Lakeville, Torrington, Washington Depot and Watertown, Connecticut.

Collinsville Bank was established in 1853. Collinsville Bank, a Division of Northwest Community Bank, has branches in Canton, Collinsville and Farmington, Connecticut.

CONTACT:
Stephen P. Reilly, President & CEO
Northwest Community Bank 860-379-7561



Happy New Year!

I believe we are all looking forward to a brighter 2021.

With the close of a passing year, the time for introspection and opportunities is always top of mind. Looking back, I am proud of the work TSB employees did to assist our communities when they needed us most. We will continue to work hard for you, our customers, to achieve your financial goals.



While we are still amid a pandemic, with 2021 we have renewed hope. Hope for health as vaccines are distributed. Hope for financial stability as additional Economic Impact Payments are delivered and a 3rd PPP cycle opens. Hope for the well-being of our employees, customers, and community as we come together and look forward to promising days ahead.

We continue to make progress on many exciting initiatives. A new branch in Bristol, CT is planned to open in mid-2021 to expand our delivery of best-in-class products and services into a new community.

As one of the longest standing community banks in the area, we are committed to mutuality. Our vision is to be a leader in strengthening and supporting the financial well-being of our customers and communities. We will continue to work along side you today and every day with refreshed optimism for a great year to come.

Lesa A. Vanotti
President & CEO

CORPORATE PARTNERS



BRYAN CASSIDY SELECTED AS TORRINGTON SAVING BANK'S NEW CIO

TORRINGTON, CT – Torrington Savings Bank is pleased to announce the appointment of Bryan Cassidy, Chief Information Officer & Senior Vice President, to their executive team.

Mr. Cassidy comes to Torrington Savings with over 15 years of information technology and cybersecurity experience within banking and various other industries. Prior to TSB, Bryan held leadership and advisory positions, most recently at Webster Bank, as Senior Vice President and Director of Information Technology Audit, Data Analytics & Professional Services, and Farmington Bank, as Vice President and Information Security Officer.



In his role, he will be responsible for providing strategic vision and leadership in the development and implementation of our technology programs, with a particular focus on effective, stable and secure operations.

Mr. Cassidy is a graduate of Western New England University where he earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Information Systems and University of Hartford where he earned his Master of Business Administration degree. Bryan is a Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP), Certified Information Privacy Professional for US Laws (CIPP-US), and Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE). Additionally, he volunteers at Shepard Meadows Therapeutic Riding Center serving as an Advisory Board member.

Lesa A. Vanotti, President & CEO of Torrington Savings Bank stated, "We are thrilled to have someone of Bryan's caliber join our organization. His skill set will be instrumental in our focus on providing best in class digital tools for our customers and internal teams."

COVID-19 UPDATE: SHARON HOSPITAL TESTING

SHARON, Conn. — Testing for COVID-19 will move to an appointment-only basis at Sharon Hospital until further notice. All specimen collections at the hospital are completed in an isolated area at the facility's rear Wound Care entrance.

- **Hours of operation: Monday–Saturday, 9 am to 1 pm**
- **To schedule an appointment, please call 845-790-8855, Option 1.**

"This change is part of our adaptive strategy to streamline access and address challenges posed by winter weather," said Dr. Mark Hirko, president of the hospital. "This location offers increased separation from patient care areas and is easily accessible by car, so you can drive up, park and await instructions to enter the testing area."



Individuals who arrive without a scheduled appointment will be asked to call (845) 790-8855, Option 1, to coordinate a future visit.

What to bring to your COVID-19 test at Sharon Hospital:

- Wear a medical face mask.
- Government-issued photo ID (examples: driver's license, passport)
- Insurance card (if you have one)
- Physician order (prescription) for the COVID-19 test. Your doctor will tell you if you need to bring a paper order with you or if it will be submitted electronically.

Nuvance Health procedural and surgical patients who meet specific criteria should have a COVID-19 test within 72 hours of their procedure or surgery. Their physician or surgeon will let them know if they need a COVID-19 test.

Information about COVID-19 testing at Nuvance Health's primary care practices and outpatient locations, please visit:

<https://patients.healthquest.org/covid-19-testing/>.

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NCB AMERICAN MURAL PROJECT

The American Mural Project (AMP) seeks to inspire, to invite collaboration, and to reveal to people of all ages the many contributions they can make to American culture. Sharon artist Ellen Griesedeck's work is five stories high and 120 feet wide, installed in a restored mill building in Winsted. The mural serves as the center for AMP's educational programs and an adjacent visitors center is planned for summer enrichment activities, lectures and workshops, as well as the onsite portion of AMP's curriculum. To date, more than 15,000 students from 17 states have contributed to the mural through AMP's education and artistic initiatives, and nearly 50,000 are expected to contribute once the mural is finished. Northwest Community Bank has supported the project since 2007.

Dea Pitruzzello, Northwest Community Bank Vice President, Branch Administration, presents a \$21,500 donation to American Mural Project to Executive Director Amy Winn.



Photo : Peter Brown

Premier MEMBERS

EVERSOURCE URGES CUSTOMERS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF PAYMENT AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Energy efficiency solutions also available to help lower bills

BERLIN, Conn. – Eversource is urging customers to sign up for a payment plan or assistance program to protect them from disconnection when the suspension on service disconnections ends. Income-eligible customers qualify for hardship payment plans and all customers, regardless of income, are eligible for the COVID-19 Payment Program. Any residential customers experiencing difficulty paying their utility bill should contact our call center to inquire about being coded hardship. Any customers ineligible for hardship status, including both residential and nonresidential customers, should ask about the COVID-19 Payment Program.

“We recognize how challenging these times are for our customers and we want to help them manage their energy bills,” said Eversource Vice President of Customer Operations Jessica Cain. “People may not realize that being on a payment plan not only sets them up with affordable monthly payments, but it also protects them from service disconnection once they resume - as long as the monthly payments are made. Our representatives are here to work individually with any customer to determine which of our flexible payment plans or other special programs would be the most helpful to them.”

Customers who've never needed assistance previously may not realize they qualify for protection from service disconnection or can apply for other programs to help reduce past due balances. For example, a household of five with an annual income of ~\$84 thousand dollars meets the income-eligibility requirements. Eversource encourages all customers to contact the energy company at 800-286-2828 or to check their eligibility on the [state income-eligibility matrix](#) - and find out if one of the energy company's programs below could be beneficial to them.

HARDSHIP PROGRAMS – **for income-eligible customers*

- **Winter Protection** – Customer's account is protected from service disconnection November 1st through May 1st regardless of bill payment status, with no late payment charges.

EVERSOURCE

- **New Start** – Customers can reduce or eliminate their outstanding balance in as little as 12 months when they make on-time monthly payments and Eversource will make up the difference.

- **Matching Payment** – Customers apply for the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) and set up an affordable monthly payment arrangement with Eversource. For every dollar a customer pays toward their bill by the agreed-upon time each month, a dollar will be credited to their past-due amount, down to a zero balance.

PAYMENT PROGRAM – **for all customers*

- **COVID-19 Payment Program** – Customers can pay past-due balances in flexible payment plans for up to 24 months with no down payment required. Once an active payment arrangement has been established, the account will be protected from service disconnection for the duration of the payment plan, as long as they don't default on the arrangement. Enrollment has been extended to **February 9, 2021**.

With many people continuing to work and learn from home, customers are noticing an increase in energy use during the pandemic. Eversource is reminding customers to take advantage of its #1-ranked energy efficiency solutions to help reduce their energy costs. There are many energy efficiency options available to customers, including the Home Energy Solutions home energy improvement service as well as generous energy efficiency rebates and incentives.

Customers can learn more [about payment programs](#) and enroll online at Eversource.com/BillHelp. Information on the energy efficiency programs is available at www.energizect.com.

This news release was distributed in coordination with other customer notifications as ordered by the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority.

CONTACT:

Tricia Taskey Modifica
860-665-4605 | tricia.modifica@eversource.com

Mitch Gross
(860) 665-5221 | mitch.gross@eversource.com

Chamber MEMBERS

NCCC STUDENTS RECEIVE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION AWARDS

Winsted – In December, Northwestern Connecticut Community College (NCCC) students Renee Dunbar from Winsted and Kit Fitch from West Cornwall received National Science Foundation (NSF) ATE Student/Alumni awards.

According to NCCC Biology Professor Sharon Gusky, the two students were two out of 30 community college students who received the award.

They were chosen based on their work on the college's NSF funded program "Engaging Students from Classrooms and Camps to College and Advanced Technical Careers."

Their awards were given during the 27th National Advanced Technological Education Principal Investigators Virtual Conference 2020, held in late October.

"The goal of the program is to introduce community college and school students to technology education," Gusky said. "I am extremely proud of the work that they both did. It is very unusual for college students to do this caliber of work and to be allowed to participate in these experiences."



Dunbar's work included annotating the GemG GemG bacteriophage with Torrington High School students last summer.

Fitch's work included creating a poster on the technical industry and education based on a study abroad trip back in January 2020.

Dunbar is a Natural Resources major, while Fitch is a Liberal Arts and Sciences major.

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ENTREPRENEURIAL

CENTER OF
NORTHWEST CONNECTICUT**NCCC TO OFFER WORKSHOP: HOW TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Winsted – The Entrepreneurial Center of Northwest Connecticut is offering the workshop, How To Grow Your Business During The COVID-19 Pandemic, on January 28, 2021, 6 to 8 p.m. through an online platform. The seminar is sponsored by the Northwest Connecticut Economic Development Corporation with funding provided through the Economic Development Administration's CARES Act disaster recovery funds.

The event is free and open to the public although registration is required at Eventbrite.

The two-hour seminar will focus on how small to medium-sized businesses can improve their online visibility. Topics will include:

- How to increase online visibility through Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Search Engine Marketing (SEM), and local SEO;
- Online marketing strategies that will help businesses target customers and keep them engaged.
- Understanding the importance of online reputation.

The seminar will be presented by Lance Leifert who formed Conquest in 1997 as a digital agency. Conquest saw the changes in marketing trends and converted to an integrated marketing agency in 2015 offering both traditional and digital marketing services with strong digital capabilities. As pioneers in this new style of marketing agencies, Conquest has grown to be recognized as an industry leader and has helped clients of all sizes with strategizing and the implementation of cutting-edge integrated marketing programs. Leifert has become known as an industry expert in digital marketing and teaches seminars and classes across Connecticut.

The Entrepreneurial Center of Northwest Connecticut is located at Northwestern Connecticut Community College and works in partnership with the Northwest Connecticut Chamber of Commerce, Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), and the Winchester Economic Development Commission. For more information contact Jane Williams at jwilliams@nwcc.edu.



To register for this seminar go to:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/132313038861>



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Economic Development Corporation**

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Commercial Sewing, Inc.

Eversource Energy

Keystone Place at Newbury Brook

Litchfield Woods Health Care Center

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Systems Support Group, Inc.

T&M Building Company, Inc.

and Torrington Downtown Partners

UCE Fine Builders

Valerie Manor

Webster Bank

Chamber MEMBERS



BRIAN LEGER JOINS SALISBURY BANK AND TRUST COMPANY

LAKEVILLE, CT – Salisbury Bank is pleased to announce that Brian Leger has accepted the Vice President, Loan Servicing Manager position at Salisbury Bank and Trust Company.



“We are very excited to welcome Brian to our team,” said Cindy Bradley, Senior Vice President, Loan Administration Manager. “Brian brings significant experience in loan servicing processes, management, product knowledge, and has strong technical skills; all of which will enhance and strengthen the Loan Administration Department’s ability to support the Bank’s strategic goals and objectives.”

Brian will oversee the Bank’s Loan Servicing Department. For the last 8 years he worked as Sr. Business Analyst at FISERV on their DNA Loan Team. Prior to that, Brian managed the Commercial Loan Operations for UPS Capital Business Credit for 8 years. Brian currently lives in Southington, CT.



25 DAYS OF HOPE WINNER!

Pictured is Michael Mazaik (left) and Staples GM Bill Thomas (right). Michael was just one of the lucky winners during the 25 Days of Hope and he was given his \$100 gift card by Bill. Thank you to everyone that took part in the 25 Days of Hope!

News and NOTES



This year, I ask that we all pause and recognize the extraordinary circumstances we find ourselves in. Never could we have imagined how different this year’s holiday season would be from years past.

No visitors, no public gatherings, no parties and no train decoration by the Riva family.

People are the lifeblood of the Geer community. The good people who live and work here have endured months of isolation and fear of this virus. Like you, they miss family and friends - they miss the activity and the sense of community we all love at Geer. Most of all, our residents are battling loneliness.



We must recognize and accept this fear and sense of loss. Although, we cannot quickly change this new reality it is very important to focus on the opportunities that bring joy and love to our lives each day. It will not be like this forever - better days are coming.

2020 is also the 50th Anniversary of Geer Nursing & Rehab Center. For 50 years, every day Geer has provided care to seniors from all walks of life and with all sorts of needs, regardless of their insurance coverage or ability to pay. If you would like to learn more about us and our history [click here](#).

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News and NOTES

Geer (Continued from previous page)

It is no secret that government insurance (Medicaid) never pays 100% of the actual cost of care provided but did you know that about 65% of patients served at the Geer Nursing & Rehabilitation center are on Medicaid or some other government program.

The total amount of subsidized charity care provided by Geer over the past 50 years, easily tops 50 million dollars, but that does not mean we provide less than 100% quality care!

Can you help us to provide top notch care to ALL patients and residents at Geer, regardless of their ability to pay or type of insurance? Your gift makes a difference in the lives of residents directly.

- A \$250 gift will allow us to purchase a tablet so more families can visit virtually
- A \$125 gift will provide a new outfit (shoes, pants, & top) for a resident in need
- An \$35 gift will provide 1 ride for a medical appointment for a local senior
- A contribution of any amount is magnified when combined with others!

Sincerely,

Kevin O'Connell, PT, MBA

COMCAST EXTENDS COVID SUPPORT WITH 60 DAYS OF FREE INTERNET FOR LOW-INCOME CUSTOMERS AND FREE ACCESS TO THE NATION'S LARGEST PUBLIC WIFI NETWORK THROUGH JUNE 30, 2021

Comcast announced today that it will extend its commitments to help people connect to the Internet during the COVID-19 pandemic as millions continue to stay home while many workplaces and schools operate virtually. Comcast will continue to provide free Internet service for the first 60 days for new Internet Essentials customers, and free access to more than 1.5 million public Xfinity WiFi hotspots, the largest network of its kind in the country, through June 30, 2021. Today's announcement marks the third time Comcast has extended these commitments.

"Our teams have worked tirelessly to ensure our network is operating at peak performance and help our customers and our communities navigate this unprecedented crisis," said Dave Watson, Chief Executive Officer, Comcast Cable. "For nearly a decade, we've been on a mission to ensure students have the resources they need to be successful. We have accelerated that work during COVID-19 by partnering with public schools to provide Internet for more low-income students and by working with community centers to create safe spaces for families to connect to free WiFi through Lift Zones."

Comcast has repeatedly committed to keeping its customers connected, and to make its services available



to families and students who don't have Internet access. These commitments are part of Comcast's [comprehensive efforts](#) to help families and individual stay connected, and to help empower small businesses, during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Network Investment – Comcast has invested more than \$12 billion to expand and evolve its network since 2017. Since the onset of the COVID-19 crisis in the United States, network teams have worked around the clock to triple network augmentations, install new hardware, and upgrade network software – to expand capacity and ensure that it could meet the rapidly growing needs of its customers. The company performs nearly 700,000 diagnostic speed tests daily which show

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News and NOTES

Comcast (Continued from previous page)

that, on average, it is meeting, and most times exceeding advertised speeds across all of its service areas.

- **Xfinity WiFi Free for Everyone** – More than 1.5 million Xfinity WiFi hotspots in business and outdoor locations – the largest public WiFi network in the country and three times larger than any other provider's – are available to anyone who needs them for free, including non-Xfinity Internet subscribers. Since taking the unprecedented step of making all of these hotspots available for free, hundreds of thousands of non-Xfinity customers have taken advantage and usage by consumers has skyrocketed. For a map of Xfinity WiFi hotspots, visit www.xfinity.com/wifi.

- **Free 60 Days of Internet Essentials and School Programs** – Internet Essentials is the nation's largest and most comprehensive broadband adoption program that provides high-speed Internet service to low-income families and has connected more than four million low-income students since its inception. New customers who sign up before June 30, 2021, will receive 60 days of complimentary service. Comcast will also continue to waive the requirement that customers not have back debt due so more families can apply. For more information, visit www.internetessentials.com. We are working with hundreds of public school districts in cities



Lift Zones are designed to help those students, who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to connect to distance learning at home.

like Chicago, Atlanta, Philadelphia and Sacramento to provide free Internet service directly to students in need.

- **WiFi-Connected Community Lift Zones** – In September, Comcast announced a multiyear program to launch more than 1,000 "Lift Zones" in community centers across the country by working with its network of thousands of nonprofit partners and city leaders. Comcast is providing WiFi in these facilities to help students get online, participate in distance learning, and do their schoolwork. Comcast plans to have at least 200 Lift Zones installed before the end of the year.

- **Comcast RISE** – In October, Comcast launched Comcast RISE, a multi-year initiative created to help strengthen and empower small businesses, starting with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color owned



businesses; those hardest hit by COVID-19. The Comcast RISE program will help thousands of small businesses over the next three years through grants, marketing and technology upgrades, including media campaigns and connectivity, computer and voice equipment, as well as free marketing insights to all applicants. For more information, visit www.comcastrise.com.

- **Providing Free Educational Resources** – In partnership with Common Sense Media, Comcast has curated thousands of hours of free educational programming into an education destination for Xfinity video customers to support remote learning for kids K-12.

For more information and updates from Comcast related to Coronavirus, visit:

<http://www.comcastcorporation.com/COVID-19/>

News and **NOTES**



Make a Difference. Be a foster parent.

On any given day, there are over **4,000 children in foster care** in Connecticut.

VIRTUAL INFORMATION SESSION OFFERED ON ZOOM

Become a Licensed Foster Home

Care for a Child with Health Needs

Provide Short Term Foster Care

Assist with Emergency Foster Care

January 11, 2021 at 7 pm*

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://zoom.us/j/98603615730?pwd=SUxZVHo5TW1le-GxHRTBZRUIEZnF6QT09>

Meeting ID: 986 0361 5730

Passcode: info

**Attendees are under no obligation to become licensed foster parents.*

Contact Wheeler's Foster Care Recruiters for more information or visit:

WheelerClinic.org/Journey

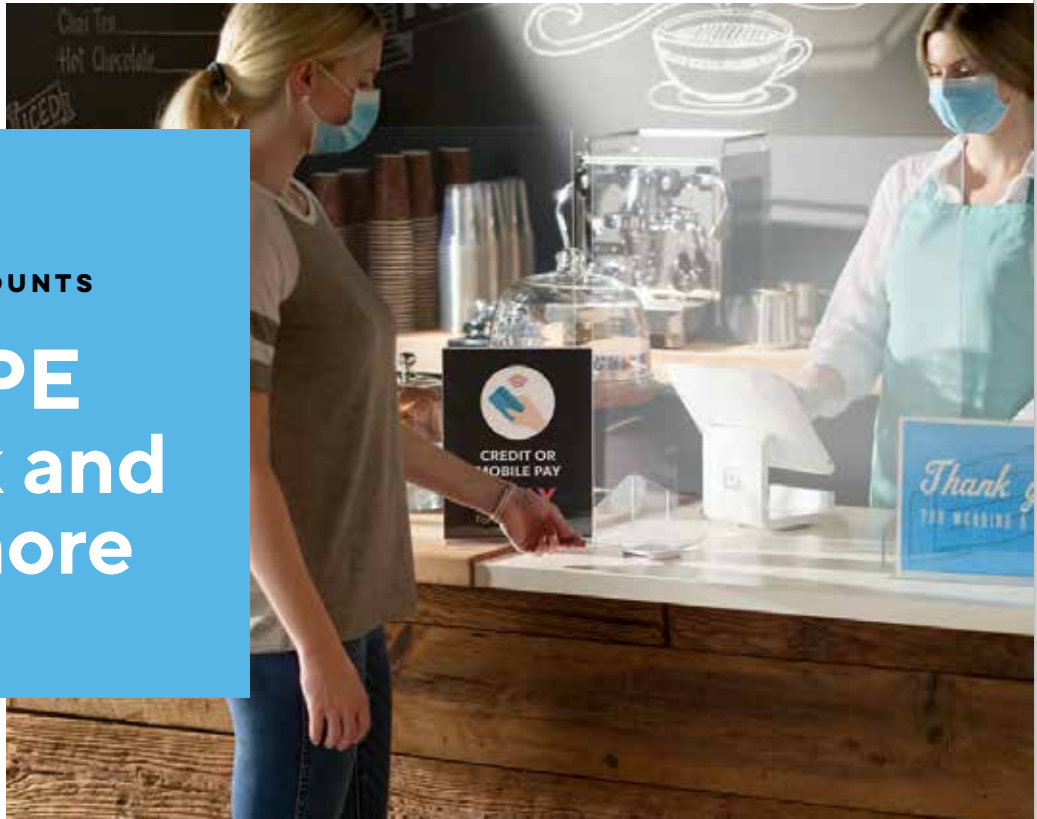
860.793.7277

fostercareprograms@wheelerclinic.org



Wheeler
FOSTER CARE

News and NOTES



SPECIAL DISCOUNTS

Buy PPE in bulk and save more



Now's the time to stock up on critical products to keep your people and space safe. The larger your order, the more you'll save.



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Hand sanitizer, wipes, cleaners and more



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📍 15 S. Main St., Torrington, CT

News and **NOTES**



Exclusively for Chamber of Commerce members

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10% off

your **in-store** purchase of regular priced items.

Expires 1/2/2021.

20% off

your **in-store** order of \$50 or more on Print and Marketing Services.

Expires 1/2/2021.

Valid in Staples® U.S. stores only on regular priced items. Not valid on Instacart orders. Limit one coupon per customer, nontransferable. Offer is subject to change or cancellation at any time. Minimum purchase requirement must be met with purchases to which no other coupon or instant savings offer applies. Tax not included in calculating the minimum purchase. Not valid on desktop or laptop computers, tablets, Chromebooks, streaming devices, Amazon products, Apple®, Bose®, Ink & Toner, Epson® EcoTank® printers, Google™ products, HP Instant Ink, Samsung®, Staples® Protection & Tech Help, Texas Instruments™ graphing calculators and accessories, gift cards, phone cards, postage stamps, computer workstation, direct mail services, faxing, custom-quoted orders, promotional products, scanning, self-service print, TSA services, PRO services, podcasting or Staples Studio. Each item purchased can only be discounted by one coupon, applied by cashier in the order received. Coupon not valid if purchased or sold and must be surrendered. Not valid on prior purchases or purchases made with Staples® Procurement or Convenience Cards. No cash/credit back. Coupon value applied pre-tax. **Expires 1/2/2021.**

Valid in Staples® U.S. stores only. Limit one coupon per customer, nontransferable. Offer is subject to change or cancellation at any time. Minimum purchase requirement must be met with purchases to which no other coupon or instant savings offer applies. Tax not included in calculating the minimum purchase. Not valid on self-serve, promo products, direct mail, postage stamps or computer workstation. Each item purchased can only be discounted by one coupon, applied by cashier in the order received. Coupon not valid if purchased or sold and must be surrendered. Not valid on prior purchases or purchases made with Staples® Procurement or Convenience Cards. No cash/credit back. Coupon value applied pre-tax. **Expires 1/2/2021**



Staples associate: Please reference the Register Guide for barcodes.

News and **NOTES**

Wishes for this Season

This message created by Nancy Hardaway, an executive coach and leadership trainer, includes words of wisdom appropriate for this special season of the year during the most challenging period of our lives.

I have taken the privilege to paraphrase. The wishes are included below:

More time in your days not just for getting more done, but for thinking and listening to your own heartbeat and the heartbeats all around you... For getting up above the clouds and seeing beyond the horizon and this pandemic.

Courage to act or not, to make tough decisions when necessary, and empathy to understand the impact of those decisions on you and all you touch... And then resilience to keep on moving forward.

Clarity of vision and creative thinking to see interconnections that could bring you opportunity, and those that point toward possible solutions to see innovative ways you can, rather than ways you can't.

The skill and will to be present in this moment, in this place, to see the person or people before you and look into their eyes to hear what they say through Zoom...

And understand, or really listen without having to speak.

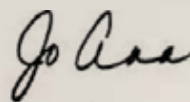
Camaraderie and support, someone to lean on, someone to think with. For leading, is a lonely business because you go to places not seen before... And it's always a risk.

Nights of rest and full sleep and vacations from technology... Slower days to set aside the heavy responsibilities of demanding more from yourself.

A team of people to work with that share a common goal, can laugh and argue together and appreciate their differences even virtually... And in the end get things done with you and without you.

To live your year, your days at work and at home, in healthy and safe ways that nourish you and make a difference for others...

Our heartfelt wishes to all throughout 2021.






Upcoming CHAMBER ZOOM EVENTS

Jan. 5	Small Business Council – 8 am	Jan. 19	Insurance Committee Meeting – 8 am
Jan. 6	WOW Advisory Committee Meeting – 8 am	Jan. 20	Health Council Meeting – 8 am
Jan. 7	Membership Committee Meeting – 8 am	Jan. 21	Restaurant & Retail Committee Meeting – 8 am
Jan. 8	Manufacturers' Coalition Meeting – 8 am	Jan. 25	Leads 1 – 12 noon
Jan. 11	Leads 1 – 12 noon	Jan. 26	Business with Breakfast – 8 am
Jan. 13	Leads 2 – 8 am	Jan. 27	Leads 2 – 8 am
Jan. 14	Government Relations Committee Meeting – 8 am	Jan. 28	Board of Directors Meeting – 8 am
Jan. 14	Leads 3 – 12 noon	Jan. 28	Leads 3 – 12 noon
Jan. 18	Chamber Closed for Martin Luther King Jr Day		

January 15 @ 8:00am – What you Need to Know Before the Vaccine Arrives Webinar

Guest Speakers, Ron Latorre, retired US Air Force Lieutenant Colonel, and M. Scott Furr, retired US Air Force Colonel, return to the Chamber for the second time to present a very important topic on COVID-19. They are co-founding partners of S2 Resilience Group, LLC. They have a combined 50 plus years of military leadership experience specializing in All Hazards/Emergency Response planning, training and overall resiliency.

Thank you to Arthur Mulligan of Senior Support Group and McKellan Group for introducing them to the Chamber.