



West Hartford Human & Community Services Committee Meeting
This Committee Meeting will be available for live viewing on the WHCi
YouTube Channel. Virtual Meeting
Thursday, August 6, 2026 at 8:00 AM

1. Call to Order

A. Call to Order

2. Business Items

A. Approval of Minutes

B. West Hartford Arts & Culture Survey

C. Resolution Accepting a Grant from North Central Area Agency on Aging to Support Behavioral Health Services

D. Resolution Accepting a Grant from Amplify, Inc. to Support Underage Nicotine Prevention Program

E. Resolution Accepting a Grant from United Way of Connecticut to Support the Food Pantry

F. Resolution Appropriating Funds to Replace the Miracle League Field Pedestrian Bridge

3. Communications

4. Staff Reports

A. Leisure & Social Services Update

B. Library Update

5. Future Agenda Items

6. Adjournment

Anyone requiring auxiliary aid or service for effective communication or modification of policies or procedures to participate in a meeting, service, program, or activity of the Town of West Hartford should contact Yeraida Reinheimer, at yeraida.reinheimer@westhartfordct.gov or (860) 561-7440, as soon as possible, preferably seven days beforehand.



Human & Community Services Committee
Meeting Minutes
Committee Meeting was aired on the WHCi YouTube Channel
Thursday, June 4, 2026 at 8:00 AM

1. Call to Order

This meeting was called to order at 8:01 PM.

In attendance: **Committee members:** Councilor Ben Wenograd, Councilor Lisa Lazarus, and Councilor Jason Wang. **Council members:** Mayor Shari Cantor, Deputy Mayor Deb Polun, Councilor Tiffani McGinnis, Councilor Barry Walters and Councilor John Lyons. **Staff:** Town Manager Rick Ledwith; Helen Rubino-Turco, Director of Leisure and Social Services; Laura Irmischer, Library Director.

2. Business Items

- A. Approval of Minutes— The minutes of the March 26, 2026, meeting were approved without objection.

The following Resolutions were discussed with the committee members and approved to be presented at the next Town Council Meeting:

- B. Resolution Approving Programs Eligible for the Neighborhood Assistance Act Tax Credit Program.
- C. Resolution Accepting a Donation from the Estate of Frances Johnson to Support the West Hartford Senior Centers
- D. Resolution Accepting a Donation from the Harriet E. Bunis Irrevocable Trust to Support the West Hartford Senior Centers.

3. Communications

- A. No communications were provided at this time.

4. Staff Reports

- A. Our Leisure and Social Services Director provided a Leisure and Social Services Update.
- B. Our Director of Library Services provided a Library Update.

5. Future Agenda Items

- A. No future agenda items were provided at this time.

6. Adjournment

This meeting adjourned at 8:53 AM.

WEST HARTFORD COMMISSION ON THE ARTS

July 29, 2026

West Hartford Town Council
50 South Main Street
West Hartford, CT 06107

Dear Council Members:

On behalf of the West Hartford Commission on the Arts, I am pleased to submit the enclosed West Hartford Arts & Culture Survey - Summary of Findings. This comprehensive survey captures critical input from 23 arts and cultural organizations that collectively serve over 100,000 patrons annually and contribute significantly to our community's quality of life and economic vitality.

The West Hartford Commission on the Arts fosters participation in and appreciation of artistic and cultural activities, encouraging their display and presentation throughout the town. Since our establishment in the Fall 2020, commissioners have been engaging with West Hartford's arts, culture, and heritage organizations to identify where the Commission and Town can be most helpful.

We developed this survey based on that feedback, focusing on areas of greatest need. The results reveal remarkable consensus: three initiatives received approximately 96% agreement—creating a unified calendar of events, promoting cultural activities on Town social media platforms, and establishing a dedicated arts, culture, and heritage liaison at Town Hall.

What emerges most clearly is that West Hartford's arts organizations—from our largest institutions serving 35,000 patrons annually to grassroots festivals reaching hundreds—are eager to collaborate and grow but need coordinated municipal support to reach their full potential. Despite decades of operation and substantial economic impact, many residents remain unaware of the exceptional cultural offerings available in our town.

Modest investments in coordination, communication, and resource-sharing would yield significant returns in community engagement, economic activity, and West Hartford's reputation as a cultural destination.

We respectfully request the opportunity to present these findings and work collaboratively on implementing the priorities identified by our cultural community. The arts are essential infrastructure that makes West Hartford the vibrant, desirable community we all value.

Thank you for your continued support of arts and culture in West Hartford.

Respectfully submitted,
West Hartford Commission on the Arts
Enclosure: West Hartford Arts & Culture Survey - Summary of Findings

West Hartford Arts & Culture Survey - Summary of Findings

Overview

The survey of West Hartford arts, culture and heritage organizations received responses from 23 arts and cultural organizations, representing a diverse range of institutions including theaters, museums, historical societies, musical ensembles, art galleries, festivals, and community organizations.

Participating Organizations

- Amelia Classical Music Series
- Connecticut Summerfest Contemporary Music Festival
- Elizabeth Park Conservancy & Summer Concert Series
- Greater Hartford Shakespeare Festival - Capital Classics Theatre Company
- Jerry's Artarama of CT
- Joseloff and Silpe Galleries at the University of Hartford
- Juneteenth Committee
- Music at the Red Door – St. John's Episcopal Church
- Noah Webster Art Gallery – West Hartford Public Library
- Noah Webster House & West Hartford Historical Society
- Playhouse on Park – Playhouse Theatre Group, Inc.
- The Chase Family Art Gallery at the Mandell Jewish Community Center
- The Hartt School
- University of Saint Joseph Art Museum
- WEHA Artists Emporium
- West Hartford African American Social & Cultural Organization
- West Hartford Art League
- West Hartford Community Theater
- West Hartford Garden Club
- West Hartford Pride
- West Hartford Summer Arts festival
- West Hartford Symphony Orchestra
- West Hartford Women's Chorale

Audience Reach

The participating organizations collectively engage over 100,000 patrons annually. Individual attendance figures range from 200 to over 35,000 annual patrons per organization, underscoring the substantial cultural and economic impacts these entities contribute to West Hartford.

Detailed Summary of Survey Responses by Question

QUESTION 1: Events Calendar

"Our organization would benefit by having our events included in an easily accessible and well marketed West Hartford calendar of events."

Survey Results:

- I strongly agree - 20 responses (87.0%)
- I somewhat agree - 2 responses (8.7%)
- No impact/Not applicable - 1 response (4.3%)

Summary: There is overwhelming support (95.7% total agreement) for creating a centralized, well-marketed West Hartford calendar of events. With 87% of organizations strongly agreeing, this represents the strongest consensus among all proposed initiatives. Organizations see significant value in a unified calendar to help cut through "choice overload" and reach both West Hartford residents and surrounding areas, with only one organization indicating it would have no impact.

QUESTION 2: Town Social Media Promotion

"Our organization's events would benefit by being promoted on the Town of West Hartford's social media pages."

Survey Results:

- I strongly agree - 19 responses (82.6%)
- I somewhat agree - 3 responses (13.0%)
- No impact/Not applicable - 1 response (4.3%)

Summary: Organizations expressed nearly unanimous support (95.7% agreement) for having their events promoted on the Town of West Hartford's social media pages. With 82.6% strongly agreeing, organizations recognize the power and value of the town's official communications platform in reaching broader audiences and increasing visibility and attendance for their events.

QUESTION 3: Arts & Culture Liaison at Town Hall

"Our organization would benefit from an arts and culture direct contact in Town Hall, who would be responsible for answering questions, providing assistance, coordinating town events and facilitating collaborations."

Survey Results:

- I strongly agree - 15 responses (65.2%)
- I somewhat agree - 7 responses (30.4%)
- No impact/Not applicable - 1 response (4.3%)

Consolidated Summary: There is widespread support (95.7% agreement) for establishing a dedicated arts and culture contact person at Town Hall who could answer questions, provide assistance, coordinate town events, and facilitate collaborations among organizations. While support is slightly less intense than the first two initiatives (65.2% strongly agreed, 30.4% somewhat agreed), this role would address important needs across the arts community. Many comments emphasized the need for paid staff coordination, noting that volunteer-led efforts have fallen apart due to organizational burden.

QUESTION 4: Grant Funding Assistance

"Our organization would benefit from assistance in identifying and securing grant funding opportunities from local, state and national sources."

Survey Results:

- I strongly agree - 15 responses (65.2%)
- I somewhat agree - 6 responses (26.1%)
- No impact/Not applicable - 2 responses (8.7%)

Summary: Help with identifying and securing grant funding from local, state, and national sources received strong support from 91.3% of respondents, making this one of the highest-priority needs. With 65.2% expressing strong agreement, many organizations clearly struggle with fundraising and would benefit from expert guidance. Comments indicate organizations need help with grant writing, identifying opportunities, and connecting with corporate sponsors and local businesses.

QUESTION 5: Additional Performance/Exhibition Venues

"Our organization would benefit from help in identifying additional performance or exhibition venues."

Survey Results:

- No impact/Not applicable - 10 responses (43.5%)
- I strongly agree - 8 responses (34.8%)
- I somewhat agree - 5 responses (21.7%)

Summary: This initiative received the most divided response, with 56.5% agreement but 43.5% indicating it would have no impact or wasn't applicable to their organization. This reflects the reality that venue needs vary significantly—theaters and performance groups urgently need space, while galleries, festivals, and some other organizations already have established venues or don't require them. Venue availability is a concern for some organizations but not a universal challenge across all arts groups.

Conclusion

The survey reveals strong consensus among West Hartford's arts and cultural organizations that they would benefit from increased coordination, marketing support, and resources from the town. The top three priorities—a unified events calendar, social media promotion, and a dedicated town liaison—all received approximately 96% agreement, indicating these initiatives would provide widespread value to the cultural community. Grant funding assistance is also a high priority, while venue support would benefit a subset of organizations with specific space needs.

DRAFT

**RESOLUTION ACCEPTING A GRANT FROM NORTH CENTRAL AREA AGENCY ON AGING TO
SUPPORT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES**

WHEREAS, the North Central Area Agency on Aging, assists communities to enhance the quality of life for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and their caregivers in North Central Connecticut by ensuring that they have access to quality, cost-effective services; and

WHEREAS, the Town of West Hartford applied for and was awarded a grant from the North Central Area Agency on Aging in the amount of \$5,000; and

WHEREAS, the Town intends to utilize the grant in the current fiscal year to help fund a community education event and support group.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF WEST HARTFORD THAT the grant funds are accepted and the fiscal year 2026-2027 General Fund budget is amended as follows:

Increase Estimated Revenues:

01-40160061-9022	Miscellaneous Grant	\$5,000
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Increase Estimated Appropriations:

01-40160061-2508	Special Events	\$5,000
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(LEDWITH)

August 12, 2026

To: Town Council
From: Richard Ledwith, Town Manager
Meeting Date: August 12, 2026
CC: Helen Rubino-Turco, Director of Leisure and Social Services; Pattie Lewis, Interim Director of Financial Services

Subject: Resolution Accepting a Grant from North Central Area Agency on Aging to Support Behavioral Health Services

Background: The North Central Area Agency on Aging (NCAAA) assists communities to enhance the quality of life for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and their caregivers in North Central Connecticut by ensuring that they have access to quality, cost-effective services. The Town of West Hartford applied for and was awarded a grant from the North Central Area Agency on Aging in the amount of \$5,000 to provide community education and support.

Operational & Financial Impact: The grant money is to be used for expenses as indicated in the grant agreement, providing a community education event and support group based on the Buried in Treasures book, which focuses on decluttering and hoarding disorder. Town Council adoption of this resolution will have a direct impact on the fiscal year 2026-2027 General Fund budget in Social Services.

Legal Review: Corporation Counsel's office has reviewed and approved the form and legality of the proposed resolution.

Project Schedule: The expenditures will be made upon adoption of the resolution.

Recommendation: This resolution is presented for Town Council consideration and adoption.

DRAFT

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING A GRANT FROM AMPLIFY, INC. TO SUPPORT UNDERAGE NICOTINE PREVENTION PROGRAM

WHEREAS, Amplify, the Regional Behavioral Health Action Organization (RBHAO) for North Central CT, in partnership with CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) offered a community mini-grant opportunity focused on Underage Nicotine Prevention Programs (UNPP) to help communities build capacity and advance community-led efforts aimed at preventing underage nicotine initiation, educating on the harms of nicotine use, and enhancing access to nicotine cessation services; and

WHEREAS, the Town of West Hartford applied for and received a grant in the amount of \$9,600 from Amplify to conduct activities focused on the grant objectives including providing information and education to the community, distributing nicotine quit-kits, and other activities; and

WHEREAS, the Town intends to utilize the grant in the current fiscal year to help fund supplemental supports and services for West Hartford residents.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF WEST HARTFORD THAT the grant funds are hereby accepted and the fiscal year 2026-2027 General Fund budget is hereby amended as follows:

Increase Estimated Revenues

01-40160061-9022	Miscellaneous Grants	\$9,600
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Increase Estimated Appropriations

01-40160061-2106	Boards & Commissions	\$9,600
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(LEDWITH)

August 12, 2026

To: Town Council
From: Richard Ledwith, Town Manager
Meeting Date: August 12, 2026
CC: Helen Rubino-Turco, Director of Leisure and Social Services; Pattie Lewis, Interim Director of Financial Services

Subject: Resolution Accepting a Grant from Amplify, Inc. to Support Underage Nicotine Prevention Program.

Background: Amplify, the Regional Behavioral Health Action Organization (RBHAO) for North Central CT, in partnership with CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) offered a community mini-grant opportunity focused on Underage Nicotine Prevention Programs (UNPP) to help communities build capacity and advance community-led efforts aimed at preventing underage nicotine initiation, educating on the harms of nicotine use, and enhancing access to nicotine cessation services. West Hartford Social Services/Prevention Partnership applied for and received a grant of \$9,600 to conduct activities focused on the grant objectives including providing information and education to the community, distributing nicotine quit-kits, and other activities.

Operational & Financial Impact: The grant money is to be used for expenses as indicated in the grant agreement, providing supplemental services to West Hartford residents. Town Council adoption of this resolution will have a direct impact on the fiscal year 2026-2027 General Fund budget in Social Services.

Legal Review: Corporation Counsel's office has reviewed and approved the form and legality of the proposed resolution.

Project Schedule: The expenditures will be made upon adoption of the resolution.

Recommendation: This resolution is presented for Town Council consideration and adoption.

DRAFT

**RESOLUTION ACCEPTING A GRANT FROM UNITED WAY OF CONNECTICUT TO SUPPORT THE
FOOD PANTRY**

WHEREAS, United Way of CT, in partnership with CT Department of Social Services (DSS) offered funding for Emergency Food Assistance for Non-Foodshare Pantries in CT for those pantries who do not have a purchasing partnership with CT Foodshare. Funds are intended only for the purchase of consumable food; and

WHEREAS, the Town of West Hartford applied for and received a grant in the amount of \$15,343 from United Way of CT to purchase food; and

WHEREAS, the Town intends to utilize the grant in the current fiscal year to help fund the purchase of consumable food West Hartford residents.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF WEST HARTFORD THAT the grant funds are hereby accepted and the fiscal year 2026-2027 General Fund budget is hereby amended as follows:

Increase Estimated Revenues

01-40210021-9340	Contributions	\$15,343
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Increase Estimated Appropriations

01-40210021-2538	Food	\$15,343
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(LEDWITH)

August 12, 2026

To: Town Council
From: Richard Ledwith, Town Manager
Meeting Date: August 12, 2026
CC: Helen Rubino-Turco, Director of Leisure and Social Services; Pattie Lewis, Interim Director of Financial Services

Subject: Resolution Accepting a Grant from United Way of Connecticut to Support the Food Pantry

Background: United Way of CT, in partnership with CT Department of Social Services (DSS) offered funding for Emergency Food Assistance for Non-Foodshare Pantries in CT for those pantries who do not have a purchasing partnership with CT Foodshare. West Hartford Social Services applied for and received a grant of \$15,343 to purchase consumable food.

Operational & Financial Impact: The grant money is to be used for expenses as indicated in the grant agreement, purchasing consumable food for West Hartford residents. Town Council adoption of this resolution will have a direct impact on the fiscal year 2026-2027 General Fund budget in Social Services.

Legal Review: Corporation Counsel's office has reviewed and approved the form and legality of the proposed resolution.

Project Schedule: The expenditures will be made upon adoption of the resolution.

Recommendation: This resolution is presented for Town Council consideration and adoption.

DRAFT

RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING FUNDS TO REPLACE THE MIRACLE LEAGUE FIELD PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

WHEREAS, the State of Connecticut has allocated the Town of West Hartford \$171,100 for the Miracle League Field Bridge Replacement; and

WHEREAS, the State has earmarked \$171,100 in fiscal year 2027; and

WHEREAS, The Miracle Field/Little League Complex, located at 1700 Asylum Avenue, is a recreation complex comprised of three youth baseball fields, a special field for children with disabilities, basketball courts, handicapped accessible restrooms and playgrounds; and

WHEREAS, the footbridge connects the field complex to the parking lot to its northwest; and

WHEREAS, the existing bridge has degraded over time and needs to be replaced; and

WHEREAS, the allocated funds will cover the design, construction and landscaping.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF WEST HARTFORD THAT the fiscal year 2026-2027 Capital Projects Fund is hereby amended to accept the funding from the State of Connecticut for the replacement of the Miracle League Field Bridge as follows:

CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND

Increased Estimated Revenues:

41-83276184-9071	Miscellaneous State Revenue	\$171,100
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Increased Estimated Appropriations:

41-83276184-3999	Miracle League Bridge	\$171,100
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(LEDWITH)
August 12, 2026

To: Town Council
From: Richard Ledwith, Town Manager
Meeting Date: August 12, 2026
CC: Helen Rubino-Turco, Director of Leisure and Social Services; Pattie Lewis, Interim Director of Financial Services

Subject: Resolution Appropriating Funds to Replace the Miracle League Field Pedestrian Bridge

Background: The Miracle League/Little League recreation complex, located at 1700 Asylum Avenue, offers youth baseball fields, a special field for children with disabilities, basketball courts, and handicapped accessible restrooms and playgrounds. It is owned by the Town of West Hartford. A footbridge connects the fields to a parking lot on the north side of the parcel. This bridge requires replacement. The State of Connecticut earmarked \$171,100 in its FY2027 budget to cover the footbridge's design, construction and landscaping.

Operational & Financial Impact: The funds will be used to replace the Miracle League Field Bridge. The resolution will have a direct impact on the fiscal year 2026-2027 Capital Improvement Fund budget.

Legal Review: Corporation Counsel's office has reviewed and approved the form and legality of the proposed resolution.

Project Schedule: The expenditures will be made upon adoption of the resolution.

Recommendation: This resolution is presented for Town Council consideration and adoption.

LEISURE SERVICES + SOCIAL SERVICES UPDATE AUGUST 2026

LEISURE SERVICES UPDATE

Summer Programs

- Most camps conclude on August 14, while some continue until August 21.
- Pools close August 16, except Eisenhower Pool, which will remain open for approximately one additional week.
- Pooch Plunge will be held Monday, August 17 at Beachland Pool.

Celebrate West Hartford

- Saturday, June 6 from 10-6 and Sunday, June 7 from Noon to 6. The event featured recognition of America 250 with a Colors Ceremony by the 1st Company Governor's Foot Guard and patriotic music. A new carnival ride provider was well received. Highlights: 40 business sponsors, 66 non-profit exhibitors, 27 food vendors and 148 arts & crafts exhibitors.
- Sunday morning's FUNd Runs had 1,364 participants: 1,226 5K and 238 Kids' K.
- Overall, event donated \$11,480, split between Town That Cares & Leisure Services Scholarship Fund. Mini Golf proceeds were donated to CT Children's Medical Center.
- Next year's event will be held **June 12 & 13, 2027**. It will be the event's 40th anniversary. Technically, it will be the 41st year since its inception in 1987. We paused the festival in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.) The 2027 festival will honor the event's rich history while continuing its tradition of celebrating community, culture, and civic pride.

Core Word Communication Board – a communication board designed to help children with autism express themselves was installed at Eisenhower Park. See attached Project Summary. A news clip aired on Fox 61.
<https://www.fox61.com/video/news/local/hartford-county/west-hartford/communication-board-for-children-with-autism-is-now-at-west-hartford-park/520-4592906c-52a7-4ef9-9fde-c90457b0dff5>

Cornerstone Aquatics Center – The facility will close briefly for annual maintenance from August 17 through August 23. We will focus on deep cleaning, maintenance, and a few facility enhancement projects.

Kennedy Park Planning

The Parks & Rec Advisory Board hosted a presentation by design firm Weston & Sampson on July 27 at Elmwood Community Center regarding Kennedy Park. The firm summarized results from a recent survey and unveiled two designs for consideration. Approximately 20 attended the meeting, and WHCi broadcast the presentation and Q&A. The final conceptual design will be ready in early fall. A moment of silence was held at the beginning of the meeting to honor board member Shawn Daly who passed away on July 16.

Program Updates

- **Fall/Winter Programs** – The Fall/Winter 2026 Program Guide is available for browsing online at <https://www.westhartfordct.gov/town-departments/leisure-services>, and print copies are available at all Leisure Services facilities, Town Hall and West Hartford Public Library branches.
- **Registration** opened for residents at Noon on August 5, and will open for non-residents at Noon on August 12.
- **Friends of West Hartford Parks** – Movie Night at Fernridge Park, 6 PM on Friday, September 11. Movie to be announced soon.



- **Feast on the Farm** – the annual fundraiser for Westmoor Park will be held on Friday, September 25 from 6 – 9 PM. Tickets available through RecDesk.

Capital Improvements

- **Eisenhower Pool** construction was completed end of July. Eversource hook-up was delayed all July due to storms in the region. Awaiting final inspections.
- **Wolcott Parking Lot** – Reconstruction was completed, and the lot is in use.
- **Veterans Memorial Skating Rink** – reconstruction of entire refrigeration system continues, with anticipated completion in October.
- **Westmoor Park** – Rot repair underway at the Hunter House (Nature Center) in anticipation of roof replacement this fall.
- **Wolcott Courts (pickleball, tennis and basketball)** will be closed temporarily to be repainted in late August/early September.
- **Fernridge Park Playscape** – replacement of 5-12 playscape to begin in Fall
- **Asylum Avenue / Miracle League bridge** – replacement of footbridge to begin in Fall; cost covered by State funding. **Draft Resolution for State Grant** - \$171,100 to fund bridge.

SOCIAL SERVICES UPDATE

Resolutions – **drafts of three resolutions to be considered at the August 12 Town Council meeting.**

- **NCAAA grant** – \$5,000 to support lecture focused on decluttering and hoarding disorder
- **UWCT DSS grant** - \$15,343 from United Way to purchase food for income eligible residents
- **UNPP grant** - \$9,600 from Amplify for underage nicotine prevention programs

Dial-A-Ride – New contract took effect on July 1 with SKY Transportation, also known as SAFE Transportation – same vehicle provider/drivers but SKY now provides direct dispatch service rather than going through an intermediary company. Transition issues have been addressed and resolved. A letter was sent to every DAR member (approximately 180) regarding the Call Center and how we are addressing customer service complaints.

Prevention Activities – Updates on summer prevention activities may be found on the website. A Community Wellness Calendar is updated regularly. <https://www.westhartfordct.gov/town-departments/social-services/prevention>

Energy Forum planned for September 24 at Elmwood Community Center. Focus will be on seniors. Provider participants include Eversource, CNG, Operation Fuel, and CRT. Different payment plans, how to read your bill, resources, energy conservation tips, etc. will be discussed.

Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program- Social Services office continues to sign up eligible residents for this state program, which provides benefits to participants that are 60 years of age or older OR is a disabled individuals under the age of 60 living in housing facilities occupied primarily by older individuals where congregate nutrition services are provided. Those who qualify are provided a benefit card to use at any participating vendor at local farmers markets. To register, please call the Social Services office for an appointment. 860-561-7560. The program runs until October.

Summer Food – Food Pantry distributed gift cards to existing Food Pantry clients in July, funded by The Town That Cares.

Back to School – In partnership with WHPS, Social Services will distribute back to school gift cards to the schools in August.

Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC) Sign
Eisenhower Park, West Hartford, CT
Installed 2026

In the fall of 2025, Jessica Sinkus contacted Leisure Services about the possibility of having a special sign board installed at Eisenhower Park playground. Her son, Maverick, was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and was mainly non-verbal until beginning to learn to communicate using an AAC device (Augmentative and Alternative Communication). These types of communication devices are life changing for the people who use them as well as their families/support systems.

Unfortunately, most of the time, AAC devices are iPads or another type of technology, which children cannot bring to a playground setting. These children lose their voices when it comes time to play and interact with other children.

Jessica connected Jaime Krajewski in Leisure Services with Ashley McCain, who runs the non-profit group Beyond the Horizon Inc. The non-profit provides sensory friendly and adaptive programming throughout Connecticut. Ashley helped make this signboard a reality by providing West Hartford with the rights to use the WordCore AAC sign design, a savings of approximately \$1,800. With this major cost covered, Leisure Services was able to purchase the sign and handle the installation.

Leisure Services purchased the sign from Sign-a-Rama in Newington, CT at a cost of \$690, and Justin Andrews in Public Works coordinated the installation of the sign on June 17, 2026.



Human and Community Services Committee

Library Report – August 2026

Summer Outreach Events

Library staff hosted a booth at Celebrate! West Hartford on both Saturday and Sunday this year (in previous years we just had a booth on Saturday). Our theme was “Escape into a Story.” Visitors could Create Their Own Story by rolling a giant dice to create a random story out of 3 famous book quotes, enter to win our giveaway, and snag some library swag.



Library staff coordinated and staffed both the Family Activity Tent at West Hartford Pride as well as our own outreach booth. Activities included drag queen storytimes, beaded pride bracelets (featuring custom 3D printed WHPL beads from Studio 20), and coloring bookmarks. We had lots of amazing conversations about Summer Reading and BookWorm Fest with folks of all ages. We can't wait for next year!



Book It!

The 4th annual Book it! for the library fun run was held on July 11th and it was our biggest turn-out yet! We had 200 registered runners and at least 150 adults on a beautiful weather day at Sterling Field. A big thanks to all of our volunteers, including Dave from Fleet Feet, the CERT team, Maren and Britney from Head Start, and Abigail, Joseph, Luke, Becca and Megan!



Teen Programs

Teen programs this summer have been big hits. There were full houses for Teen Crochet Club and SummerWeen Cupcake Wars. D&D regular campaigns and one shots have also been full as we work toward more D&D offerings for our lengthy waitlist.

Teens came to a special summer reading **Paint Party at RiseUP for Arts** on Monday, June 29. Artist Julie Bergeron taught students how to create a BookWorm-Fest inspired scene with acrylics. Several parents expressed an interest in seeing similar art programs in the future.



Children's Programs

This week we hosted a Stuffed Animal Sleepover. Kids were invited to bring their favorite stuffed animal friend for a storytime together and then said goodbye for the night. The next day when they picked up their furry friends, the kids got a memory book full of their nighttime adventures in the library.

At Family Camp-in at the Library, the Noah Webster Magazine Room was transformed into an indoor “campground”. Families with children of all ages brought blankets, flashlights and fort-building supplies to enjoy a screen-free evening of campfire style stories. Smores in a bag were served.



Faxon Library

Recent patron comment about the Faxon Library:

“This library may be small, but it's definitely mighty! The staff is incredibly kind, welcoming, and always willing to help with whatever you need. They truly take the time to listen to patrons, and I appreciate that they value suggestions and genuinely consider ideas for improving the branch.

This has become our go to West Hartford library, simply because of how amazing everyone is. We're so grateful to have such a wonderful branch nearby.”

Upcoming Programs

[Sundays in the Park with Sam](#)

Join us for another of our live sketching meet-ups at Elizabeth Park! Enjoy the nature and beautiful weather while capturing the decisive lines and shapes the season brings. Studio Coordinator and local artist [Samuel Ferri](#) will provide timed instructions and challenges inspired by the scenery.

Sunday, August 9 at 9:30am
Elizabeth Park
All ages welcome

[Star Wars Trivia](#)

Test your knowledge of *Star Wars* in this themed trivia event for a chance to win a prize!

Tuesday, August 11 at 2:00pm
Noah Webster Meeting Room
Age group: Grades 6-12

[Introduction to Google Drive](#)

Learn the basics of Google Drive in this beginner-friendly class designed to help you organize, store, and access your files online with confidence. Participants will be introduced to key features of Google Drive, including uploading and managing files, creating folders, sharing documents, and accessing files from any device. This class is ideal for those new to Google Drive or looking to build a stronger foundation in using cloud storage effectively.

Tuesday, August 11 at 4:30pm
Faxon Community Room
Age group: Adult

[Pet Boredom Busters](#)

Bad weather, injuries, and short winter days can leave pets bored and under-stimulated, often leading to destructive behavior. Join Connecticut Humane Society to discover fun, easy ways to keep pets active, entertained, and mentally engaged year-round!

Wednesday, August 12 at 6:30pm
Noah Webster Meeting Room
Age group: Adult

[Summer Reading Finale with Science Heroes](#)

Join us to wrap up another amazing summer at WHPL! Unearth your curiosity as we dig into the incredible science that's all around us through fun, interactive stories and hands-on experiments with Science Heroes.

Tuesday, August 18 at 6:30pm
Bishops Corner Senior Center Large Meeting Room
Age group: Grades K-6