

## Inspiring Next Generations

This chapter of the Care & Share History Narrative is somewhat different from the others you may have been reading, or may come back to this website page to read at a later time. Because it delves into the nature of community service as young people witness it, this chapter relies on storytelling of sorts, or at least upon anecdotal evidence, culled from public media accounts, Care & Share press releases, membership meeting minutes, or participant hearsay or memory.

Many of the partnerships and some of the camaraderie recounted in the immediately preceding chapter of this Narrative feed into this portion of the history by highlighting specific activities that were sponsored or co-sponsored—including those by Leos, Scouts, School clubs, and the like. As such, you may discover some overlap of incidents or events.

### Camperships and Scholarships

For most of its history, Care & Share was looking out for school age children in clients' families. Some programs provided K-12 nurture, to parallel C&S nutrition. One strong motive for C&S underwriting summertime camperships of varying duration and locale was that most featured a lunch program. C&S members knew that lunch was missing for many client-children when school was not in session. There was also a recognition that continuing education after high school, whether academic or vocational, was important to support.

With deference to the "Timelines and Statistics" page in this narrative, these numbers suggest a slice of life that Care & Share served up as a side dish to food and clothing in its own "tween years." For both items, clients applied for the assistance and C&S members evaluated needs and made awards. Usually, the annual budget process was completed prior to the application season, so the members knew their financial capability in advance, which may have differed from year to year:

2004 Camperships (22) & Scholarships (10 totaling \$7,500)  
2005 Camperships (21) & Scholarships (13 totaling \$7,500)  
2006 Camperships (20) & Scholarships ( 8 totaling \$5,000)  
2007 Camperships (29) & Scholarships (\$ 7,000)

- 2008 Camperships (?) & Scholarships (5 totaling \$ 10,000)
- 2009 Camperships (42) & Scholarships (6 totaling \$ 12,000)  
{Uniquely, one campership made home computer access learning available to a wheelchair bound student unable to afford transportation}
- 2010 Camperships (58) & Scholarships (6 totaling \$ 12,000)  
There were four out-of-town camps, including 4-H. Niantic Yacht Club had 1 new awardee, and itself continued supporting 3 prior campers. The membership meeting minutes noted for the first time that 5 of the summer Parks & Rec campers were from Salem. Eunice Logozzo Fund sent one camper to Bushy Hill Nature Center.
- 2011 Camperships (74) & Scholarships (6 totaling \$ 15,000)  
Camperships to Park & Rec 8:30 to 11:00 all summer. Explosion of numbers due to the generosity of EL P&R and EL All Star Sports School, who provided lunch free or at a reduced price, stretching campership funds to cover more registration fees. For the first time, in 2011, one of the college scholarships awardees was a four-time recipient, having received a scholarship in each of four college years.

### Student and Youth Activism

The cavalcade of youth activities across the years is as sundry as the young persons' magnanimous imaginations and boundless energies could envision. In some cases, there were fundraisers to benefit Care & Share, leaving it to the organization to discern how to use those monies. In others, the young people were part of organized groups whose adult leadership offered direction and supervision to accomplish a specific designated goal. Often, working side by side with Care & Share volunteers provided kids with models to imitate then and later in their lives. The public nature of their volunteerism within the community frequently mixed fun and purpose, building new relationships and cementing existing ones with the new mortar of doing good for neighbors-in-need. As the years unfolded, here are some examples sprinkled through C&S meeting minute accolades and media article praise.

In the 2004-2005 school year students at Lillie B Haines donated several large boxes of books to share with children in kindergarten to grade 4.

In 2005 summertime there was a car wash and a talent show youth participated in as fundraisers and spirit-building events.

Middle schoolers helped staff a game booth during East Lyme Day on St John's Green in 2005.

Early in 2007, *The Lyme Times* noted in a story about the 20% increase in the number of needy persons assisted in 2006 by Care & Share, that one fifth grader raised \$200 for Care & Share by making and then selling jewelry.

In the summer of that same year, a young girl, identified only as "Charlotte," was throwing her second year-in-a-row (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>) birthday party helping others. When she was 7 the party was by her friend's hospital room, with gifts or a donation for Care & Share. When 8, and with her friend home from the hospital, she asked her party guests to bring kid-friendly food to donate, wrapped as a present. Care & Share was the recipient of the food collected. Her mother later wrote, in part,

" . . . thank you for the grand welcome Charlotte received when she came to work at the Diamond Dig. She rarely opens up in front of unfamiliar faces as much as she did there . . . I think it was because everyone was so inviting."

The *Post Road Review* carried a significant anecdote from the 2007 Holiday Store, emblematic of C&S offering the environment and encouragement of family and childhood generosity. Quoting the article:

"It seems that a nine-year-old grandson of a Care & Share volunteer won a cuddly bear at school and immediately decided that it HAD to be given to the Care & Share holiday store, thinking another youngster might enjoy it. Apparently, his instincts were right, as it had no sooner been placed on the counter when it was whisked away by a young mother who exclaimed how much her daughter would just love it, and she nearly danced out of the store."

East Lyme Youth Services decorated and food-filled two large laundry baskets to incorporate into the 2007 Spring Basket distribution for larger families.

An intriguing sign of the times and a reflection of Care & Share ethos (of client privacy and respect) occasioned a clarification in the C&S by-laws during the Spring of 2007.

So many East Lyme High School and grade school classes were gravitating to volunteering to assist in Care & Share activities that youths under the age of 18 would now be known as “associate members” and require a sponsor. The sponsor would on a case-by-case basis deem if involvement in a particular activity was appropriate for associates. Evaluating face-to-face contact taught youth a crucial life-lesson and promoted client appreciation. The sponsor was to make sure volunteering youth would not come to know the identity of Care & Share clients, respecting their privacy.

The timing of this recognition coincided with the planned August/September letter to be distributed by the Superintendent of Schools to every registered student in the East Lyme schools, to promote awareness of Care & Share—both to foster volunteering and to encourage those needing it to seek C&S assistance. C&S and the Superintendent chose the broad distribution, mindful so as not to single out any student or family receiving a letter being a possible indication of a need of for assistance.

In the Fall of the 2007-2008 school year, High School Spirit Week garnered three carloads of food donated by students. Meanwhile, on Citizenship Day, second graders from Niantic Middle School walked on a field trip to the Pantry with their decorated canned food donations. There they saw how the Pantry was set up and worked, and a heard an age-appropriate presentation explaining how C&S helped neighbors in need and relied on donations such as the ones they themselves had brought that day.

Springtime school food drives by Spinnaker and East Lyme Middle School added to the pantry’s supplies.

The Diamond Dig during East Lyme Day in the summer of 2008 was replete with youth involvement, significantly after the springtime change in C&S by-laws that protected clients and youthful volunteers from violating confidentiality and privacy. Six cub scouts helped set up and break down The Dig equipment and display. As a public event there was no identification of participants being clients receiving assistance from C&S. Likewise, C&S bike repairer Peter Georg supplied two refurbished bikes that were prizes, that

were not dedicated to being awarded to clients. As in an earlier year, the Diamond Dig generated a wonderful human-interest story, engaging youth in the C&S mission personally. To quote the minutes of the August meeting:

“A young 12-year-old boy drew a bead to win a bike. The youngster just could not believe it and kept looking astounded and finally walked away wheeling the bike all over Main Street. It turned out he had never had a bike and didn’t know how to ride it. His sister had never owned a bike either so Care & Share, through Peter, subsequently arranged for her to get a bike, too.”

The LEOs held a car wash over the 2008 summer to benefit C&S.

The late autumn and holiday season of 2008 was jam-packed with youth activities supporting Care & Share clients and families. Notably, most of the activities were food drives and fundraisers that did not require inflection of the 2007 changed by-laws, as youth did not interact with clients in any way that compromised privacy.

St. Bernard’s sponsored a food drive in autumn 2008. And its Youth Ministries worked a Saturday on the seasonal Thanksgiving baskets. While Cub Pack #7 sponsored its second food drive in as many years.

Participating youth groups in that Fall 2008 season included: St Agnes Life Teen Group, (15 bags of food, Halloween Drive) and St Agnes Vincent DePaul (25 bags of food) both groups sorted and check expiration dates . . . Scout Troop # 24 held a food drive at Stop & Shop (20 boxes of 440 food items) . . . East Lyme Middle School (Halloween Drive, 131 items) . . . With the Key Club and Honor Society, EL High School Spirit Week netted 1,200 food items . . . Nine Cub Scouts and parents visited to learn about the Pantry and packed eight Thanksgiving baskets . . . Third graders at Lillie B Haynes held a “Children’s Food Drive” and donated wonderful amounts of mac & cheese, peanut butter and jelly, cocoa, and cold cereal.

In Spring 2009, the LEOs collected food donations as part of the Middle School Dance and then presented them to C&S the following day. A neighborhood group of moms brought their children to spend an hour and a half to help pack personal hygiene and toiletry bags and conduct a pre-assembly count of inventory of components for the Spring baskets.

And in October of that 2009 school year, numerous food drives were held by town youth at EL High School Spirit Week (1,300 items), elementary and middle schools, by Cub and Boy scouts, by the LEOs, by soccer teams and clubs and neighborhood groups. The outpouring bode well for regular clients of the Pantry and for Thanksgiving baskets being planned for the subsequent month.

The LEOs collected food and gifts through the Middle School and High School and also donated funds.

A spectacularly practical “make-over” of the Hope Street Pantry was proposed as a Boy Scout Eagle Project that would go far beyond aesthetics alone. Planned for over three weekends, without significant disturbance to Pantry operations, the project envisioned removing wooden hanging shelves, painting walls and the floor, scrubbing metal shelves, cleaning up the windows and surrounds, and installing a drop ceiling. Despite knowing that another home for the Pantry was being actively sought, the Scout and his family still wanted to create an improved and better working atmosphere for the C&S volunteers. The timeline for the project required completion by the Scout’s 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, consistent with Boy Scout requirements. And the deadline was met by Scout Sam Maxfield and a bevy of helpers, including fellow scouts, C&S members, notably Mike Hills who performed heavy equipment relocation, and Town Engineering Department employee Ron Bence. A refreshed and newly cleaned Pantry was ready for Spring 2010. At the May 2010 general membership meeting, C&S President, Jim Hall, presented Eagle Scout Maxfield with a Certificate of Appreciation and a US Mint proof Silver Dollar commemorating the Boy Scouts of America Centennial.

Another youth project was developed over multiple years and completed in springtime 2010. Using a labor-intensive Dime Bank Foundation grant, from a program of The Imagine/Render Group, ELHS Art Teacher Eloise Gada introduced C&S members to the “East Lyme High School Empty Bowl” project.

East Lyme High School students in ceramics, culinary, and graphic arts programs combined efforts to create hundreds of bowls, cook soup for the evening's fundraiser meal, and create posters and Facebook page advertising for the event. Funds donated to C&S included entry fees and additional bowl sales. All guests were asked to bring a canned good for the C&S pantry as well.

Elementary Schools received snacks and underwear and socks from the C&S School Out-Reach during the spring of 2010.

Autumn 2010 saw the LEOs collect canned goods at every dance held at the Middle School. Scouts held a special evening for the Pantry at the Center School, when they presented all the donated food they had been collecting.

Boy Scout Troop 7 used proceeds from its Labor Day Weekend "Coffee Stop" on Interstate 95 to purchase and donate over 40 individual pot pies to the Pantry. Troop 24 conducted a food drive at Stop & Shop in November.

Meanwhile, on the school front, the 2010 "Spirit Week" at the High School resulted in the Pantry receiving 1,800 items of donated food. Elsewhere, Carolyn and Brian Gough worked with elementary and middle schoolers on November food drives.

Helping to continue and to propel a trend forward, in January Ella Stone celebrated her 8<sup>th</sup> birthday with a themed disco dance party, with invitations to the entire 3<sup>rd</sup> grade at Lillie B Haines school. Gifts were designated to be food items for Care & Share. Later in the Spring she held a bake sale on her own and raised \$20 for Care & Share.

The LEOs also continued their unflagging and exclusive support of Care & Share by donating a "generous check" in Spring 2011, a cumulative amount raised from several events in their past fund-raising season.

Just prior to Labor Day of 2011, Christ Lutheran Church donated 20 backpacks filled with individual student school supplies. A Salem resident also donated another 4 backpacks. Backpacks and extra school supplies were provided to students who needed them as soon as school beginning made their need apparent.

The following year, in 2012, the East Lyme Police Cadets initiated a contact and said its members were looking to support C&S with food drives regularly in the future.

Also in March 2012 EL High School's arts, culinary, and graphics students combined their efforts, funded by Dime Bank and Stop & Shop, for that year's repeat of its successful Empty Bowls Project. That fund raiser celebrated creativity and community. Bowls crafted by students and provisioned with food cooked by them formed the basis of the fund raiser's dinner event. More than 400 bowls were sold, as were flower arrangements donated by Smith Acres. The donation check from the event was sizeable and greatly appreciated by C&S.

Amid all the excitement of Opening the new Pantry location, the Lions and LEOs put on a fundraiser spaghetti dinner, two seatings, \$10 fee, with all proceeds going to C&S, the LEOs almost exclusive beneficiary of fundraising and food collection efforts. Even a late season hurricane on the first scheduled date was not sufficient to dissuade these intrepid sponsors from being supportive. The dinner was postponed a month and held in December.

Members at the December 2012 meeting had the amazing experience of listening to child fundraiser, Ella Stone, who by then was a fifth grader. She had graduated beyond birthday parties with her age-mate guests bringing a food gift for C&S. In 2012, she almost single-handedly, organized a Student and Faculty Art Show. C&S benefited doubly. Admission also included bringing 5 items of non-perishable food. Proceeds were split 50/50 between the winning artist and C&S's fuel assistance fund.

The 2012 Holiday Store solved the oft-challenging problem of suitable gifts donated for teens and adults by purchasing Kohl's gift cards and movie theater passes for that "hard to shop for" age demographic. 66 shoppers came and enjoyed selecting gifts, linens, coats, jackets and a few bikes.

Holiday Baskets had a special multiple donor, cross generational character in 2012. University of Hartford's Community Service Division donated 100 pre-packaged baskets which only needed turkeys and cranberry sauce added. Local area churches, individuals and C&S added poultry (chickens/turkeys), as well as bringing 53 of their own baskets, already completely constructed. On the morning of the distribution, the Lions once again provided their

traditional perishable items and poultry, and indispensable labor for assembly and distribution.

Just as Care & Share has greeted generations of new client young boys and girls, the organization has borne witness to volunteering young boys and girls. Both groups will never forget what they saw and felt. Perhaps many will return in their own time, in their own place, to continue the mission of neighbors-helping-neighbors.