YWCA & YOU

NEWS & UPDATES: WHY *You* MAKE A DIFFERENCE

WINTER **2021**

eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca
Hartford Region
135 BROAD STREET
HARTFORD, CT 06105

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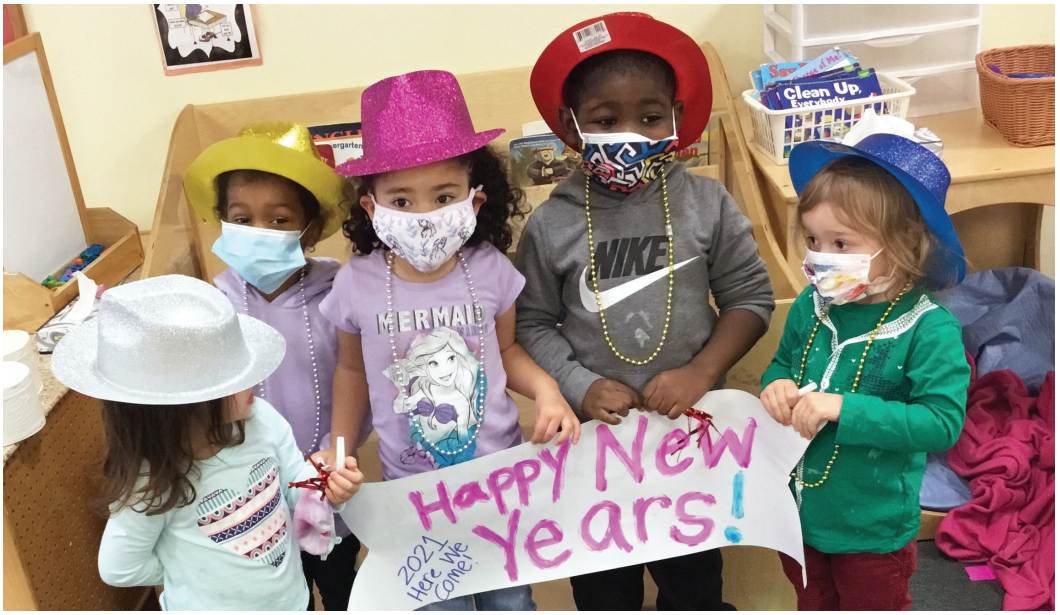
KATE COLAN FROM ROCKIN' CHICKEN SHARES THE GIFT OF GIVING BACK WITH HER TWO CHILDREN AS THEY DELIVER DINNER FOR SOROMUNDI RESIDENTS.



IN A DIFFICULT YEAR, YOU WERE A BRIGHT LIGHT

From everyone at the YWCA, thank you

2020 was a year to remember – and for many of the hardest reasons.

But at every step, you were there. You brought your passion, your kindness, and your support to women, girls, and families. You joined the cause – to support them, to fight for social justice, to oppose racism. You brought us all closer to realizing the dream of peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all.

Across our region, people needed you, and you answered. You supported their safety, their education, their empowerment. You gave, even when giving might be hard.

You cared…and your caring mattered.

Your caring was mirrored by Footwear with Care, Fleet Feet, the CT Podiatric Medical Association, and the Hartford Police when they donated warm boots to Soromundi Commons residents. You were joined by donors like Sheree Shields, Delta Dental, Rockin' Chicken, and Delta Pi Sigma chapter of Phi Beta Sigma who sent blankets, books, gift cards, oral health kits, and warm coats. And we saw your

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CARE FROM HEAD TO TOE

How a community supports the people who need us

Abby Sullivan Moore was volunteering when she met Officer Jim Barrett. A veteran and advocate for the homeless, Officer Barrett bought new shoes for a homeless vet whose only footwear were worn-out flip-flops.

Abby, a journalist and an author, wanted to help as well. So she formed Footwear with Care (FwC) and began distributing shoes to people who urgently needed them.

Imagine being without shelter right now. The weather is cold and raw. You walk most of the day to keep warm. If your feet are wet or injured, your entire body is at risk. For someone with no or uncertain housing, good shoes or boots are critical.

The women living in our Soromundi shelter have been among the people receiving new footwear. It's wonderful to watch as women are treated as valued customers. New shoes, given with care, warm more than feet.

Making this project work takes a community. We're grateful to Abby and to you. Thank you for being such an important part of our community!

*"Our women come in with **nothing**. Winter shoes are especially needed."*

LUCIANA DEGRAY
Clinical case manager at YWCA Hartford Region

YOUR SUPPORT IS CHANGING YOUNG WOMEN'S LIVES...

LEADING INTO THE FUTURE

The topic was "Diversity and Microaggressions." Immediately, one young woman asked: "Are we talking about microaggressions or straight out racism?"

That's when the conversation got real. Our volunteer from the Greater Hartford Chapter of The Links, Incorporated shared personal stories with the young women. The Links volunteer shared experiences of not being seen in their professional capacities through mistaken identities.

This is the realness that happens when successful adult mentors – women who have been there and done that – meet with young women eager for straight talk and advice. The girls see women who look like them and are leaders in their fields.

Afterwards, the volunteer mentor said, "These young women are going to change the world."

The Links, Incorporated is an international, not-for-profit corporation, established in 1946. It is one of the oldest and largest volunteer service organizations in the nation. Members of the Greater Hartford Chapter of the Links, Incorporated will be volunteering for all programs for young women, and their time and wisdom are hugely appreciated.

The Young Women's Leadership Corps brings young women together across school communities for weekly virtual workshops. These workshops focus on their personal growth, leadership and interpersonal skills, career exploration, and so much more.

We're grateful to you for the generosity that makes this important program possible. And we agree: these young women will change the world.

"We hope to impress upon the girls that there are absolutely no limits. They can achieve any goal and can succeed in any profession through hard work and perseverance. We hope that they will continue to build the foundation of confidence and skills needed to become our future leaders.

ANJANETTE FERRIS SENATUS, MD, MPH
President of the Greater Hartford (CT) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated

WHAT'S MY WHY?

Jeannette Punsoni Dardenne's daughters, Olivia, age 11, and Elise, age 8, have a passion for helping.

They have watched their parents' charitable actions, and now helping others is what they love to do as well.

Every family has been affected in some way by COVID. Jeannette's family is no different. But though Olivia and Elise knew there would be fewer toys and treats this year, their first priority has been helping other people who need them.

Jeannette, who owns a marketing firm, helped them raise money on social media. She invited her friends to comment or tag a post—and consider it a $1 pledge. The girls eagerly monitored the effort. And when they had raised $36, they chose to give it to YWCA Hartford Region.

Olivia and Elise know no gift is too small. And they hope they will inspire you, too!

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO TO MAKE THIS A BETTER, MORE JUST WORLD!

Save the Date

Opportunities you won't want to miss!

FEBRUARY 1-28	*Black History Month*
MARCH 1-31	*Women's History Month*
MARCH 8	*International Women's Day*
MARCH 31	*Equal Pay Day*
APRIL 22-25	*Stand Against Racism*

OUR WISH LIST: WAYS YOU CAN HELP TODAY!

$25
You can provide healthy meal options for a child for a week

$50
You can provide a day of child care for a working parent

$150
You can stock a shelter food pantry for 1.5 months

$1500
You can provide support services for someone overcoming homelessness

COPING WITH COVID

Your care is helping children learn and grow through the pandemic

Your support for YWCA helps fund four Early Learning Centers in Greater Hartford area and nine after-school programs.

But COVID has changed how we work. Safety regulations now mean we operate at half our usual capacity. We're also offering virtual programs for children who cannot come in. These programs are designed to be interactive. Because social and emotional growth is critical, children are busy dancing and singing together – not staring at a screen.

This period has been particularly hard on our staff.

"Miss Mackenzie, do you need to breathe? Do you want me to breathe with you?"

So we've helped them learn new ways of coping, including mindfulness and breathing exercises.

The children know when something is worrying the adults. So we've been helping them understand and cope with this new reality. We label emotions. And we teach children coping skills, like breathing, too.

Caring for our children is so important now. Too many young people are losing ground: socially, emotionally, and academically. We're ready every day to adapt to their needs.Your generosity means even the youngest in our community have what they need to grow and learn now. Thank you.

YWLC EXPANDS!

Our world needs more young women who are ready to change the world.

That's why we're excited to share with you that we're expanding the YWLC program to Classical Magnet School, Thurman Milner School and Jumoke Academy in Hartford.

Thanks to the community service of women from the Greater Hartford Chapter of The Links, Incorporated, we have been able to expand the program to serve more young women. We're also welcoming girls from anywhere in the Greater Hartford area.

With your every gift, you are changing lives — and entire communities. Thank you!

YOUNG GIRLS FROM YWLC SHARE A MOMENT TOGETHER DURING A LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP AND LOOK FORWARD TO WHEN THEY CAN MEET AGAIN IN PERSON.

▼ **BRIGHT LIGHT** *continued from front page*

generosity in the gift of a Thanksgiving feast for 60 families in our community – given by an anonymous restaurant owner. So many generous people – people like you – made all the difference in 2020.

All through last year, we've known you were at our side. Your commitment touched so many in our community. Thank you.

As we begin a new year, full of hope for all it must bring, we're grateful for you – our partner in this important work.

Here's to 2021 – together!