

# Liberty Voice

Fall 2009



## News Brief

### LIBERTY AWARDED SAMHSA FUNDS

The Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has awarded grant funds over a period of five years to local organizations throughout the country working to end homelessness in their communities. Liberty has been awarded \$2M of these funds. The funds will aid our efforts to end chronic homelessness.

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## A Review of New Haven Fashion...

On November 5th Artspace came alive with a celebration of New Haven fashion to benefit Liberty Community Services. The event included models who were displaying the current fashions being sold in New Haven stores such as Bottega House of Style, Hello Boutique, idiom, Seychelles, TracyB, and Urban Object. Also modeled were fantastic used clothing donations made by New Haven women. Special thanks goes out to Roxanne Coady, Jennifer Herrlinger, Anne Higgonnet, Elaine Jackson, Anne Jones, Helen Kauder, Ruth Koizim, Linda Lindroth, Diane Ruben and Anne Worchester for digging deep into their closets to provide Liberty with quality clothing donations. Desiree Fontaine from News Channel 8 helped out by modeling one of our beautiful donated gowns.

In addition, guests were treated to a special show of designs by Emmett McCarthy who owns EMC2 in New York City and was a finalist on Project Runway Season 2. Emmett was returning to New Haven where he was raised and graduated from the Educational Center for the Arts before embarking to New York to begin his fashion career. Guests in the audience included members of Emmett's family and his teacher from high school who inspired him to think of fashion design as a career. Emmett brought a few items from his clothing line which were worn by local models. Many thanks go to the store owners, models, volunteers, sponsors and silent auction sponsors for making this event such a success.



# Liberty Board of Directors



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John Bradley

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## A Note from the Executive Director...

The topic of multi-tasking is back in the news as people try to figure out whether it is a good or bad strategy to get through a busy life. People who are homeless don't have an option to decide whether to multi-task. They have to. How can I find a bathroom? Where do I eat for Saturday lunch? Which of the items or documents in my backpack are essential for my survival today? How do I get to see a physician about a medical problem? Liberty's mission of providing supportive housing is essential to get people in our community back to living full lives where everyday is not a struggle for existence. Housing creates the building block to help put a life back together. The good news is that due to the federal economic stimulus funds, Liberty was able to compete for and obtain two new federal grants which address the issue of homelessness in New Haven. The focus of the two grants is quite different in terms of the people served. The Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program was passed by the Congress and signed by the President as a response to people who are recently homeless or on the verge of homelessness due to the country's economic situation. Liberty was one of four agencies chosen to administer this program for the City of New Haven. The money is for short-term interventions and for people who are able to get back on their feet after an economic downturn and rapid re-housing of individuals who don't have a home.

Our second grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration is for the chronically homeless with substance abuse and mental illness. The assistance to these individuals is intense and often long-term. We are pleased to have secured new resources for New Haven to try to reach the hardest to serve. We are optimistic about the future and how these additional services will positively impact our community.

## Thanks to Elaine & The Study at Yale...

Elaine Jackson (Board Vice-President) was reading an article about another community where linens no longer useable by luxury hotels are donated to agencies who work with people who are homeless. She asked John Bradley whether Liberty could use donated, but slightly imperfect linens. Of course! Liberty could use these materials because new clients moving into housing from the streets or shelters have nothing. Liberty provides clients with linens and other essentials. Donated linens would allow Liberty to use scarce resources for other items. So Elaine went to work.

Two months later, eight bags of towels, bathrobes, duvet covers, and of course sheets were donated to Liberty by The Study at Yale, a new hotel in town. These linens otherwise would have been discarded. And as coincidence would happen, the day of the linen delivery was the same day that a new client was moving into one of the Dwight area houses and needed bedding. Several days later, one of Liberty's clients who lives in the community asked his case manager for linen. We were able to immediately provide it and the bare mattress is now covered. The economic reality for our clients living on disability is grim. After paying their required portion of the rent, clients may have about \$300 per month to spend. With such a tight budget, items that most of us regard as necessities (sheets, bed covers) may move to a luxury status and thanks to Elaine and The Study we now have plenty to offer.

## Board Update...

The Liberty Community Services Board of Directors experienced turnover this summer as a combination of changing circumstances and term limits resulted in the departure of five Board members. Board Members Darin Bahl and Maud Sandbo resigned as a result of relocating out of State. Doug Rae resigned due to additional obligations. Mark Shiffrin and Robert Orr ended their six-year terms in June. We thank Darin, Maud, Doug, Robert, and Mark for their volunteer commitment to Liberty.

Luckily, we have been able to recruit additional Board members to fill the gaps left from the people who have left. Liz Salsedo joined the Board this Fall. Liz recently relocated to New Haven from the Hartford area and is an attorney who works for Thomsen-Reuters. Jeff Hudson also joined the Board. Jeff is a Vice-President of NewAlliance Bank and is also the owner of the Rumberos Dance Studio which is located on State Street next to the Safe Haven building. We are excited that Liz and Jeff will add their talents and knowledge to the Liberty Board.

## Liberty Garden...

After a long and plentiful summer, Liberty's garden program has wrapped up for the year. For the last four months clients have had the opportunity to grow their own vegetables, flowers, and herbs. Tom Bell, Liberty's community gardener recalls, "We would pile into the van on Wednesday and Friday mornings and drive out to our garden which is beautifully wedged between West Rock Park and the New Haven Horseshoe Club." In between bird watching and trading stories we worked hard at tending our plants. Despite the cold rains of last June (and skirmishes with the neighborhood's population of groundhogs) we were able to harvest a great deal of produce. Our corn on the cob was the biggest hit with the Day Program clients, but we also had success with everything from cooking greens to pumpkins. Trips to the garden were relaxing as well as productive. As one client described, "the sense of ownership we all felt was a valuable part of the program. We also took pride in coming back with fresh produce to share with other residents at Safe Haven."

Now as the growing season draws to a close we are looking towards next spring and ideas for the future. In the coming year we plan to work with community gardeners in Westville to expand the size of our garden and to encourage the bonds between our program and the larger community. For now we'll sharpen the blades of our pruners and shovels and count off the days until the spring thaw and our return to the garden. You can hear more about the garden in the WSHU Public Radio story about us at: <http://www.wshu.org/news/story.php?ID=7129>



## Day Program Update...

As the Day Program enters its third year of operation, it's only appropriate to reflect on its humble beginnings. In early September 2007, staff excitedly prepared group curriculum, finalized program policies and procedures, rearranged the community room at Safe Haven, and contacted individuals on the Safe Haven waiting list to tell them about this new service. Staff anxiously awaited the first day the doors opened, wondering how many people would come to the program. One man came, and the staff explained the program rules, ran groups (albeit very small ones), and helped the client in the computer lab. As days and weeks passed, more clients started trickling



in the doors, and, by December, a steady crowd of 15 people per day began utilizing the Day Program. Two years later, many things have changed. The schedule has been tweaked to best meet client needs, and new rules and policies have been put into place as others have become outdated. That first Day Program client no longer attends the program, as he has been successfully housed for over a year. Approximately 150 people have enrolled in the program, some of whom have gained housing, employment, or benefits with the help of staff in the program. Many clients, however, remain with the program for several months while working on improving their lives. Some people come daily for weeks at a time, while others arrive a couple of times a week to receive services and just check-in with staff. Here's a brief glimpse into who is taking advantage of the Day Program's services:

- Someone currently on unemployment, who is studying to become a medical paraprofessional and then will take other courses in the medical field.
- An individual who just moved into their own subsidized apartment. Staff continues to help them get furniture and connect with community resources.
- An individual who works part time and is waiting for housing. The individual participates in many groups and rests while in the program.
- A person who does general labor work and has been in and out of the shelter system for several years. This person seeks a permanent position to end this cycle of going in and out of the shelter when temporary jobs end.
- Someone recovering from an automobile accident that has changed their projected career path due to slight disability.

A variety of individuals from many different backgrounds and dealing with many unique situations participate in the Day Program. In the year to come, the staff hopes to reach out to even more individuals confronting homelessness, to offer not only tangible services, but a place where dignity and respect are available to all.



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## About Us...

For over two decades, Liberty Community Services has offered a new beginning to individuals in our community facing homelessness, addiction or chronic illness. Liberty provides a stable place to live with supportive services that help foster physical and psychological health. This combination of stability and care helps to bring about life-saving changes.

We are proud to be a part of the success of those we serve and to support the community we share one individual at a time.

## Thank you...

On behalf of the individuals we serve, our Board and Staff, we wish to thank all our donors, volunteers and sponsors. We'd like to pay special thanks to:

- \* Broadway Cares
- \* AT&T Employee Fund
- \* AIDS Walk New Haven
- \* NewAlliance Foundation for donation to improve State Street storefront
- \* United Healthcare Employees who participated in a Volunteer Work Day
- \* The Study at Yale for donation of linens & towels
- \* Kulvinskas Family for furniture donation
- \* Nancy Leisa for volunteering to teach health classes to clients
- \* David Brotman, Volunteer

**For more information about our programs, staff and events  
please visit our website:  
[www.libertycs.org](http://www.libertycs.org)**