



Spring 2011

The Liberty Newsletter



New Haven's Fashion Community Comes Together for a Fabulous Night at Project STYLE



The third annual Project STYLE fashion event was attended by 300 local fashionistas at the New Haven Lawn Club on April 14th to support Liberty's efforts to help New Haven's homeless community living with HIV/AIDS and mental illness.

Emmett McCarthy, Project Runway alumnus and New Haven-born designer, was the curator of the show and Sonia Baghdady, News 8 anchor, hosted the event. Along with Emmett, Tracy Bonosconi, Gary Greco, and Keisha Blake donated their creative talents and energy to present a show that included 7 local up-and-coming designers who showed their lines. Awards were to Tia Waters (grand prize), Neville Wisdom and Samantha Violante (runners-up). Specials thanks to the other designers who presented their beautiful creations (Whitni Dickin, Denise Miller, Monica Rak, Brittany Solem, and Catherine Cazes Wiley). Our sincere thanks

to all of the models as well (Mitrah Avini, Hillary Barr, Julie Bilotta, Amber Boroski, Agnes Bradbury, Cara Ann Cama, Griselle Carrano, Bree DiMaio, Jasmin Figueroa, Dajuana Goins, Chidinma Gubor, Monica Laudemberger, Karen Leary, Jen Luciani, Casey Maher, Marisa Messer, Rohannia Mooyin, Carine Narcisse, Sherese Reddick, Paris Robinson, Barbara Sahon, Kate Simpson, Sarah Skrip, Shampayne Smith, Haley Vincent, and Capri Visintini).

We are very grateful to the following sponsors for supporting Liberty's work and helping to make Project STYLE a financial success: the NewAlliance Foundation, the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, Yale-New Haven Hospital, Hedgeye Risk Management, Yale University Properties, Citizens Bank Foundation, and a very special anonymous donor. The event raised \$30,000 to help Liberty continue to bring hope, help and meaningful solutions to individuals facing homelessness in our New Haven community. We offer our sincere thanks to all those who contributed to making this a wonderful and



John Bradley (left) and Emmett McCarthy (right) at Project STYLE.



From left to right: Sangene Oswald, Antoinette Stanley, Daniqua Simmons, Lily Adams, Tia Lynn Waters, Sonia Baghdady, & John Bradley.

successful event. In particular, we wish to thank the following individuals: John Bradley, Liberty Executive Director and visionary; Emmett McCarthy, curator and designer; Tracy Bonosconi, Gary Greco, and Keisha Blake, creative team; Steve Blazo, photography; James Boemmels, videography, Stevi Moore, makeup; Edward (Ted) Oberon, music; Richard Penna Salon; Levi Peterson, hair; Rimagé Salon & Spa; Andrew Rubenoff, design, lighting, and music; Julius Stone, stage manager; Sheila Allen Bell, event chairperson; and Pansy Blake, sponsorship chairperson.



A Note from John Bradley, Executive Director

A few weeks ago, we invited new Board members Seila Mosquera and Fred Acquavita to meet some clients who are living in Liberty's Transitional Living Program. After one man told a small part of what led him to Liberty, he briefly described his childhood and ended the story by saying in a resigned way, "I never had a chance." With Liberty's help, people who haven't had many chances can think about the future rather than the past. Permanent housing, which Liberty has provided to hundreds of men and women over the years, is the beginning of a new chance – a chance for a peaceful and productive life.

On a single day this spring, Liberty staff helped five formerly homeless individuals move into their own apartments. Staff and clients celebrated as individuals were handed keys to their apartments and a chance to create a full life. Thanks to the support of the State and federal government, donors and volunteers, homelessness in New Haven is flattening despite a terrible economic downturn. We can do more to end homelessness and we appreciate all the supporters of that effort.

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Board Highlight: Jeff Hudson

Jeff Hudson joined the Board of Liberty three years ago. Originally from New York City, Jeff's first-hand knowledge about the issues that are faced by clients who come to Liberty led him to decide to join the Board. After graduating from college, Jeff moved to the New Haven area when he was employed by People's Bank. Jeff served as Vice President of NewAlliance Bank until just recently, when he left to join Revelwood Corporation as a consultant in business analytics. Six years ago, Jeff also started the Rumberos Dance Studio where he teaches Salsa and other dances. Rumberos is located on State Street in New Haven, close to Liberty's Safe Haven building.



Jeff has been a strong supporter of Liberty's programs. This past winter, he developed a video of the Safe Haven Sunday brunch which he used as a method for spreading the word and fundraising for the program. In addition, Jeff sold dozens of tickets to our Project STYLE fundraiser and donated items for the event's silent auction. Jeff said that he is inspired by the people he has met who are receiving services from Liberty and wants to help make New Haven a better community for some people whose lives are sometimes forgotten.

Thank you, Jeff.

Cut-a-Thon Benefiting Liberty Held at Local Salon

On February 13th, Rimagé Salon & Spa, located on Chapel Street in New Haven, opened their doors to support Liberty's Safe Haven Brunch by hosting a Cut-a-Thon. Through their efforts we were able to keep the Brunch open through the remainder of this past winter.



Team Rimagé and our Cut-a-Thon volunteers.



Special thanks to Rimagé Artistic Director Len Yanavich (above).

The Liberty Newsletter

Editor: Daniel Bell

Advisors: John Bradley & Ellen Gabrielle

Sunday Brunch at Safe Haven

When we hear “Sunday Brunch,” the phrase usually brings to mind fond memories of family gatherings, celebrating with friends or just a quiet Sunday enjoying our favorite food. For Liberty Community Services, it means these things and so much more. Throughout the winter months our homeless community in New Haven comes to our Safe Haven Sunday Brunch when they leave the shelters or the streets. They share a meal and some companionship for a few hours out of the cold and away from the isolation of the streets.

The Brunch also offers an opportunity for our trained staff members to introduce our guests to the services that we provide at Liberty and those that are available in the community. It allows us to refer at least three people each week to needed services and ultimately find them permanent housing. One individual, whose situation is not uncommon among our guests, came to us with untreated mental illness, addiction issues and, though he was housed, was in danger of being evicted. After many months of intensive case management, treatment for his mental illness and addiction, he is now housed, working and in recovery.

Liberty began the Brunch in 2009 because Sundays are difficult days for our homeless people in New Haven. Agencies that offer services are not open, public buildings are closed and meal programs are limited. Each Sunday we serve up to 100 people a warm, hearty catered meal, served by caring volunteers from our Day Program and Liberty staff in our community room at Safe Haven.

Last winter we struggled to keep the Brunch open. Thankfully, however, due to our Cut-a-Thon and the generosity of an anonymous donor, and we were able to fund it until the first day of spring. We hope that our readers will consider helping us keep our Safe Haven Sunday Brunch open throughout the next winter season. Your contribution will allow us to continue to offer this exceptional service to our homeless community.

Bon Appétit!

Since 2009, volunteers from Trinity Baptist Church in New Haven have been serving meals to Safe Haven and Day Program clients on a Saturday afternoon each month during the winter. Below one of the volunteers, Rachel Gilson, offers some of her reflections on her time helping with these lunches. We are deeply grateful to the men and women from Trinity Baptist who have given of their time and resources to provide lunches for Liberty clients.

I have had a great experience serving lunches at Liberty Safe Haven. The residents and Day Program visitors are polite, thankful, and friendly. I have heard several stories from the residents about their lives, past, present and hopes for the future. It's grown my understanding that the experience of being homeless is so individual—there are so many different reasons and also different reactions. Interacting with these individuals has made the issue more real to me, more personal. It has been a great pleasure, after serving lunch, to see people from Safe Haven around town, and be able to greet them by name and ask how they're doing, to make a real person-to-person connection with the community.



Volunteers Jeff Bingham (left) and William Briscoe (right) from Trinity Baptist Church serving lunch to clients on a Saturday afternoon in February at Safe Haven.



Kim and Sara.

Liberty Goes to the Dogs

Kim Tchakirides, Project Specialist/Trainer at Liberty, writes below about an unlikely friend she met at the office.

Sara and her owner have a bond like no other. They are the best of friends, always looking out for one another. Even though Sara's owner is homeless, she never wants for anything. Some would say that she is better taken care of than her owner. Sara's owner makes sure she has food before he does. Sara also gets veterinary care regularly, while her owner has not seen a doctor in years.

Over the past several months, while Liberty has been working with Sara's owner to obtain permanent housing, she has become somewhat of a mascot at our main office. She greets all of the Liberty staff with kisses and hugs, her tail wagging constantly. Sara should be a reminder to all that homelessness includes beloved pets as well. Please remember this as you donate to your local charities.

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PLEASE NOTE:

**AS OF AUGUST 1, 2011, OUR
MAIN OFFICE LOCATION WILL BE
MOVING TO 129 CHURCH STREET,
SUITE 202, NEW HAVEN, CT 06510**

A Very Special Thanks to...

- ◆ AT&T Employees' Community Services Fund
- ◆ Blue State Coffee
- ◆ The Community Foundation of New Jersey
- ◆ Rimage Salon & Spa
- ◆ Eric Rogers of Sweet Relief Catering
- ◆ Trinity Episcopal Church on the Green
- ◆ Wells Fargo Bank (formerly Wachovia)

giveGreater.org Challenge a Success

We are pleased to announce that we surpassed our goal of receiving 50 donations of \$50 or more in order to obtain a matching grant from the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven during its giveGreater.org 2010 Challenge. Many thanks to all of you who helped to make this campaign a success.

Car Donation

Liberty has been selected to receive a 2007 Toyota Camry (see photo on right) through the Recycled Rides program, which is jointly operated by the Connecticut Collision Repair Specialists (CCRS) and Hands on Hartford.



It's a Girl!

We are extremely happy to announce that Shalisha Roberts, a Liberty case advocate, gave birth to a beautiful baby girl named Violet on April 27, 2011. We wish Shalisha and her family all the best during this exiting time in their lives.