

TOWN OF STONINGTON, CONNECTICUT

WINTER 2023 ISSUE

STONINGTON

magazine



*Stonington Beautification Holiday Flower Boxes
and Starry Lights across the Pawcatuck River*

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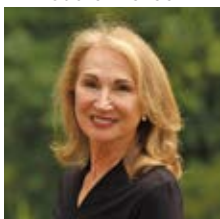
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STONINGTON TOWN HALL

152 Elm Street, Stonington, CT 06378

Monday-Friday 8:30am to 4pm

STONINGTON HUMAN SERVICES

166 South Broad Street, Pawcatuck, CT 06379

Monday-Friday 8:30am to 4:00pm

STONINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

173 South Broad Street, Pawcatuck, CT 06379

Monday-Friday 8:30am to 4pm

911 for Emergencies

TRANSFER STATION

151 Greenhaven Road, Pawcatuck, CT 06379

Monday-Tuesday/Thursday-Friday: 9-3

(Closed Wednesday); Saturday: 8-3; Sunday 8-1

Administrative Services	(860) 535-5000
Animal Control	(860) 599-4411
Assessment Department	(860) 535-5098
Building Official.....	(860) 535-5075
Emergency Management	(860) 535-5050
Engineering	(860) 535-5076
Finance Department.....	(860) 535-5070
Highway	(860) 535-5055
Human Services	(860) 535-5015
Planning Department	(860) 535-5095
Public Works.....	(860) 535-5055
Registrars of Voters.....	(860) 535-5047
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Sanitarian.....	(860) 535-5010
Selectmen's Office	(860) 535-5050
Solid Waste and Recycling.....	(860) 535-5099
Transfer Station	(860) 535-5088
Police Department.....	(860) 599-4411
Tax Collector	(860) 535-5080
Town Clerk	(860) 535-5060
Water Pollution Authority.....	(860) 535-5065

www.stonington-ct.gov

Dear Stonington Residents,

All of the important work underway in the Town is thanks to the efforts of many different people coming together, including staff, volunteers and other community partners. We are grateful for all the time and effort put forth by so many people working to improve our community. Recently we were reminded of the motto of our local rotary clubs "service above self".

There are so many who make our community so special, and we wanted to dedicate this update to highlighting some of the work taken on by the Town of Stonington staff.

In looking at our Town's budget, all the work undertaken by our municipal government falls into five categories: General Government (which includes Administrative Services, Assessment, Finance, First Selectman, Planning, Tax Collection & Town Clerk); Human Services; Police; Public Works (which includes Highway, Engineering, Facilities; Building; Solid Waste and WPCA) and our school system.

The dedicated work taken on by those who work for the Town of Stonington is too vast to fit into this update, but we have pulled a few highlights below.

Human Services has a mission to foster a more collaborative community by connecting residents with resources, support and facilities that provide the framework for a healthy and fulfilling life in the Town of Stonington. The Department is comprised of four divisions: Social Services, Recreation, Youth and Family Services and Senior Services. This team runs our Town's summer camp, they offer specialized case management home visits for residents in need of cognitive support, such as those with Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia. They run our new Housing Rehabilitation Program, providing loans for low to moderate income property owners for eligible housing rehabilitation work. They also oversee the Juvenile Diversion Board and Prevention Council.

The Solid Waste Office has responsibility for the operation of the Transfer Station, oversight of the Commercial and Residential Municipal Solid Waste Collection Programs, Recycling Collection and Education Programs and is Stonington's representative on the Southeastern Connecticut Regional Resources Recovery Authority (SCRRA). They have made Stonington a leader in the State for sustainability initiatives aimed at reducing our waste stream. Thanks to their efforts, in addition to traditional recycling, we have taken food waste, textiles, and plastic film (i.e., produce or dry-cleaning bags) from our trash stream.

The Public Works Department is responsible for our local infrastructure and a wide range of services, including: 2,370 Roadway Signs; 116 miles of road system; 45 miles of stormwater drainage pipe; 44 miles

of sidewalks; 1,600 catch basins, 359 outfalls, and over 6 detention/retention ponds; 45 Historic Cemeteries; 17 Bridge Structures; 8 athletic turf fields; 4 parks and one Hurricane Protection system.

The Department provides direct services to the community through snow removal, emergency response, community event support, maintaining and improving our roadways, proactively improving stormwater management and resolving issues along the road right of way.

The Department of Planning manages Stonington's land use decision-making, permitting and enforcement processes. The Department provides technical assistance to several commissions and also leads long-range planning initiatives such as the Plan of Conservation and Development. The Department also assists with various special grant-related projects, such as the Mystic River Boathouse Park project. The Department's other main responsibility is enforcement of the Town's land use regulations on behalf of relevant commissions.

The Stonington Police Department provides a diverse range of services to residents and visitors. They respond to a variety of calls that consist of criminal complaints, medical calls, motor vehicle accidents and mental health assistance. The town, along with its nonprofits and businesses, host many events throughout the year requiring police services. The department continues to operate a Marine Unit for our large coastline and provide Animal Control services to the town. They also provide outreach and educational programs for the schools and residents. In a recent review of the many thank you letters the men and women of the Stonington Police Department receive it was clear how compassionate, hardworking and devoted our team is and we are extremely grateful for work they undertake every day, at all hours of the day and night.

To all those doing the work that makes the Town of Stonington what it is, we wish to extend a very sincere thank you. Thank you for being part of our community and being a big part, often behind the scenes, in what makes our community so special.

Thank you, Stonington,
Sincerely,

Danielle Chesebrough, First Selectman

Deborah Downie, Selectwoman

June Strunk, Selectwoman



Tax Collectors Office

Please be advised the Town of Stonington, CT is using a new collection agency. If you receive a letter from TaxServ this is not a scam, you must call TaxServ to discuss your account and arrange payment. You can contact TaxServ at www.taxserv.com or 860-724-9100.

Be on the look-out for your reminder postcard for second installments for Real Estate and Personal Property taxes. Postcards will be mailed the beginning of December. Second installments are due January 1, 2024 and the last day to pay without interest and penalty is February 1, 2024.

Automobiles registered after October 1, 2022 will be receiving a Supplemental Motor Vehicle bill at the end of December and are payable January 1, 2024 – February 1, 2024.

Department of Assessment

The Department of Assessment would like to remind all residents that the Homeowners-Totally Disabled Program and the Additional Veteran Program opens for applications Feb. 1st, 2024. The application period for the Homeowners ends on May 15, 2024 and the Additional Veterans ends on Sept.30, 2024. Both of these programs are income based. Please contact the Department of Assessment at 860-535-5098 or assessor@stonington-ct.gov for more information or to schedule an appointment.

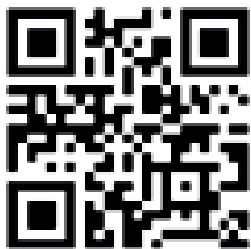
STONINGTON ALERTS

During emergencies and weather-related events, receive important information from the Stonington Emergency Management Team.

Visit <https://www.stonington-ct.gov/emergency-management> and click on the "Stonington Alerts" icon to sign up. Create a simple account and tailor it to your notification preferences.

***If we can't reach you,
we can't ALERT you.***

REGISTER TODAY



Stonington Beautification

The Stonington Beautification Committee had a busy year with many successful projects. The latest and most exciting initiative (that has been "in the works" since 2018) was the addition of new lighting in Downtown Pawcatuck and Donahue Park. The goal of the project was to improve the safety for residents and visitors, as well as create a more welcoming and aesthetically pleasing environment for all to enjoy!

The committee could not have brought this plan to fruition without the support from Town of Stonington leadership including, but not limited to: Board of Selectmen; Board of Finance; Department of Public Works; Stonington Police Department and Stonington Human Services – who all pooled resources and collaboratively worked on creative solutions to reach our goal.

The committee also worked to add new gardens under the Amtrak bridge to beautify the gateway into Downtown Pawcatuck. We are thankful for the support of our local business and residents who made this portion of the project possible.

If you would like to make a donation to support future projects, please send a check to: Stonington Beautification Committee, C/O Stonington Human Services, 166 South Broad St, Pawcatuck, CT 06379.

If you have questions or would like to volunteer, please email us at stoningtonbeautificaion@stonington-ct.gov.



Safe Futures

Safe Futures is happy to share the success of our Annual 4K Safe Walk that took place this October. Our warmest thank you to everyone who came out to show their support and walk with us in recognition of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Special thanks to our Honorary Chair Mike Buscetto, the Public Schools and Town of Waterford for hosting the walk, and all police chiefs, local officials, state representatives, senators, community partners, Board members, school teams and representatives, our photographer Anne Bishop Ogden, and all others.

Our work to support victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and trafficking in southeastern Connecticut continues every day. To learn more about our services, visit our website at: safefuturesct.org. We thank you all for your support!

Stormwater Awareness

“You’re not just washing your car in the driveway” – Long Island Sound Study. As winter approaches in New England and freezing overnight temperatures require salted roads for safety, our cars need extra maintenance and cleaning. Washing your car in a paved driveway which drains into the road can bring harmful levels of surfactants, metals, and plastics into local waterways. Bringing your car to a commercial carwash is the best way to make sure the runoff water is properly cleaned. Otherwise, washing your car in a stone driveway, in the grass, or on a paved driveway which drains to your yard is helpful in preventing pollution from entering your local waters. To learn more you can visit <https://longislandsoundstudy.net/> or visit us at our website <https://www.stonington-ct.gov/engineering>



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Listed with Tammy Tinnerello



**Mary Ann
Agostini**

860.930.3813
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**Ellen "ET"
Fox**

860.235.8333
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**Amanda
Gaudette**

860.859.7610
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STONINGTON HUMAN SERVICES

PLAY • PROVIDE • PROSPER

As the year draws to a close, we reflect on all that we are thankful for. New community connections, increased open and transparent communication and robust outreach remain at our forefront, as well as create excitement for the year to come. From the newly renovated pickleball / tennis courts, to the massive increase in referrals from our forged partnership between our Department and the Stonington Police and Schools, leave us with hopeful, grateful hearts. We love connecting with residents and want to hear from you on how we could fill existing gaps in service, as well as provide more diverse recreation and enrichment offerings for the community at-large. Please do not hesitate to reach out. Together, we are making a difference!

THANK YOU for the tremendous support received for the 2023 Benefit Golf Classic!

All funds raised will directly support our neighbors that need it the most in the form of program scholarships, basic needs assistance and expanded recreation/enrichment opportunities. TEE SPONSORS: Dinoto Funeral Home; Grey Sail Brewing Company, LLC; Jewett City Savings Bank; Kris Theodore – Real Estate Agent CT/RI – Stonington Realty; McQuade's Marketplace; Rawson Materials; Stonington Prevention Council.

Do you have an idea for a program that may benefit residents in Stonington – social services, recreation,

Our mission is to foster a more collaborative community by connecting residents with resources, support and facilities that provide the framework for a healthy, fulfilling life in the Town of Stonington.

Leanne Theodore – Director, ltheodore@stonington-ct.gov

Amanda Davis – Human Services Specialist, adavis@stonington-ct.gov

Julie Holland – Receptionist, jholland@stonington-ct.gov

senior services or youth and family services-based? Please reach out to Human Services Director, Leanne Theodore (via email or phone) - we would love to hear from you!

4TH ANNUAL STONINGTON HOLIDAY DECORATING CONTEST

Celebrate COMMUNITY and join the FUN! Sponsored by Stonington Human Services and Stonington Beautification Committee. ALL Town of Stonington residents, businesses, schools and community organizations are eligible to participate ~ Create a display at your own location ~ 1st and 2nd place awards in each category! No fee to participate!

TO PARTICIPATE send a picture or video of your holiday display to: ltheodore@stonington-ct.gov

JOIN the Stonington Holiday Decorating Contest group on Facebook. Your submission will be posted in the respective photo album for voting.

VOTE BY LIKING your favorite(s)! The displays with the most likes by December 22nd will be crowned the 2023 winners!

****IF YOU ARE HAVING A MENTAL HEALTH
EMERGENCY YOU CAN DIAL 988 DIRECT TO
SPEAK TO SOMEONE 24/7. CALL 911 IF YOU ARE
HAVING THOUGHTS OF SELF-HARM.****



Photo by Tim Martin



STONINGTON HUMAN SERVICES

SENIOR SERVICES

Acting as an advocate for elderly residents in the Town of Stonington, the Commission on Aging (COA) is a twelve-member commission, which meets monthly in order to discuss issues with regard to the elderly. The division provides local and regional access to supportive services, as well as a variety of educational workshops and socialization opportunities.

Michelle Banks – Municipal Agent for the Elderly, mbanks@stonington-ct.gov

Cynthia Gardiner – Program Coordinator/Case Manager, cgardiner@stonington-ct.gov

Has a friend/family member recently been experiencing memory issues and/or diagnosed with a mild cognitive impairment, Dementia or Alzheimer's Disease? We are here to help! Please reach out and our case managers would be happy to set up a meeting in our office OR conduct a home visit to offer warm, caring, educational and HELPFUL solutions to support your situation.

AARP SMART DRIVER™ (FOR ADULTS 50+)

The AARP Smart Driver™ is the nation's first and largest refresher course designed specifically for drivers age 50 and older. For more than 35 years, the course has taught over 16 million motorists proven safety strategies so they can continue driving safely for as long as possible. **YOU MAY SAVE ON AUTO INSURANCE!** Smart Drivers may earn a discount on their auto insurance premium after completing the course. \$20/ AARP Member; \$25 Non-Member. Pre-registration required. For an updated list of classes, please visit <https://stonington.recdesk.com> or call (860) 535-5015.

THE KING OF ROCK & ROLL is coming to Pawcatuck! Elvis Tribute Performance – Sunday, December 3rd. Join us for a fun afternoon at the Pawcatuck VFW from 2:00-3:00PM. Purchase a ticket in advance or at the door -\$5/Stonington residents; \$10; Non-Residents.

Robert Black is an Award-Winning Elvis Presley Tribute Artist performing nationwide. Robert Black's authentic portrayal and exciting interpretation of Elvis Presley, has made him one of the country's most sought after, and popular tribute performers. A true professional, Robert's crowd-pleasing style, and spot-on mannerisms mixed with his unique blend of vocal talent, charisma, and elaborate costuming make him a favorite of fans worldwide. Robert Black's most appealing trait is that he has the ability to connect with the audience and make them feel like they are part of the show. Many fans from across the country think of him not only as their favorite entertainer, but also a good friend. He is very personable and has the ability to reach people and touch their hearts through his performances.

PROTECTIVE SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY

The Protective Services for the Elderly Program (PSE) is designed to safeguard people 60 years and older from physical, mental and emotional abuse, neglect, abandonment, and /or financial abuse and exploitation. This includes allegations of abuse or neglect of residents in long-term care facilities. If you suspect or believe that an elderly person is a victim of abuse, neglect (including self-neglect) exploitation or abandonment contact the Protective Service Intake Lines: During Business Hours: In-State: 1-888-385-4225 (Toll Free) Out of State: 1-800-203-1234 (Toll Free) After Hour Emergencies: In-State: 2-1-1 (Toll Free) Out of State: 1-800-203-1234 (Toll Free)

Reference: <https://portal.ct.gov/dss/Social-Work-Services/Social-Work-Services/Related-Resources>

SENIOR & DISABLED TRANSPORTATION FOR STONINGTON RESIDENTS

The Eastern CT Transportation Consortium, Inc. (ECTC) provides Stonington seniors, age 60+ (and disabled residents, age 18+) with medical transportation (Dial-A-Ride), as well as reimbursement to caregivers for medical mileage expenses for those who have access to a driver. The Dial-A-Ride program will provide transportation for residents to medical trips within New London County and Westerly. Please contact Human Services for further information and to register.





STONINGTON HUMAN SERVICES

RECREATION

Serving as an advocate for meeting the recreational needs of all the residents within the Town of Stonington by providing youth and adults with an abundance of seasonal and year-round recreational opportunities. Residents can participate in camps, clinics, leagues, open runs, trips and fitness programs.

Richard Ward – Recreation Administrator, rward@stonington-ct.gov

Peter Christina – Recreation Program Coordinator,
pchristina@stonington-ct.gov

ADULT FITNESS & EXERCISE CLASSES

The following Fitness & Exercise Classes are offered this winter. Please note the location of each class.

FITNESS CLASS FEES / PUNCH CARDS

Good for any current or future Fitness Class hosted by Stonington Human Services—Recreation Division

- 10 Class Punch Card \$45.00
- 20 Class Punch Card \$80.00

Punch cards made be purchased during normal business hours - M-F 9am-12pm / 1-3:30pm - at Stonington Human Services or by calling (860) 535-5015

BOOMERS EXERCISE

Days: Mon & Wed 8:30-9:30AM

Location: St. Michael's Church Hall

Participants use weights, bands and balls to strengthen muscles and increase range of motion. Balance and fall prevention exercises are included. Designed specifically for individuals ages 50 and older. Join at any time. Age: 50+ Instructor: Michele Gardner

CHAIR YOGA

Day: Mondays 9:45-10:30 AM

Location: St. Michael's Church Hall

Slow down, stretch and breathe in this 45-minute seated and standing class. Work within your own ability to improve flexibility and soothe tight muscles. Bring a water bottle for hydration. Instructor: Michele Gardner

GROOVE & TONE

Day: Fridays 8:30-9:30AM

Location: Stonington Arms Groove & Tone uses weights, balls and bands for strength and balance exercises - mixed in with cardio dances - all set to some jazzy music, along with some popular tunes, that you'll be sure to recognize. Instructor: Tina Pagliusi

YOGA FOR EVERYONE

Day: Thursdays 4:00-5:00pm

Location: Stonington Arms

Practice a gentle style of yoga that focuses equally on strength, stretching and balance. Perfect for new students and seasoned yogis alike. Please bring a mat or towel/blanket to practice on as well as any additional props that are part of your usual practice (block, strap, pillow, extra blanket). Instructor: Chelsea Hauck

HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL LEAGUE

REC High School Basketball league held at Stonington High School. Games will be played once a week in the evenings starting the week of Jan 8th through March 1st. (including playoffs). Important dates: Registration deadline 1/8/24; Team Draft Day (all players must attend the open gym) and scheduled start of games are still TBD based on gym availability week to week.

Age: Boys and Girls at SHS Grades 9-12

Place: Stonington High School

Fees: \$40.00 – SHS Students only

REC INDOOR FLAG LEAGUE

Our ever-popular
INDOOR FLAG
FOOTBALL LEAGUE
starts in December.



Registration is limited and on a first come, first served basis. This is strictly a recreational league and commitment to the program should not conflict with other winter sports. There are NO PRACTICES during the week. Each player will receive a Licensed NFL Flag reversible team jersey.

Where: Mystic Indoor Sports, 90 Welles Rd, Mystic

SESSION 1: December 3–January 14 (5 weeks)

- Grades K-1
- Grades 2-3
- High School Grades 9-12

Fees: \$105/Resident • \$120/Non-Resident

SESSION 2: January 21–February 25 (6 weeks)

- Grades 4-5
- Grades 6-8

Fees: \$120/Resident • \$135/Non-Resident

*Sessions are subject to change based on registration



FAR FLUNG DISC GOLF AT SPELLMAN PARK

ADDITIONAL LEGACY AND TEE SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE!

Disc Golf is here! It is not only growing in popularity across the state and region, but right here in Stonington! We are proud of the 9 holes already built behind Stonington High School in Spellman Park and the response has been TREMENDOUS! We have averaged over 90 rounds/month in 2023! Please consider helping us build an additional 9-holes and add to this ever-growing sport right here in Stonington!!

What is Disc Golf– It is played much like traditional golf (a.k.a. ball golf) in that the object is to complete the round in as few strokes (throws) as possible. However, disc golfers throw a plastic disc at an elevated target (basket). The sport is growing rapidly, with multiple new courses opening in our area this year alone. It is estimated that over 50 million Disc Golf rounds were played in 2020!!

Who Plays Disc Golf– Disc Golf is a fun and challenging experience for school-aged children through the golden years. It is available to practically everyone, and is a fantastic lifetime sport!



BENEFITS OF DISC GOLF

Social– Disc Golf offers park visitors a fun, healthy way to exercise with friends & family.

Health– Disc Golf is a low impact activity that gets people out and walking. It is fun for all ages and abilities and is a great way to introduce both upper and lower body conditioning.

Economical– Disc Golf equipment is surprisingly inexpensive to install and maintain.

Environmental– Disc Golf will highlight the incredible features of Spellman Park and utilize previously under-utilized areas that cannot support other activities.

Programming– The options for year-round competitive and recreational activity, plus the opportunity to provide lessons, classes, camps, leagues and tournaments are endless.

LEGACY SPONSOR \$850 (BACK 9 HOLES)

Company identified at any given hole (on a first come / first served basis) as Hole Sponsor and listed on permanent signage at both the tee box and basket areas. Listed on all marketing, brochures, news releases & social media announcements; Company name/logo displayed in proportion at any future events held on the course.

TEE SPONSOR \$150 (2024-2025 SEASON)

Offered and available on an annual/seasonal basis. Company name/logo displayed on signage at particular tee boxes on a first come / first serve basis.

To receive a packet with additional information on how to become a LEGACY or TEE SPONSOR please call (860) 535-5015 or email discgolf@stonington-ct.gov



Ethan Harris, SHS Student and Pawcatuck resident tees off from Hole #5 on the Far Flung Disc Golf Course in Spellman Park. The course is free and open to the public on a year round basis.



STONINGTON HUMAN SERVICES

— YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

DAY TRIP - NEW YORK CITY

Friday, December 1st - Join us for a day on your own in the Big Apple! Leaving Stonington Human Services at 8:00AM, returning home from the city at 7PM. Bus drops at Rockefeller Center; Pickup location TBD. \$60/Resident; \$75 Non-Resident. To register: <https://stonington.recdesk.com>.

GIFTS FROM THE HEART

Tuesday, December 5th - The best gifts are made with LOVE! Come create several unique handmade gifts for someone special this holiday season. Each gift includes all materials to make (5) gifts/cards (includes gift wrap). Location TBD ~ Open to ALL ages. Younger children may need assistance from a caregiver. Fee: \$25. Program Scholarships available to eligible families! Email LTheodore@stonington-ct.gov.

CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY PARTY

Saturday, December 9th - Please join us at Stonington High School (café/commons) from 11AM-1PM for some festive fun! Enjoy lunch, crafts, music and a special visit from Santa!

The programs and services that are offered by the Youth and Family Services Division are done so as a means of promoting positive youth development and supporting improved family and community relations.

Kristen King – Youth & Family Services Administrator, kking@stonington-ct.gov

Sara Startz – Preschool Head Teacher, sstartz@stonington-ct.gov

Emily Hamm – Assistant Preschool Teacher/Program Coordinator, ehamm@stonington-ct.gov

Miranda Krause-Cahill – Counseling Supervisor, mcahill@stonington-ct.gov

Maribeth Scahill – Counselor

WINTER BOOT PROGRAM

Stonington Human Services is currently accepting names of children in need of warm, winter boots, as well as those interested in donating to the program. Please call (860) 535-5015, send a direct message on Facebook or email to: LTheodore@stonington-ct.gov for more information.

YOUNG ADULT SOCIAL CLUB

Tailored for young adults with disabilities. Each session focuses on socialization and life skills, while enjoying games, crafts and music. This group meets at various locations within Town in order to familiarize participants with what their community has to offer. If you are interested in joining, please email KKing@stonington-ct.gov. Space is limited.

HEY KIDS... THE HOLIDAYS ARE ALMOST HERE!

Would you like to send a letter to Santa Claus DIRECTLY to the North Pole this year? He has promised to personally answer all of the letters (dropped off by December 15th) in the special holiday mailbox outside of Stonington Human Services. Just be sure to include your name and return address!

HUMAN SERVICES PRESCHOOL *ONGOING ENROLLMENT* 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAM

Every parent wants a nurturing environment for their young child's early education. Get off to a great start and enroll in our school year program! Open to fully potty-trained children ages 3-5. Located within Stonington High School.



Monday-Friday (2, 3 and 5-day opportunities) – 9:00am-12:30pm
Quality, affordable program that encourages social, emotional, physical, and intellectual growth. Structured classroom setting with a well-balanced schedule of activities and weekly curriculum themes. Reach out to our Head Teacher to schedule a classroom tour today – Sstartz@stonington-ct.gov.



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STONINGTON HUMAN SERVICES

SOCIAL SERVICES

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

It is not easy to ask for help during difficult times. We understand and we are here for you! Reach out today to connect with a case manager that can screen for a wide variety of federal, state and local programs that may be able to assist your situation. For more information or to make an appointment with a case manager, please call (860) 535-5084 or email mbanks@stonington-ct.gov.

ENERGY ASSISTANCE APPLICATIONS NOW BEING TAKEN!

TVCCA's Energy Assistance Program helps families and individuals pay their home heating bills. Priority is given to "vulnerable households" with young children, elderly or disabled individuals. Applications are being taken remotely, or in person. Please contact our office and an application packet can be sent to you to complete and return (via drop-box or mail) along with required documentation.

DID YOU KNOW...

Stonington Human Services responds 24/7 to crises that occur within the Town. From weather emergencies to house fires, our team works closely with local first responders to be there at residents' most critical times of need. We play a critical role within the Town's Emergency Operations Center to ensure residents feel safe, secure and cared for during the most vulnerable times.

UNITED WAY MOBILE FOOD PANTRY

A critical extension of the work of the Gemma E. Moran United Way/Labor Food Center, focusing on bringing fresh produce, proteins, and healthy snacks directly to those most at-risk for food insecurity in New London County. No paperwork required. Stonington High School parking lot - 1st Wednesday of each month from 4:30-5:30PM.

SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, is part of the nation's safety net against hunger. The program's debit card system allows for convenience and confidentiality. SNAP applications can be completed online at CT's DSS site and required documents can be uploaded directly to DSS at <https://connect.ct.gov>. Contact Human Services for more information or application assistance with the online

Social Services programs address poverty issues within the Town of Stonington and help to increase self-sufficiency.

Michelle Banks – Social Services Administrator, mbanks@stonington-ct.gov

Deanna Rushlow, MA – Community Outreach Specialist, drushlow@stonington-ct.gov

process. Residents are also referred to the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center's Food Pantry (860) 599-3285 and WARM Center's Congregate Meal Program (401) 596-9276 - both supported with town funds.

SPECIAL NEEDS REGISTRY

Enrolling in the Special Needs Emergency Registry lets police, fire and other first responders in your community better prepare for and respond to your needs during a hurricane, storm, homeland security or any other emergency situation that you may be experiencing. All information will remain confidential. If you, or someone you know, may need extra help during a time of emergency, please sign up today: <https://www.stonington-ct.gov/emergency-management/pages/special-needs-emergency-registry> If you would like a form emailed/mailed directly to your home, send a message to: LTheodore@stonington-ct.gov or call (860) 535-5083.

Happy Holidays

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The COMO

The Stonington Community Center is excited to welcome its new Executive Director, Dr. Matthew Haugen who joined the team earlier this year. Matt is eager to build upon the COMO legacy and help the community continue to find and explore their passions. Community members are encouraged to meet with Matt to share new ideas and discuss their hopes for the future of the COMO.

One of the COMO's goals is to continue fostering community connections and expanding programming for adults. The COMO has recently partnered with the Mystic Chapter of Cycling Without Age, a program that provides active outdoor experiences for people of all ages and abilities on a specialty trishaw bike. Community members can sign up as riding partners on the COMO website (weather permitting).

Additionally, we are excited to introduce pickleball to the COMO lineup! The gym will soon include three lined pickleball courts open to members for this fun and inclusive sport. The courts will be available for open play this winter. Please check our website at www.thecomoo.org or call the office at 860-535-2476 for more information.



The Ocean Community YMCA in Mystic is coordinated the Tarzan Brown Mystic River Run and the Turkey Trot & Dip again this year!

The 48th Annual Tarzan Brown Kids 1-mile Fun run is at 12:45pm, and the 5.5-mile run begins at 1:30pm on Sunday 5 November on Pearl Street. T-shirts guaranteed for the first 150 runners registered. Please join us for Chowder, Apples, and Apple Cider at St. Mark's Episcopal Church parking lot! Prizes will be given to the top three runners in each age category and kids will get a purple participation ribbon.

The 31st Annual Turkey Trot 5K (with 1-mile turnaround option) begins at 8:30am on Thursday 23 November at the Naik Family Branch in Mystic on Harry Austin Drive. T-shirts guaranteed for the first 300 runners registered. If it's not too cold for you, take a dip at the waterfront following the run!



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Affordable Homeownership Is The Answer

The images of Habitat for Humanity are iconic. President and Rosalynn Carter looking at blueprints. Friends and neighbors posing with hammers on a weekend morning. A group of college students raising a wall. Is that Garth Brooks in a hardhat...?

But heartwarming images don't always tell the full story. In fact, the most common myth about Habitat is we build homes and give them away to low-income families. As a result, people will often ask what they have to do to "get" a home.



Well, the first lesson is learning about what Habitat really is; specifically, that the endgame for qualifying families is an affordable, interest-free mortgage. Once that's cleared up, you just need to answer one important question...

Do you want to be a homeowner?

Ask any of our current homeowner partners – this commitment is about so much more than just moving into a new house. Habitat homes provide families who have struggled in less-than-adequate circumstances stability and peace of mind. They know they are safe, they have room to grow, and they understand the costs. But there are valuable hidden lessons, as well.

- How to be a good neighbor.
- There will always be a to-do list.
- Ants come in multiple shapes, colors, and sizes, and they're all after different things.
- When your breaker pops, your stove won't turn on, your drain clogs...there's no landlord to call.
- If you forget to close your windows before a big storm...you probably won't forget twice!

Sound scary? Maybe, but it's also empowering. Homeownership is the largest source of wealth for US households. It affords you privacy and freedom. You decide what kind of home you want, and it's your canvas to paint. You can show off your style to friends and family, play games, cook meals, celebrate holidays, birthdays, or Tuesdays! Even better, you can retire to your couch at the end of each day knowing you worked hard, but also knowing exactly what you're working towards.

Affordable homeownership improves your life, and the lives of those around you. Once the fear and

uncertainty of an unsettled living situation subside, more energy is focused on the classroom, or in the office. Families might find the time and strength to make friends with their neighbors, form new social circles, and participate in community activities.

Here in New London County, the current median rent for a 2-bedroom apartment is \$1,900/month. Housing is deemed affordable if your costs don't exceed 30% of your gross pay. Consider a single parent who works full-time, 40 hours/week making \$25/hour. The average apartment costs this family almost half of their pre-tax wages. It doesn't sound sustainable, but families are living this every day. Even if they're making it work, they're likely not saving much.

Habitat for Humanity believes that affordable homeownership is the answer for families who can't afford to buy or rent in this market. Financial literacy courses, as well as learning how to budget and save, are all part of the Habitat program. A fixed monthly payment allows you to plan for your expenses or pay down debt. Best of all, you're now building equity, and have something you can pass on in the future.



Even though the myth of giving away houses is busted (and yes, that was Garth), please call, write or stop by the office to find out about our next application period. It's the first step in a million you'll take along the way, but that path will lead you right through your own front door.

Sarah Lufler, Executive Director
Habitat for Humanity of Eastern Connecticut

Please visit our website www.habitatct.org for all of our information, and to apply. Applications must be completed online. Our next application period will be in March 2024.



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Welcomes Two New Board Members

Always Home is excited to announce the addition of two new members to its Board of Directors: Ali Mitchell and Lydia Shell.

Ali is a policy, strategic planning, and non-profit management professional who works for Lighthouse Consulting Group in Warren, Rhode Island. "I am excited to join the Always Home board because it has done what many organizations struggle to do," she shared. "It has taken on a big goal - Preventing Family Homelessness - and has not gotten overwhelmed by its importance or complexity. Instead, Always Home takes clear steps and develops practical programs to accomplish it."



Lydia is Director of Philanthropy for the Mystic Aquarium, where she has worked for the past 15 years. "Always Home has done so much to help those in need of emergency housing assistance and has worked tirelessly to prevent homelessness from happening to the most vulnerable in our community," she said.



Always Home's Board President Annemarie Seifert remarked that Ali and Lydia are joining the board at a time when low-income families' access to affordable housing is threatened. "We are grateful for the strength of their experience and their deep dedication to advancing our nonprofit's mission, Preventing Family Homelessness," she said.

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Celebrating our local Seniors who have worked with us for 10 years!

Seniors Helping Seniors celebrates our newest companions to join our Ten Year Club! We're happy to announce that we have a wonderful group of six employees who share our mission of keeping seniors independent in their homes for as long as possible, whom have been working with our agency for 10 years.

We are grateful to recognize the following individuals

who will join with our Ten Year Club at a recognition luncheon in November: Cathy Ann Caserta-Allen, Bonnie Everett, Janice Fitton, Nancy Gilbert, Margot Larkin, Carol Mars, and Ida Polverari. These staff join our previous 10 Year Club members who continue to work with us, and we'll celebrate together and enjoy the opportunity to reminiscence about the many faces of seniors we've assisted over the past decade-plus.

Seniors Helping Seniors is a local Companion & Homemaker agency offering non-medical care for over 15 years in the Stonington area.

Lights, Camera Action! Green Planet Films Hosts Filmmaking Workshops

Over the past year, Green Planet Films (GPF) has presented Filmmaking Workshops for teens with local and national nonprofit partners such as: the Mystic Seaport Museum, the International Ocean Film Festival, Mystic Aquarium, Lyme Arts and the Phoebe Noyes Griffin Library.

GPF has been testing out this educational outreach program and new ways to leverage education opportunities for students. With over 350 films in the GPF collection, and great relationships with many local, national, and international documentarians, these workshops are proving to be impactful and fun for participants.

The themes of each workshop are designed with non profit partners to meet the goals of each institution. Participants who sign up make short films with professional filmmakers also learn the ethics and responsibilities of filmmaking. One thing all the films have in common, the topics they choose engage the the nonprofit host in some meaningful way.

It's a great way for first time documentary filmmakers to investigate the work and collections of a museum or library as their subject. For the institution, the films become a unique way to observe the visitor experience. And of course, they are excited to see young people take ownership of key stories and collections.

GPF is a local nonprofit distributor of documentary films to the educational market. For information on Filmmaking Workshops for your nonprofit, or to learn more about GPF, visit greenplanetfilms.org.



Town of Stonington Shellfish Commission

The Stonington Shellfish Commission continues to stock the recreational shellfish beds, known as Areas A & B East of Masons Island and the Outer Quiambaug Cove area with both clams and oysters.

The Commission is always looking for ways to communicate to the general public the benefits of recreational shellfishing. Follow us on Instagram [STONINGTON-SHELLFISH](#) and on our Town website Stoningtonshellfishcommission.org.

Watch for news of the ability to purchase your annual shellfish permit online for the 2024 season with other new upgrades and benefits for the shellfishing public.



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Mystic Chamber of Commerce

SANTA ARRIVES BY TUGBOAT: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25 AT 2PM

Santa Claus is coming to town and so is Mystic's Holiday Lighted Boat Parade in Historic Downtown Mystic. Santa will pull up to Mystic River Park on the Tugboat Jean Paul thanks to Cross Sound Ferry and will greet the crowds and listen to all the children's wishes during his visit. The 'Christmas Tree Lighting' will begin at 6pm in Mystic River Park with the Holiday Lighted Boat Parade to follow. Spectators line both sides of the Mystic River to watch as decorated boats pass by in the Annual Holiday Lighted Boat Parade. This event is a holiday favorite and is celebrating it's 21st year.

PARTY OF 12 AND COMMUNITY AND TOURISM AWARDS: THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30.

The Chamber hosts its annual and our best local restaurants together with music, cocktails and your friends. Awards given are The Keal Award, Ballast Awards, Joyce Resnikoff Tourism Awards and the Just One Chance Awards. SUGAR will be playing all night long and restaurants who will be there include Rocks 21, Surf Cantina, Sift, Daniel Packer Inne, Bank & Bridge, Waffle Pop, Andiamo, Popover Eatery, Pink Basil and Angie's. Tickets are available for purchase at Mysticchamber.org and includes open bar. There will be a silent auction to benefit the Chamber with unique interesting items.



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Music Director & Conductor: Toshiyuki Shimada
Sat, Jan 27 | 7:30 pm

THE ARTIMUS PYLE BAND + SOULSHINE
FRI, FEB 9 | 8:00 PM

WORLD BALLET SERIES: SWAN LAKE
SUN, FEB 11 | 6:00 PM

UPCOMING LIVE EVENTS

EVIL WOMAN

The American ELO
Fri, Nov 10, 2023 | 8:00 pm

CONNECTICUT LYRIC OPERA

Gala Concert
Celebrating 20 Years
Sun, Nov 12, 2023 | 3:00 pm

LEWIS BLACK - OFF THE RAILS

Stand-Up Comedy
Sun, Nov 19, 2023 | 7:00 pm

MASTERS OF ILLUSION

Believe the Impossible
Sat, Nov 11, 2023 | 8:00 pm

EASTERN CONNECTICUT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Music Director & Conductor
Toshiyuki Shimada
Sat, Nov 18 | 7:30 pm

A MAGICAL CIRQUE CHRISTMAS

A Holiday Variety Show
Sun, Nov 26, 2023 | 4:00 pm

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SUNDAY DECEMBER 10 from 10am-Noon: Holiday Youth Art Workshop. La Grua Center is pleased to host another of our Youth Holiday Art Workshops! Local artisans and our friends from the Denison Pequot Nature Center and the Yellow Farmhouse Education Center will be on hand to help children create festive holiday greens and more. Drop in from 10am - noon. No registration needed. Suggested donation \$5. Visit LaGruaCenter.org for more info.

SATURDAY DECEMBER 16 at 5pm: Music Matters ~ Chopin with Jiayan Sun. This all-Chopin recital is his long-awaited Music Matters solo debut. Jiayan will share an intimate look at some of the subtlest and most entrancing repertoire by Poland's national composer. Tickets \$20. Visit LaGruaCenter.org for more info.



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PNC Community Events

Please join the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center when our community will come together to pack holiday food for our neighbors at 9:00 a.m. on December 17th. Children over age 10 are welcome with an adult chaperone. Volunteer drivers are needed on December 18th to deliver food to the homebound. Donor Angels are needed to provide Christmas toys and gifts for children. If you would like to help with these holiday events, please email executivedirector@thepnc.org.

Lunches and BINGO are available for Stonington residents at no cost on Mondays and Tuesdays. On Thursdays at noon a Speaker Series is offered with a complimentary lunch. Speaker Series topics are detailed under the Stonington Commission on Aging article in this magazine.

Senior exercise classes are FREE to Stonington residents and include day and overnight trips, painting, yoga, stretch & balance, chair yoga and tai chi. Information of upcoming events available at pawcatuckneighborhoodcenter.org.

Door-to-door rides to the PNC, shopping, banking and medical appointments are available at no cost by calling (860) 599 – 3285, ext. 102. The food pantry is open from 9:00 to 3:30, Monday through Friday. Nonperishable food, pet food, and diapers sizes 4 – 7 are always needed and appreciated.

CAREGIVER SPEAKER SERIES WITH COMPLIMENTARY LUNCH THURSDAYS AT NOON

NOVEMBER 16

Understanding and Navigating Medicare and Medicaid
Presenter: Michelle Dempsey, Title XIX specialist

3:00 p.m. Upcoming Trips with the PNC and Tours of Distinction
Presenter: Tyler Zajacz

NOVEMBER 30

Understanding Living Wills, Powers of Attorney, Trusts & Advance Directives
Presenter: Attorney Jean Ceddia

DECEMBER 7

Understanding the Impact of Physical and Occupational Therapy in the Home
Presenter: Dr. Shayla Adams

DECEMBER 14

How do you transition when your loved one deteriorates? Presenter: Samantha Descombes, RN, BSN

DECEMBER 21

Volunteer Opportunities for Seniors at the PNC
Susan Sedensky, Executive Director, Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center

*Kindly register at (860) 599 – 3285, ext. 101 or executivedirector@thepnc.org

Stonington Free Library

“Enriching Lives, Building Community”

SFL IS FOR FAMILIES

Holiday Houses are back! Call or go online to reserve yours on 11/20. The Family Reading Challenge (1st-8th grade) and 50 to Grow On (birth-7) run from 1/1 – 3/31. Drop-in Storytime begins 1/8 at 10:30 every Monday when the library is open. On display in the SFL Gallery until 12/30 is the LOVE WHERE YOU READ art show. Congratulations to all the participants!

SFL IS FOR ADULTS

SFL is partnering with area libraries on a variety of virtual programs – A Look Inside It's a Wonderful Life with Brian Rose on 12/19 and the Sinking of the Steamboat Lexington book talk with Bill Bleyer on 1/18. Check the SFL website for details and registration.

SFL IS FOR EVERYONE!

Library card holders have access to books, periodicals, DVDs, Nintendo Switch games and consoles, chromebooks and WiFi hotspots, e-books, audiobooks, monthly book groups, technology help and homebound delivery services. To get your library card or for library information visit www.stoningtonfreelibrary.org, call 860-535-0658, or email stonlib@stoningtonfreelibrary.org.

The library is open seven days a week – Monday-Thursday 10 to 7, Friday 10 to 5, Saturday & Sunday 10 to 3.



*Sanctuary by Sally McBee, First Place –
Love Where You Read Contest*



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The Eugene Atwood Fund Continues To Partner With New London County Students

The Eugene Atwood Fund continues to honor their mission to aid deserving and industrious young people who are making an honest effort to accomplish the best results in life as they embark on their 107th year of programs supporting New London County area students.

Applications for their Trade/Tech School and Certification/Licensing Interest Free Loan Program are currently being accepted on a rolling basis. Students must be New London County residents and attending a trade/tech school or acquiring certification/licensing for their career. The application process will close to new applicants when the allotted funding has been disbursed and/or on February 28, 2024, whichever comes first. Applications will reopen again in May of 2024 when funding becomes available.

Beginning January 1, 2024, applications will be accepted for their College Bound Interest Free Loan Program as well as their award programs. The awards include the Eugene Atwood Award for academic achievement which is completed by area high school principals and the Eugene Atwood Innovation Award to fund the purchase of tools/equipment needed for students pursuing a career in a trade which is completed by New London County area senior high school students.

For more information, please visit www.eugeneatwoodfund.org or contact Stacey Haskell at 860.535.0005.





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