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## Beth-El Center Newsletter

Spring 2018



Hello Friends,

As many know, we have successfully completed our executive leadership transition and I am proud to serve as your new Executive Director. Over the past several years, in my role as the Center's Director of Programs and Facilities, I have experienced first-hand how inspirational your dedication and commitment to the Beth-El Center mission is and how it speaks to our unbreakable community spirit. Thank you for all you do!

As I have the honor of getting to know you, I encourage all of us to share the wonderful work being done at Beth-El Center with friends, old and new. Share your lived experience of helping the homeless and hungry in your commitment and suggest ways for others to get involved as well. Through volunteerism, philanthropy and advocacy of our mission and values, we can achieve our goal of alleviating homelessness and hunger in the Greater Milford community.

As stated in an African Proverb, *"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."* Together, everything is possible.

I very am happy and thankful to share the recent success stories and program updates located in this Spring 2018 Newsletter. Please, enjoy and visit us soon.

Until then,

Jenn

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### **Beth-El Client Story: Veteran Faces Personal Loss, Illness and Homelessness Head On**

Before coming to the Beth-El Center, Gust L., a 57-year-old veteran, was sleeping in abandoned houses in Connecticut/New York area for over a year.

Previously, Gust had been living with his mother who qualified for Section 8 Housing (for persons with disabilities) and was her full time caregiver. When Gust's mother passed away, he lost the housing and had nowhere to live.

As a resident of the Center, Gust worked on his goals, which consisted of obtaining housing, getting proper Connecticut identification and stabilizing his significant health ailments.

Through Beth-El's partnership with the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in West Haven, Gust was able to focus on his medical issues and mental health with the daily support of VA's healthcare services.

Although Gust was fortunate enough to have income, he didn't have enough to secure permanent housing. With advocacy from his Beth-El Case Manager, Nicole Nickerson, Gust was accepted into the HUD-VASH (Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing) program which offers voucher rental assistance for homeless veterans along with case management and clinical services.

According to Nickerson, "Once Gust obtained this voucher, he knew he was on the path to independence and he was really determined to find somewhere to live."



Gust worked very closely with all of his service providers to secure an apartment of his own in Milford. He is required to pay 30% of his income toward rent and his voucher covers the rest.

According to Gust, "It's only been five weeks since my departure from Beth-El, a Center that shall always remain at the core of the most wonderful gratitude."

It was a long journey to independence for Gust. The Beth-El Center staff is very proud to have supported this deserving veteran in overcoming his homelessness.

"I'm no longer homeless, living in a beautiful place, with wonderful neighbors," says Gust.

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## Beth-El's Spring Gala Raises Funds for Homelessness and Hunger

Beth-El Center held its 'Light the Way' Spring Gala fundraiser at the Mill River Country Club in Stratford on Saturday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2018 with over 150 people in attendance.

"We're very grateful to the local community and our many supporters who contributed so much at the Gala to facilitate our work to help the most vulnerable in our society," says Jennifer Paradis, Beth-El Center Executive Director.

The evening's program highlighted a former Beth-El resident and US Army veteran who conveyed her story of homelessness and how she turned to the Beth-El Center for temporary housing and supports when she had nowhere else to go.

The Gala's master of ceremonies was news anchor Tim Lammers from Fox 61 Morning News. It was also the official introduction of Jennifer Paradis as the new Executive Director of the Beth-El Center.

Thanks to our dedicated Gala planning committee including Gail Utitus, Marcia Ivers, Cindy Berkowitz, Shaileen Landsberg, Al May, Shawna Onukwugha, Eileen Schuman, Ed Davies, Suzanne Lyngaas and Jenn Paradis.

### Many thanks to our Gala Sponsors

*Gold Sponsors* : Barrett Communications, Meisenheimer Foundation

*Silver Sponsors* : The Milford Bank, Thom and Shelley Bach, Michael & Suzanne Lyngaas, Prindle Hill Construction, Milford Rotary, Bismark Construction

*Bronze Sponsors*: Acura of Milford, Anonymous Donor, Al and Marilyn May, Ray and Alice Oliver, Anthony and Michele Benedosso, Bay Brook Remodelers Inc., Blum Shapiro, Ed and Candace Davies, Lou Massari and Joanne Walsh, Marilyn Cormack, Marty and Gail Utitus, Milford Health & Rehabilitation, Neubert, Pepe & Montieth, PC and Stonebridge Restaurant.

### [View our Gala Photo Gallery](#)

## Meet Our New Staff Members



Julianne Green started as our **Director of Programs and Facilities** on Tuesday, May 29<sup>th</sup>. Formerly serving as the Emergency Shelter Case Manager for Inspirica Inc. of Stamford, Julianne has firsthand experience in motivating and connecting clients experiencing homelessness with community resources. Julianne also has over five years of experience in the non-profit sector working directly with complex homeless populations. [READ MORE](#)



Ruth Saint Vil, our new **Housing Specialist**, has a wealth of knowledge regarding the tactics and resources needed to support and house the individuals and families we serve in our shelter. In her most recent job, as the Housing Specialist/Case Manager of HELP USA Supportive Employment Center, she advocated for over 200 homeless single adults in the areas of employment and housing. [READ MORE](#)

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## Your Support Makes a Difference

With your support, last year the Beth El Center:

- Sheltered 90 individuals and 18 families with children
- Served over 28,000 meals to the hungry through our food service programs
- Sheltered 63 homeless individuals from the cold in our No-Freeze shelter

[Please Donate](#)

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## Volunteer Spotlight Jan Lynn

Jan has been volunteering in the Beth-El Center office for almost two years. She is one of the pleasant voices who answers the phone and her smiling face greets new residents, visitors and donors at Beth-El Center's front door. Jan also works on other tasks that peak her interest, such as writing thank you letters to generous donors, helping to prepare for large organizational events and supporting our volunteer coordinator and office assistant Coleen Lane.

Jan rarely comes to work empty handed; we enjoy her baked goods which she so kindly shares with the staff as well as our Center residents.

In addition to volunteering at the Beth-El Center, Jan is a generous donor who has supported us via our Annual Appeal and Spring Gala fundraisers.

According to Jan, "I enjoy coming to the Beth-El Center because of the caring staff and the work we do for our community."

Thank you Jan for all you do!

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## Office Volunteers Needed

Office volunteers are needed to support the Center's administrative by performing reception duties and various clerical tasks while maintaining professionalism and confidentiality at all times.

Tasks include, but are not limited to:

- Answering phones & directing callers as appropriate
- Reception of visitors
- Receiving & logging in-kind donations
- Preparing thank you letters & cards

[Read the full job description here .](#)

To volunteer, fill out our [Volunteer Application](#) and return to Beth-El Center via fax or email [info@bethelmilford.org](mailto:info@bethelmilford.org) .



## Save the Date 7th Annual Milford Trick or Trot 5K Walk/Run

**Saturday, October 27, 2018**

Gather a group of friends, family or co-workers, dress up in your favorite Halloween costume and run or walk through Milford to support the homeless and hungry in our community.

Register at [www.milfordtrickortrot.com](http://www.milfordtrickortrot.com)

