

# RecycleCT Foundation, Inc.

## Annual Report 2019



# FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



## Mission

*RecycleCT seeks to target and promote the coordination and support of research and education activities and public information programs aimed at increasing the rate of recycling and reuse in the state.*

Fellow Connecticut Residents,

The RecycleCT Foundation continues to promote recycling, help residents understand how to recycle correctly and support schools and organizations, in an effort to help Connecticut divert 60% of its waste by the year 2024.

In 2014, the General Assembly passed Public Act 14-94 to move Connecticut from managing 'waste' to developing strategies to manage materials sustainably, which included the creation of the RecycleCT Foundation, Inc.

Now in its sixth year, this initiative continues to be timely. In the beginning, RecycleCT developed a statewide campaign to increase participation in household recycling and help our residents recycle better. And now with increased challenges and pressures on end-markets, placing the correct items in the recycling bins to reduce contamination is more important than ever. Increasing the quality, and not just the quantity of materials collected for recycling is a main goal of the "What's IN, What's OUT" statewide recycling campaign.

The RecycleCT Foundation helps schools that are seeking to learn more about sustainable materials management, and helps non-profit organizations and municipalities to support new efforts and initiatives, which expand Connecticut's ability to reduce, reuse, recycle or compost more!

Please read on to learn about all of these important and exciting efforts!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Katie S. Dykes".

Katie S. Dykes, Commissioner, Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, and Board Chair

April 2020

# PROGRAMS

RecycleCT administers programs in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP). Programs include the statewide What's IN, What's OUT campaign and grantmaking.

In the 2018-2019 calendar, the RecycleCT Board concluded Phase II of a paid media campaign and distributed \$15,210 to help schools integrate the actions of reuse, recycle and compost with education and to support innovation in the non-profit sector – which could include research, outreach, program development, pilots and demonstrations, etc.

## What's IN? What's OUT?

The What's IN, What's OUT campaign was created to be effective using social media to notify residents of a new universal list of acceptable materials that could go in their “mixed recycling” recycling bins or carts, and learn about what shouldn't go in their recycling bins or carts. A main tool to assist residents is the

The graphic is divided into three main sections. On the left, a dark blue triangle contains the text 'OUTBOUND MARKETING' and 'PUSH' in white. Below this, under the heading 'PAID MEDIA', are three icons with corresponding text: a radio tower icon for 'Online Radio', a location pin icon for 'Digital Display/Video', and a network icon for 'Collateral and Multi-Media Support'. In the center is a screenshot of the 'Recycle[s] Wizard' website. The website header includes 'RECYCLECT WIZARD' and navigation links like 'WHY RECYCLE', 'IN THE BIN', 'BEYOND THE BIN', 'EVENTS AND PROGRAMS', 'SOCIAL', and 'REDUCTIONS'. The main content area has a search bar titled 'CAN I RECYCLE IT?' and a 'RecycleCT Wizard' logo. Below the search bar is a 'WHAT'S IN? WHAT'S OUT?' section with the text 'New, simple standards for residential curbside recycling'. At the bottom of the screenshot are four categories: 'Plastic Bags', 'Pizza Boxes', 'Shredded Paper', and 'Loose Bottle Caps'. On the right, a dark blue triangle contains the text 'INBOUND MARKETING' and 'PULL' in white. Below this, under the heading 'EARNED MEDIA', are four icons with corresponding text: a Facebook icon for 'Social Media: Facebook', a Twitter icon for 'Twitter', a YouTube icon for 'YouTube', and a megaphone icon for 'Public Relations'.

RecycleCT Wizard, a search tool where residents can learn about different materials or products to determine if they are IN or OUT. In addition, the Wizard is one of the many tools made available to municipalities, haulers and collectors, facility operators and others interested in promoting better recycling habits.

Paid media included online radio, digital display/video, and social media promoting the universal list as well as specific items or categories of materials that are acceptable or not acceptable in the bin.

From November 2017 - June 2019 the What's IN, What's OUT campaign generated more than:

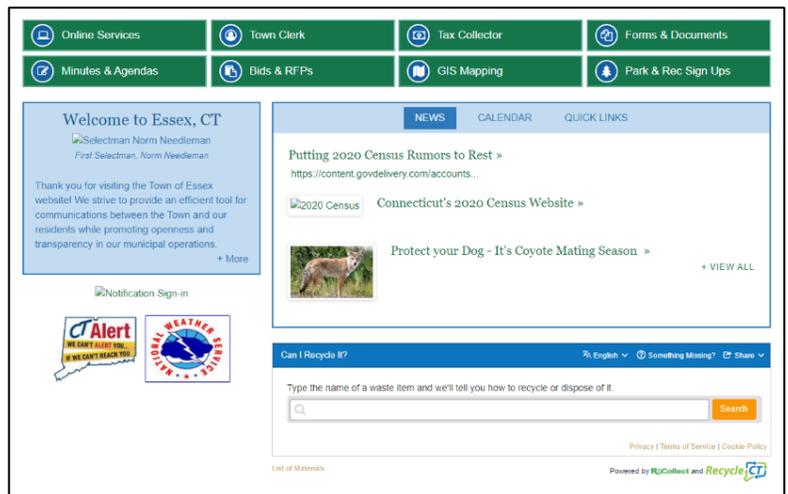
- 12 million impressions
- 124,000 web site visits
- 180,000 RecycleCT Wizard searches
- 3.2 million video views

Since the campaign launched in November 2017, it has brought strong results in every platform, including the webpage with over 124,000 website visits, including over 180,000 RecycleCT Wizard searches, 17,000 video views from the webpage and over 3,500 collateral downloads.

People are finding the RecycleCT webpage through a variety of ways including through direct search (30%), Pandora (19%), Referral (19%), Organic (14%), Digital Video (10%) and Facebook/Instagram (8%).

Paid digital video has also proven successful including over 4.6 million impressions, 13,000 links and a 0.27% click-through rate, over 3 million 100% views and a 68% video completion rate. In addition, Pandora resulted in over 6.4 million impressions, 23,000 link clicks and a .37% click through rate. Facebook/Instagram, which included paid and organic media, resulted in over 1 million impressions, 9,900 link clicks, 27,000 post reactions, comments and shares, and 172,000 video views.

The RecycleCT Wizard, the search tool found on the [www.RecycleCT.com](http://www.RecycleCT.com) webpage is also available to others and continues to be added to webpages managed by municipalities, processors, haulers and nonprofit organizations. Social media images used for paid media, are also made available to the community to use on their social media pages, or for print media.



RecycleCT Wizard's search tool on the Town of Essex, CT webpage.



A Guide to Recycling Bin Sticker templates can be downloaded and printed – in English or Spanish. Photo is of What's IN, What's OUT stickers in New Haven.

RecycleCT also created downloadable items that can be personalized and printed including brochures, flyers, magnets, mail inserts, and stickers.

It's this ability to expand the resources and streamlined message that continues to make it successful.

## What's IN? What's OUT? Goes On the Road

In response to mixed messages coming from news outlets in Connecticut and around the world about recycling and trash due to China's policy referred to as the National Sword, DEEP staff created a workshop for municipalities. The workshops are designed to help residents understand how the China Sword impacts Connecticut recycling markets, learn more about how to identify what should go IN the bin and what should stay OUT and include local municipal staff and/or volunteers that can provide answers for local questions and/or promote a new local initiative such as shredding events, textile recycling or compost bin distributions. Some municipalities went a step further and videotaped the programs, so they could reach more of their residents.



*Sherill Baldwin, CT DEEP, presenting What's IN, What's OUT workshop in Orange, CT.*

## Sustainability Leadership Award

In October 2018, the What's IN, What's OUT Campaign received the Northeast Recycling Council's 2018 Sustainability Leadership Award. Contributing to the development and success of this campaign were the Connecticut MRFs, RecycleCT Board members, the firms of Decker and ReCollect, as well as the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection recycling staff that kept all the parts working together.

# GRANT PROGRAMS

## SCHOOL RECYCLING GRANTS

Funds efforts in Connecticut K-12 schools that foster greater understanding of and promote action and engagement in sustainable materials management.

Amount funded ranges from \$500-\$3,000. Applicants must be CT-based K-12 schools, including public, charter and magnet schools that are exempt from federal taxation under the Internal Revenue Code Section 501.

*Sustainable materials management* means using less, using materials in the most productive way, and reducing environmental impact throughout the lifecycle of the material.

In the 2018-2019 grant cycle, RecycleCT awarded seven schools funding totaling \$15,210. Schools were awarded funds to implement food waste collection and composting, field trips to recycling centers, reusable utensils in the school, refillable water bottles and water fountains, educational workshops, and more.



*Cafeteria trash and recycling bins at Environmental Science Magnet School at Mary Hooker.*

field trips to recycling centers, reusable utensils in the school, refillable water bottles and water fountains, educational workshops, and more.

## INNOVATION GRANTS



*Clip from Waterbury's Recycling is Magic video.*

Fund innovative projects or programs that target sustainable materials management initiatives that advance local, regional or statewide knowledge and participation in building sustainable alternatives otherwise destined for disposal.

Amounts funded range from \$2,500-\$10,000. Applicants must hold 501(c)(3) or other tax-exempt status, or work with a fiscal sponsor.

In the 2017-2018 grant cycle, RecycleCT received 26 applications seeking over \$219,000 in funds, some of which were granted in the early 2018-2019 fiscal year. Applicants represented a variety of organizations including land trusts, museums, council of churches, and community groups in addition to municipalities. Funds were awarded to 13 applicants amounting to \$99,990 in grant awards. Projects focused on social enterprise development, educational videos on products made with our recyclables, integration of education with existing compost initiative, creating waste bin signage, food waste reduction effort and a digital directory to help people downsize and donate responsibly.



## Grantee Highlight: Innovation Grant

### *Food Waste Social Enterprise Pilot*

**Center for Food Equity for Economic Development,  
The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport  
Bridgeport, CT**

#### Organization Overview

The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport Council (CCGB) is a social services agency dedicated to breaking the cycle of poverty and meeting the needs of people at risk. CCGB has served the Bridgeport area for over 75 years. CCGB's FEED (Food Equity and Economic Development) Center leverages food to improve the physical and financial health of area residents with the goal of building community wealth by focusing on food-based living wage employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. A priority of the work of the CCGB is to get food to folks whether through food banks, food pantries or direct donations and provide economic opportunity in the food system.

FEED Center's focus on food waste and food sovereignty as connected concerns stemmed from the Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic's conference, *Reduce and Recover: Save Food for People*. With the understanding that diverting food waste to feed people is the 2nd highest priority on the EPA's Food Recovery Hierarchy pyramid, FEED Center recognized that recovered food could also be used as a pathway out of poverty and in 2016 began using recovered food in cooking classes where low income residents learned culinary skills for employment.



*Roschelle Barrett and Anthony Anania stand with their culinary creations made from recovered food.*



*Nora's Potato Empanadas, product from FEED Center.*

#### How has RecycleCT helped?

FEED Center wanted to expand their work through a pilot social enterprise program developed to use recovered produce in a product line. A weekly donation of 400 pounds of produce from the Milford ShopRite to FEED Center allowed for product development and donation to food pantries. The products coming from diversion of food waste was a tangible way to meet the goals of the mission and was an opportunity to highlight food waste.

During the pilot year, FEED Center learned they had to change a few of their goals; they could not receive donated meat, and the product-audience of congregation members did not facilitate enough revenue to make the venture sustainable for the program. They developed products and became a vendor at the Larchmont Farmers Market in New York; the pivot proved successful and FEED consistently sold out at farmers markets. This shift allowed program growth and additional funding sources to be secured.

Over 6,000 pounds of food were recovered in the pilot year, and sales of the finished products generated nearly \$4000, a portion of these funds will be used for seed money for CCGB culinary graduates to develop their products and businesses. Two food businesses have been created from this pilot and two more culinary graduates are involved in the food business immersion program.

Food waste is a valuable resource; by making it available to communities to use as they see fit is an environmental and social justice goal for FEED. Michelle McCabe, Director of FEED Center shared that “it’s really demoralizing when you can’t control your own food supply” which highlights the importance of food sovereignty in the fight against poverty.

This project is about valuing resources and making sure everything gets used. Connecting food waste and food sovereignty is showing the value of treating people and food resources with respect. Expanding entrepreneurial opportunities for the people served by FEED helps them transition out of poverty, we are investing in the people of CT in a way that is unique.

-Michelle McCabe



*Roschelle Barrett and Chef Aditi Goswami prepare donated food together.*

### Future Plans

FEED Center will be occupying a new, 3,500 square foot commercial kitchen in Summer 2020 which will double their production capacity. This facility will house the culinary training program and social enterprise program in the same space, as well as providing a new space to rent for area food entrepreneurs. “Ultimately the goal is to convert as much food waste as possible to living wage opportunities,” explained McCabe when speaking of the future for the project. CCGB plans to continue to invest in the growth of this project.



## Grantee Highlight: Innovation Grant

### Community Composting

**New Haven Land Trust  
(Renamed, Gather New Haven)**  
New Haven, CT

#### Organization Overview

As Connecticut's first urban land trust to preserve open land in New Haven, the New Haven Land Trust, (now Gather New Haven) focuses on land conservation, community gardening and environmental education. With over 50 community gardens, and 6 nature preserves, the New Haven Land Trust (NHLT) impacts the community, environment, and foodshed of New Haven. Their mission seeks to engage people in stewardship and cultivation of the land for a healthier community and healthier environment.

NHLT employs New Haven high school youth in a program called "Growing Entrepreneurs" where students learn tangible life and professional skills while earning income and developing their own business ventures related to carpentry, the environment, gardens or agriculture.



*Bradley Fleming, former Garden Manager for the NHLT, checking one the aerated static compost bins.*



*High School students from New Haven, participating in the NHLT Growing Entrepreneurs program, helping build the aerated static compost bin system.*

#### How has RecycleCT helped?

NHLT oversees 50+ community gardens, which includes a constant need of compost, which entailed paying a source outside the City to have it brought at a cost of more than \$2,000 annually. At the same time, the community space to compost and recognized without citywide food scrap collection, there was plenty of food waste scraps and other resources to develop an on-site community composting project. This project linked the need for compost with the Growing Entrepreneurs students to create a closed-loop system of food scrap waste with amending community gardens with nutrient rich compost.

NHLT built a four-bin aerated static pile community composting system, which uses solar energy to provide its forced air at one of their community garden sites. Creating the system also reduces CO<sub>2</sub> by not shipping in compost. The intention is that students will collect food scraps by bicycle as the program grows.

High school students from New Haven schools, participating in the Growing Entrepreneurs programs helped build the bin, gaining carpentry and customer service skills in addition to learning the science of composting. Fourteen students from the program learned how to process food scraps and other raw materials in this unique system, maintaining the system, and benefits of finished compost. In addition, NHLT

held four community composting workshops, each with over 20 people in attendance to learn more about how this compost system operates.

Since the project began, over 3,000 pounds of food scraps have been collected from the Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen (DESK) and provided by community gardeners which resulted in about 9.5 cubic yards of finished compost.

In addition to working with community gardeners and students, the Community Compost project expanded or deepened connections with other New Haven organizations; Peels and Wheels for their technical training; Common Ground High School which also recently developed an aerated static pile system to share new ideas and work on problem-solving; Haven's Harvest who recovers edible food for people, but also has food that cannot be eaten and the Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen, which feeds community members and has food scraps from their kitchen.



*Finished four-bin aerated static compost bin system.*

It's exciting that DESK are feeding people and then we're picking up their food scraps and then we're making compost, which is then going back to community gardens, which are growing food to feed people in New Haven.

-Esther Rose-Wilen

The community gardens are places of environmental and social justice, where people are organizing in their neighborhoods, said Esther Rose-Wilen, NHLT Garden Education Coordinator. "They're growing food...for themselves, their neighbors, their families, for donating, whatever it might be, and, [...] connecting with each other and learning together at the same time."

The community composting project has provided a closed-loop food system in the New Haven community. Through community composting the Growing Entrepreneurs students are learning skills that have practical and professional application. They are learning everything from community engagement to budgeting. This project expanded the community impact of the organization and of their gardens.

### Future Plans

Receiving the funding support from RecycleCT allowed NHLT to build capacity and leverage other funding streams for additional projects. NHLT hopes to increase the amount of food scraps they are collecting through increasing the number of food scrap pick up sites for the Growing Entrepreneurs, which will be collected by bicycles. NHLT are working to secure funding to pay for a compost sifter and a bobcat to help sort and move the compost they produce, currently this work is being done by hand. The community composting system has afforded many opportunities for the organization and the community at large, the continuous opportunities for education and business ventures will only strengthen these connections and their impact on food waste recovery in New Haven.



## Grantee Highlight: School Grant

### *Banning Expanded Polystyrene*

#### **Charter Oak International Academy**

West Hartford, CT

#### Organization Overview

Charter Oak International Academy is an international baccalaureate elementary magnet school in West Hartford. Their mission is “to inspire and prepare all students to realize their potential and enhance our global community.” This school is actively focused on environmentalism, is a green LEAF school and considers themselves to have a culture of sustainability.

#### How has RecycleCT helped?

Purchasing reusable lunch trays for the cafeteria lined up with the school’s goal to reduce waste by 50%. Previously, the school was serving meals on expanded polystyrene (commonly known as Styrofoam™) trays which created a large volume of waste. Kim Hughes, an environmental educator and longtime school volunteer and parent shared that “we realized pretty early on that focusing on the waste was the best way to get the attention of students and our community.” The school had recently shifted from plastic utensils to reusable and washable flatware to reduce waste in the cafeteria. The expanded polystyrene trays were consistently overflowing out of waste bins making it the school’s new focus for waste reduction.



*Charter Oak students participating in a waste sort.*



*Charter Oak students using their new reusable trays.*

While the intention was to help reduce waste, the switch to reusable trays has changed student behavior. Students are now more accurately disposing of waste and recyclables in the proper bins (the school has a recycling and food waste collection system) and reducing the number of times the custodial staff has to remove trash from four to six times per day to just once a day.

This project strengthened relationships and led to having support for a grow lab in the school’s cafeteria and led to a more sustainable-focused school community. Being the first school to do this work has led them to be looked to for help at schools that want to do similar sustainable measures, Hughes shared, “I really want to make sure it’s clear how far reaching and how important this information is; [...] to have [this] knowledgeable resource that is Charter Oak.”

Waste is an issue of environmental justice for everyone in the school community; it's a topic that everyone can see. Charter Oak's success with the reusable trays has caught the attention of other schools in West Hartford and Kim is supporting the efforts to attain grant funding to transition four additional schools to these trays.

At the elementary education level we see more clearly now than ever, how important it is to connect this to children's lives because they are the future and instilling these values at a young age will allow for a cleaner environment.

-Kim Hughes



*Charter Oak students sharing results of their waste audit and sustainability efforts to the West Hartford Board of Education, including news of receiving RecycleCT Innovation Grant.*

### Future Plans

This project was a catalyst for waste audits and continued work around sustainability and waste for the school community. This project is ongoing but it's not expected to change much, it's a one-time funded project. There may be a need for replacement trays in the future but that should be far down the line.

# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

At the end of June 2018, all RecycleCT Foundation funds were held by Bank of America through its Donor Advised Funds or by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). As part of its work to become more independent, the Foundation distributed an RFP seeking fiscal management support. In October 2018, the Northeast Recycling Council (NERC) was awarded a two-year contract to provide fiscal management support, including the establishment of bank accounts outside of DEEP. While some funds being held by DEEP are still encumbered through a contract with Decker/Makiaris for the What's IN, What's OUT campaign, all other funds are now held independently and managed by the Foundation Board.

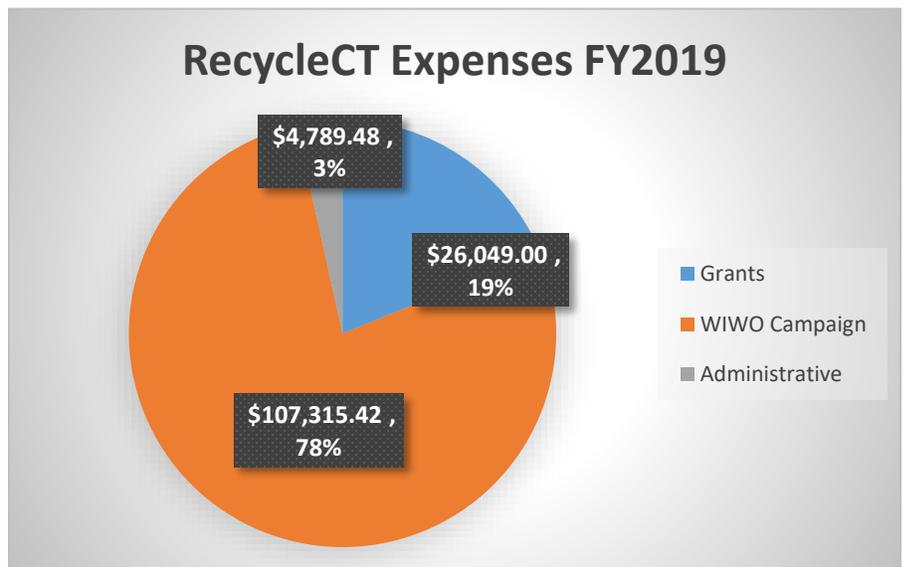
Revenue/Income	FY 2019
DEEP SEP	\$400,000
EPA Grant (EdAdvance)	\$2,500
Interest	\$116.64
<b>Total Revenue/Income</b>	<b>\$402,616.64</b>

Expenses	FY 2019
WIWO Campaign	\$107,315.42
Innovation Grant (partly in FY 2019)*	\$18,250
School Grant	\$7,799.00
Admin: NERC, Fees, Acctg	\$4,789.48
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$138,153.90</b>
<b>NET</b>	<b>\$264,462.74</b>

NERC also ensures the RecycleCT Foundation is up to date on filings, taxes and helps with distribution of checks when grant funds are awarded, and works with accountants providing an annual audit.

Robert J. Klee, former Commissioner of DEEP and former RecycleCT Foundation Board Chair, successfully secured \$400,000 in supplement environmental program funds to support the Foundation with the goal of becoming more financially sustainable. In addition, RecycleCT was a partner in an EPA Environmental Grant with Ed Advance to support Green LEAF Schools with professional development and matching grant funds.

Phase II of the What's IN, What's OUT paid media portion of the campaign was also completed in the third quarter of this fiscal year. In addition, some funds earmarked for the Innovation Grant were paid out at the end of FY2018 and the beginning of FY2019 and while only the funds paid are reported here, all grants for that grant cycle are listed under FY2019 Grantees.



## RecycleCT 2018-2019 Grantees

### 2019 School Grants

#### **Oak Grove Montessori School**

Mansfield, CT

*Grant Amount: \$1,315*

**Waste reduction; reuse**

#### **Wilcox Technical High School**

Meriden, CT

*Grant Amount: \$500*

**Repurposing; reuse**

#### **Manchester Public Schools**

Manchester, CT

*Grant Amount: \$1,500*

**Education, eco-teams**

#### **South Elementary School**

New Canaan, CT

*Grant Amount: \$1,494*

**Cafeteria collection**

#### **Environmental Sciences Magnet School at Mary Hooker**

Hartford, CT

*Grant Amount: \$1,490*

**Cafeteria collection**

#### **Charter Oak International Academy**

West Hartford, CT

*Grant Amount: \$1,500*

**Reuse**

### 2018-2019 Innovation Grants

#### **New Britain Roots**

New Britain, CT

*Grant Amount: \$10,000*

Farmers market food waste collection program

#### **New Haven Land Trust**

New Haven, CT

*Grant Amount: \$10,000*

Community composting pilot project at community garden

#### **iQuilt Partnership Inc.**

Hartford, CT

*Grant Amount: \$4,000*

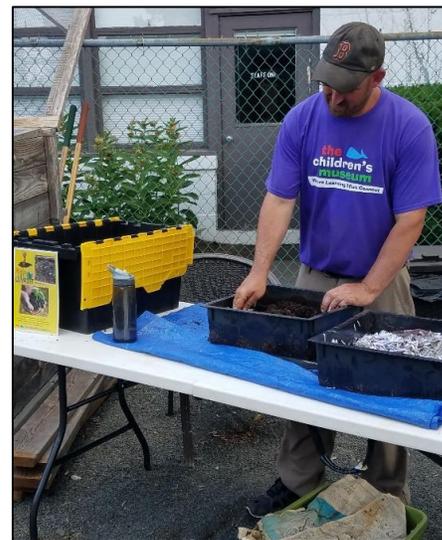
Create BMP for Event Recycling with City of Hartford; upcycling banner pilot from events

#### **Center for EcoTechnology (CET)**

Florence, MA

*Grant Amount: \$5,000*

Urban food waste reduction technical assistance for CT businesses



#### **The Children's Museum**

West Hartford, CT

*Grant Amount: \$5,000*

Home composting education program

#### **City of New Haven**

New Haven, CT

*Grant Amount: \$7,000*

Sustainable Materials Management "Bee" competition

## Town of Darien

Darien, CT

Grant Amount: \$8,460

Launch food scraps collection program at town transfer station



## The Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport, Center for Food Equity and Economic Development

Bridgeport, CT

Grant Amount: \$9,530

Business development/training using recovered food with low-income residents

## Product Stewardship Institute

Boston, MA

Grant Amount: \$10,000

Outreach, education and consensus building around plastic film/plastic bags

## All Our Kin

New Haven, CT

Grant Amount: \$10,000

Waste reduction, recycling and worm composting for their 3 CT sites including all staff and provider training programs.



## Fairgate Farm at Charter Oak Communities

Stamford, CT

Grant Amount: \$10,000

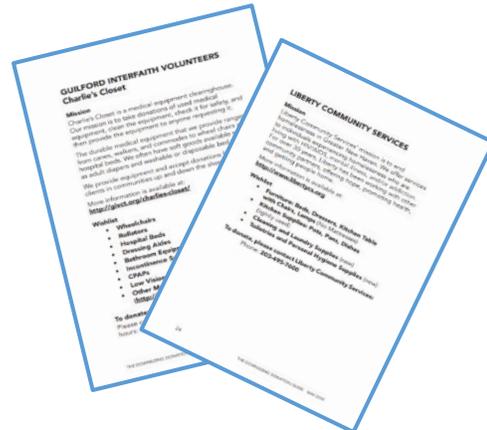
Expand compost education and outreach into schools and urban gardens

## Center for Latino Progress (CLP)

Hartford, CT

Grant Amount: \$8,250

In partnership with Blue Earth Compost, purchase collection bike for youth employment to start bike-collection of food scraps



## The Home Haven Inc.

New Haven, CT

Grant Amount: \$2,750

Downsizing donation guide for greater New Haven region

[https://housing.yale.edu/sites/default/files/file\\_s/TheDownsizingDonationGuide.pdf](https://housing.yale.edu/sites/default/files/file_s/TheDownsizingDonationGuide.pdf)

# BOARD MEMBERS

**Frank M. Antonacci, Jr.**  
Manager  
Murphy Road Recycling  
*Vice Chair, October 2018 – Present*  
*April 2015 – Present*

**Jennifer Heaton-Jones**  
Executive Director  
Housatonic Resources Recovery Authority  
*June 2017 – Present*

**Craig Connolly**  
Partner  
Altmore Partners  
*June 2017 – Present*

**Thomas DeVivo**  
Vice President  
Willimantic Waste Paper Co.  
*April 2015 – Present*

**Katie Dykes**  
Commissioner  
CT Department of Energy and Environmental  
Protection  
*Board Chair, April 2019 – Present*

**Michael Ferro, III**  
General Manager – Taylor Reed  
City Carting & Recycling  
*October 2018 – Present*

**Diane Lauricella**  
Solid Waste Consultant  
*February 2019 – Present*

**Kim O'Rourke**  
Recycling Coordinator  
Town of Middletown  
*June 2017 – Present*

**Brian Paganini**  
Vice President & Managing Director  
Quantum Biopower  
*Treasurer, October 2018 – Present*  
*April 2015 – Present*

**Suzanne Huminski**  
Sustainability Coordinator  
Southern Connecticut State University  
*August 2019 – Present*





Visit [RecycleCT.com](http://RecycleCT.com) for our RecycleCT Wizard and printable resources. To stay up to date on our latest happenings, find us on Facebook and Twitter.