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WELCOME TO
UNITED WAY OF SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT

Dear Volunteer,

Welcome to United Way of Southeastern Connecticut and thank you for your interest in volunteering!

At United Way, volunteers are at the heart of what we do. When you volunteer your time – an hour, a day, or once a week – you are contributing to the bigger goal: to advance the common good and to LIVE UNITED!

Last year, United Way mobilized more than 1,000 volunteers that provided more than 5,000 hours of time to nonprofit organizations throughout Southeastern Connecticut. According to the Independent Sector, those hours are worth more than $141,000, which helps to keep the administrative and fundraising costs at United Way low, allowing more resources to go directly towards strengthening lives and helping people.

This handbook was designed to give you background on United Way of Southeastern Connecticut, as well as to provide a broad overview of the many different ways you can get involved. We hope you will find this handbook helpful in answering any questions you may have about volunteer opportunities with United Way.

We thank you for sharing your passion, expertise, and especially your time to help make Southeastern Connecticut the best it can be. Without volunteers like you, our work to advance the common good in the community would not be possible. We strive to make your volunteer time meaningful and enjoyable, and that as a volunteer you gain knowledge of and experience in what it means to LIVE UNITED.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Virginia L. Mason
President and CEO
MISSION STATEMENT
The mission of United Way of Southeastern Connecticut is to change our community by helping people in need through responsible use of donations.

VISION STATEMENT
United Way of Southeastern Connecticut will be the recognized leader of challenging socially important projects while continuing to fund critical human services programs. Our leadership will visibly change New London County for the better.

ABOUT UNITED WAY OF SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT
In 1962, the United Fund of Norwich and the Community Chest of Groton, New London, and Waterford merged to form United Community Services of Southeastern Connecticut, Inc. The organization pledged itself to study the county’s needs and the ways in which they can be met through volunteers and agencies and then to raise the money to support those agencies.

The first campaign in 1962, called the United Fund, raised $427,885 for programs at 34 agencies providing health, welfare and character-building services. That represented $38,000 more than the two separate agencies raised in total the prior year. Clearly, a successful enterprise had begun.

In 1975, the organization changed its name to United Way of Southeastern Connecticut and raised nearly $1 million each year to support the community. In 1988, the community recognized that area shelters, pantries, soup kitchens and child care centers needed a center to purchase food in bulk. As a result, the United Way Labor Department Food Center was initiated. Today, the Food Center, known as the Gemma E. Moran United Way/Labor Food Center, distributes food to help serve the equivalent of 1.5 million meals per year through nearly 100 member food distribution sites.

In 2013, United Way raised more than $5.8 million for health and human services in New London County. United Way supports 60 partner programs and initiatives that make meaningful, positive changes in four priority areas: Community Wellness, Thriving Children, Basic Needs, and Promoting Independence.

Through the ongoing support of hundreds of companies and organizations in Southeastern Connecticut, combined with the generous gifts of employees and residents, United Way is improving lives. By working together, we can make real lasting changes right here in our community.

That’s what it means to LIVE UNITED.
WHAT WE DO

United Way of Southeastern Connecticut is a locally-based non-profit organization. Chances are, someone you know may have received assistance or support services from a United Way funded partner program. We bring together organizations, businesses, and people from all across the community that share our passion for changing lives to get things done.

What does United Way do? Donations to United Way are invested in programs and services that provide the building blocks for a good life and create real, lasting change in New London County.

After the funds are raised each year, community volunteers go to work determining where to invest your donation. These volunteers are recruited throughout the community, representing people from all walks of life that live and work in New London County. Anyone from the community is invited to volunteer and get involved with our fund distribution. These volunteer opportunities are explained more fully on pages 4-5.

Does United Way operate its own programs? Yes, throughout the years and through the voice of the community, United Way recognized pressing needs that had to be fulfilled within our community. Therefore, we fund and administer a few of our own programs to address these needs, including:

- The Gemma E. Moran United Way/Labor Food Center, which distributes food and product to nearly 100 agencies and feeding sites in New London County (described in greater detail beginning on page 6).
- Project Warm-Up, a last resort heating assistance program which collaborates with other local service providers to meet the home heating needs of families in Southeastern Connecticut who are experiencing a short-term crisis.
- Individual Development Accounts, in which United Way collaborates with Liberty Bank, to provide a special interest bearing savings account that offers a dollar-to-dollar match up to $1000 by each Liberty Bank and United Way to assist low-income families saving to buy a first home.

Does United Way administer programs that it does not fund? Yes, United Way works within the community on a federal and state level to bring together people and organizations for the betterment of Southeastern Connecticut. Some examples of programs that United Way of Southeastern Connecticut administers include the Emergency Food and Shelter Program, FamilyWize Prescription Drug Discount Cards, The Diaper Bank, and United Way Day of Caring.
Volunteer Opportunities

United Way of Southeastern Connecticut does not discriminate against any volunteer or volunteer applicant due to age, gender, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, or disability. Please refer to the Volunteer Guidelines and Procedures section of this handbook for details regarding behaviors/rules pertaining to these volunteer opportunities.

United Way Day of Caring

Throughout the year, United Way of Southeastern Connecticut’s partner programs work tirelessly to provide critical support services to individuals and families with the aim of offering a hand-up instead of a hand-out. Meanwhile, United Way donors support this network every day through workplace donations to United Way.

*Day of Caring* provides an added way for workplace members to LIVE UNITED. *Day of Caring* is a free service of United Way and pairs groups of employees from local businesses with partner programs to volunteer on one-time volunteer projects.

United Way *Day of Caring* offers free labor to not-for-profits while participating companies benefit from team building and public demonstration of goodwill. Employees enjoy a break from routine and feel good about joining together for a good cause. The program also provides an opportunity for employees to visit agencies where donor dollars are spent and increase their understanding of community needs and services provided.

Work groups range in size from two to fifty members. A group can give a half or full day on a project of the company’s choice, scheduled at the group’s convenience. United Way provides t-shirts, takes photos and sends them to the participating company for use in newsletters, a press release, or website. Projects vary but may include cleaning, landscaping, painting, minor construction and/or help with clients. Once a match is set, details are addressed on a case-by-case basis by the agency and participating business.

For more information on how your company can get involved, please contact Lamar Spruill at (860) 464-3315 or lamar.spruill@uwsect.org.

For a list of United Way partner programs, please visit www.uwsect.org/partner-programs.

Community Investment

At United Way of Southeastern Connecticut, Community Investment is the oversight and funding of a multi-million dollar network of partner programs offered at local health and human service agencies. These volunteers act as stewards of donor dollars, ensuring they are wisely invested in local programs that demonstrate need in the community, are managed efficiently, and produce positive results.
The hallmark of United Way Community Investment efforts is community oversight. Monies are allocated through a volunteer-driven distribution process during which Community Investment volunteers spend countless hours reviewing each funded program. Volunteers visit each program, interview agency personnel and board members, and analyze budgets and audits. Volunteers then decide how the funds are invested in local programs that get results.

Anyone interested in becoming involved with Community Investment is encouraged to call United Way. There are many volunteer opportunities within the Community Investment process, although which roles are available changes annually.

If you are interested in becoming involved with Allocations or to find other volunteer opportunities, please contact Anne Stockton at (860) 464-3321 or anne.stockton@uwsect.org.

Campaign/Engagement

Working together with companies and unions and their employees, United Way invites people through the workforce campaign to support services in our community which help people in need. This is achieved through engagement and education of how investments in the community through United Way are making a difference and changing lives.

In 2013, the United Way Campaign raised more than $5.7 million. With this, United Way-funded programs provided 115,568 service encounters in the priority areas of thriving children, basic needs, community wellness, and independence. Contributions to United Way of Southeastern Connecticut support local programs and initiatives that work together to advance the common good for all.

Living United is about all of us working together to make a difference, because it takes everyone doing their part to create real change and to improve people’s lives. Through participating in a United Way Campaign, those in the workforce can join the movement and Live United.

Please contact Sharon Peccini at (860) 464-3318 or sharon.peccini@uwsect.org if your company/business is interested in participating in a United Way Campaign.

Other Individual Volunteer Opportunities

There are sometimes individual volunteer opportunities at the Gales Ferry office. If interested in helping with office work, please contact United Way at (860) 464-7281. You may also submit an online form at www.uwsect.org/webform/contact-us.

Many volunteers get involved in United Way by volunteering at the Gemma E. Moran United Way/Labor Food Center, a program of United Way which is further discussed on the following pages.
History & Vision

The Food Center began during a time of deep recession in the region. It is the brainchild of Gemma E. Moran, who decided she wanted to assist the families of laid-off workers through the collection and distribution of food after listening to a child describe that their refrigerator at home was completely bare. With that, it is clear how the vision of the Food Center – to strengthen the community by offering food and guidance to every man, woman, and child in their times of need – came to be.

The Food Center was formally established in 1988 on the campus of Uncas on Thames in Norwich, but moved to its current location at 374 Broad Street in New London in 1999. The 200,000-square-foot-facility more adequately met the space requirements of the growing program, and the location change was made possible by a grant from the state. It was refurbished by volunteers – skilled union workers of Metal Trades Council, AFL-CIO, SECT Central Labor Council, MDA-UAW Local 571, Teamsters Local 493, and Norwich-New London Building and Construction Trades Council – in partnership with United Way. Since its establishment, the Food Center has played a key role in providing one of the building blocks to a good quality of life by feeding food insecure individuals and families all across our community.

The Food Center supplies donated, surplus food to nearly 100 program sites, including pantries, community meal sites, day care centers, shelters for the homeless, after-school programs, shelters for battered women and children, programs for the elderly, and many more. Through all of these programs, the Food center distributes more than 2,000,000 pounds of food annually and provides food to an average of 20,000 men, women, and children each month. The Food Center is one of three food banks in the state, as well as an official Partner Distribution Organization (PDO). This status ensures a partnership with the Connecticut Food Bank in East Haven, the largest food bank in the state, to provide a product allocation based on poverty levels as determined by the census. Through the CT Food Bank, the Food Center is also a member of Feeding America which allows the purchase of approximately $7 worth of food for every $1, helping the Food Center provide as much food as possible to people in the community through the distribution sites and Mobile Food Pantry.

In 2011, United Way, along with numerous community partners, expanded its vision beyond providing food to advocacy. The New London County Food Policy Council (NLCFPC) is a shared leadership initiative with William W. Backus Hospital, FRESH New London, TVCCA, and Lawrence & Memorial Hospital. The Council consists of representatives and residents from all sectors of the food system that collaborate on mutually beneficial solutions to food system problems. The Food Center and this initiative support and strengthen the community by helping to stop food insecurity, and this helps us all to Live United.

For a complete and up-to-date listing of all Food Center member feeding sites, please visit www.uwsect.org/food-distribution sites.
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The Gemma E. Moran United Way/Labor Food Center does not discriminate against any volunteer or volunteer applicant due to age, gender, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, or disability.

For volunteers ages 17 and older

- Sorting Donated Food: On weekdays, volunteers inspect, sort, and pack perishable and non-perishable food for distribution to direct feeding programs.

- Office Assistance: Volunteers are often needed to write thank-you notes, file, make copies, and stuff envelopes in the office at the Food Center.

- Mobile Food Pantry: Volunteers are needed the day before and morning of our Mobile Food Pantry distributions. Volunteers will be sorting produce and other perishable items while packing the Food Pantry truck in preparation for distribution. Please see page 8 for details on volunteering at the distribution on-site.

- Gleaning: Volunteers are needed periodically to help glean (pick and sort) fresh produce at local farms and orchards for food distribution to the many food assistance agencies throughout our service area.

- Special Events: There are certain times of the year where the need for volunteers is extremely high, such as Thanksgiving. Often there are food drives, which mean an increased need for food sorting during the holidays.

- The Walk Against Hunger, held every spring to raise public awareness about hunger, encourages personal involvement in addressing hunger, and raises funds to help Gemma E. Moran United Way/Labor Food Center distribute food to approximately nearly 100 food programs. Be a walker to raise money or volunteer as a registrar, crossing guard, or for another role.

- Food drives are held by organizations and/or businesses throughout the year to benefit the Gemma E. Moran United Way/Labor Food Center. If your group or organization is interested in hosting a food drive, please visit our website at www.uwsect.org/food-center or contact Ellen Mail at ellen.mail@uwsect.org for more information.

For volunteers under the age of 17

Although they can be involved in most volunteer activities, children under the age of 17 MUST be accompanied by a parent at all times when volunteering at the Food Center.

Please contact Maureen LeBlanc at (860) 237-3971 or maureen.leblanc@uwsect.org if interested in volunteering at the Gemma E. Moran United Way/Labor Food Center.
FOOD CENTER & WAREHOUSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Please use your best judgment in following these policies and procedures. Please communicate with the Product Manager, Warehouse Specialists, Volunteer Specialist, or other staff if any questions pertaining to these policies and procedures arise while volunteering.

• All Gemma E. Moran United Way/Labor Food Center volunteers must sign in and sign out each time that he or she is at the Food Center to volunteer; please record hours as well.
• Volunteers must wear their nametag when volunteering.
• Volunteers should dress comfortably and wear closed toe shoes, especially when volunteering in the warehouse. Remember that some activities can be messy as well! No tank tops, sandals, or flip flops are allowed.
• No eating, drinking, or using any of the products in the warehouse. Product is not to be given to volunteers.
• Please leave purses, jewelry, and other valuables at home or locked in your car. The Gemma E. Moran United Way/Labor Food Center is not responsible for any missing personal items.
• No running in the warehouse area or other volunteer areas.
• No smoking in the warehouse area or other volunteer areas.
• No food or drink in the warehouse area.
• Climbing on the equipment, machinery, carts, or pallets is not permitted.
• Stepping on any of the scales in the warehouse is prohibited.
• Please report all accidents and/or injuries to warehouse staff and/or the Volunteer Specialist immediately.
• Volunteers must wash hands before and after handling food items, as well as after using the restroom.
• Please no headphones or cell phones used in the warehouse area. If a volunteer needs to make a phone call, he or she must step out of the warehouse to do so.
• Please remove necklaces and/or long earrings, as well as pull back long hair as these could pose a safety concern.
• Please report any safety concerns to a staff member immediately.
• Please use proper lifting techniques: when lifting heavy objects, volunteers should keep their backs straight, and push up with their legs. Please do not attempt to lift anything that might be too heavy without assistance!
• Volunteers are only permitted to use electrical equipment when cleared by Food Center staff.
• Volunteers under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult at all times.
MOBILE FOOD PANTRY
This section highlights the history, operation, and volunteer opportunities pertaining to the Mobile Food Pantry. For Mobile Food Pantry Policies and Procedures, please see page 10.

About the Mobile Food Pantry: Our History and What We Do

The mobile food pantry program brings a custom-made refrigerated truck with perishable food items to an approved site for direct distribution. The program is a way to help individuals, some living in rural locations, to acquire items they may not find in a traditional pantry, such as fresh fruits and vegetables. The program’s “no questions asked” philosophy and farmer’s market feel allow a level of dignity and respect throughout the process.

The truck arrives with approximately 5,000 pounds of food including 8-10 perishable products for an average distribution of 100-150 households every month. We emphasize fresh produce and bakery items, and the truck also may contain snack foods, condiments and other items in abundance at the Food Center warehouse. In rural areas and where pockets of great poverty influence limited access to food, a mobile food pantry is a good solution.

The site coordinators, Food Center staff and volunteers are responsible for several duties before, during and after distribution. These duties are highlighted within the Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities and Mobile Food Pantry Procedures sections.

This mobile food pantry truck is made possible by the generosity of CL&P and Connecticut Food Bank.

Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities

Roles also include an Agency Site Operator and Site Coordinator, which are not listed below, as filling the roles is part of the collaborating agency’s duties.

Registration/Greeters:
• Sign in Mobile Food Pantry attendees.
• Provide participants with a number using either number or lottery process, see Mobile Food Pantry Procedures (page 10) for further details.
• Direct participants based on site’s distribution procedures.

Distributors/Client Assistant Distributors:
• About 3 volunteers on each side of the truck to help in the set up and loading of tables.
• Assist clients through the lines.

For more information about Mobile Food Pantry procedures, please contact Jennifer Blanco at (860) 464-3327 or jennifer.blanco@uwsect.org or refer to the Mobile Food Pantry Training Manual.
MOBILE FOOD PANTRY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Procedures can vary by distribution site. Below is a list of procedures that are common among all sites.

- Volunteers are asked to arrive a half-hour before the truck arrives for registration and set-up, as well as stay a half-hour after the distribution has ended to help with cleaning up.

- Volunteers are asked to be prepared for the weather, as the Food Truck will be distributing in rain, shine, or snow! The Mobile Food Truck will only be cancelled if schools in the town of the distribution site are closed, or New London schools are closed.

- Please follow any and all instructions given by the site coordinator(s) regarding the amount of produce to hand out per family, registration procedures, and set-up and cleaning procedures.

- It is vital that each household is offered the same amount throughout the distribution. Do not start to double up towards the end; any excess food will be used in another location.

- The mobile food pantry has been set up to allow for clients to select among the foods available and choose the foods that meet their cultural, religious, and dietary needs and family preferences. If a participant does not want an item, do not try to force them to take it, but that does not mean they get more of something else.

- When needed, a volunteer can assist with “Shopping” and/or helping clients to their transportation (again, please do not go alone or inside cars or buildings/apartments).

- The driver is responsible for the vehicle and may not be used to give out food in place of a volunteer. The driver may assist in unloading the product from the truck bays.

- Volunteers should not expect to receive food. Although, if volunteer is determined eligible through the client screening process, they may be able to get food; however, they would need to comply with the same rules and policies as the recipients. In other words, they cannot go first, get extra, or take food for others.

- Volunteers should begin to break down boxes that are not suitable for carrying food, and this garbage should be collected for disposal. Other trash should also be placed in a dumpster if available, otherwise put in a separate bay on the Food Truck.
OFFICE CLOSURE POLICY

Both the Gales Ferry and New London offices are closed for the following holidays:

- New Year’s Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- President’s Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day, as well as the day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

In terms of inclement weather:

- The Gales Ferry office is closed when Ledyard schools are closed.
- The Gemma E. Moran United Way/Labor Food Center is closed when New London schools are closed.

The Mobile Food Pantry will not run if:

- New London schools are closed, or
- Schools in the town of the distribution site are closed
General Volunteer Guidelines and Procedures

These general volunteer guidelines and procedures apply to all United Way of Southeastern Connecticut volunteers. Please use your best judgment in following these guidelines and always ask your supervisor if unsure about a certain procedure.

- Please notify supervisor if unable to volunteer on scheduled day/time.
- Volunteers should follow the instructions of their supervisor.
- If a United Way Volunteer is helping at a partner agency, United Way asks that the volunteer adheres to all policies and procedures at that agency. Volunteers from United Way represent United Way, thus United Way asks volunteers to act in a polite, appropriate, and professional manner.
- Please dress appropriately for the volunteer task. If unsure of how to dress for a specific opportunity, volunteers should contact their supervisor to check.
- Volunteers must follow a code of confidentiality pertaining to any information available to them, i.e. information about clients or service recipients. This information is private and should not be discussed outside of volunteering.
- No one under the influence or in possession of drugs and/or alcohol will be permitted to volunteer.
- Please refrain from smoking while volunteering. Depending on where a volunteer is placed, there may be smoking breaks. However, United Way asks that volunteers follow policies set forth by the supervisor or agency with regard to smoking.
- No firearms and/or weapons of any kind are permitted at any volunteer space.
- Sexual harassment will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome and/or unsolicited sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Any volunteer who believes he/she has been harassed should notify his/her supervisor immediately.
- Violence, harassing behavior, or offensive speech will not be tolerated.
- Please report all accidents and/or injuries to supervisor and/or staff immediately.

I understand and accept these guidelines put forth by United Way of Southeastern Connecticut. I will use my best judgment in adhering to these guidelines, and will ask my supervisor or United Way staff if any questions or uncertainties arise pertaining to these guidelines.

X________________________________________
Volunteer/Company Signature

________________________________________
Date of Signature
United Way of Southeastern Connecticut
283 Stoddards Wharf Road
Gales Ferry, CT 06335
(860) 464-7281
www.uwsect.org

Gemma E. Moran United Way/Labor Food Center
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