



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

# The Connection

## in Motion:

How People,

Partnerships, and Purpose

Move Our Mission Forward



**A MESSAGE FROM  
OUR PRESIDENT & CEO**



**OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
& EXECUTIVE TEAM**



**MAKING IMPACT VISIBLE**



**IMPACT &  
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW**



**SPECIAL EVENTS & MEDIA**



**OUR SUPPORTERS**

# A Message From Our President & CEO



# A Message from Lisa DeMatteis-Lepore

**PRESIDENT & CEO**

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In FY2025, The Connection continued to grow, not only in scale, but in complexity. As needs evolved and demands increased, our focus remained steady: **staying grounded in how the work happens, and in the relationships that make it possible.**

Across the organization, our staff showed up every day with care, skill, and consistency. Their work is often quiet and relational, built on trust and presence rather than headlines or quick outcomes. In a year that required flexibility and thoughtful response, it was this commitment to people first that allowed us to remain both stable and adaptable.



# A Message from Lisa DeMatteis-Lepore

PRESIDENT & CEO

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We also saw partnerships deepen in meaningful ways. Our ongoing affiliation with Prime Time House is one example of how collaboration matures over time. What began as alignment has become shared practice with our teams learning together, supporting one another, and strengthening systems side by side. This work is not defined by a single moment, but by daily coordination and mutual respect, reflecting how we approach partnership across all of our work.

Throughout the year, we were reminded that people and relationships remain constant, even amid change. Trust in our staff, in our partners, and in the communities we serve continues to guide our decisions and our direction. It is this trust that allows us to respond thoughtfully, to adapt without disruption, and to remain accountable to the individuals and families who rely on us.



# A Message from **Lisa DeMatteis-Lepore**

PRESIDENT & CEO

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None of this work happens alone. Our supporters, partners, and community members play a vital role in sustaining the frontline services that meet people where they are. Your continued belief in our mission and in the people who carry it forward makes it possible for The Connection to remain present, responsive, and reliable.

As we look ahead, we do so with confidence in the strength of our relationships and the experience of our teams. The work will continue to evolve, but our commitment to connection, care, and trust will remain unchanged.

**With heartfelt appreciation,**



**LISA DEMATTEIS-LEPORE,**  
President & Chief Executive Officer



# Our Board of Directors & Executive Team



# A Message from **Our Board Chairs**

**KAREN BUCKLEY & GARY WALLACE**

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Fiscal year 2025 was a year that required **steadiness, clarity, and trust**. The Connection continued to navigate growth and increasing complexity with intention, remaining grounded in its mission while adapting thoughtfully to changing needs across the communities it serves.

The role of a nonprofit board is to provide oversight, ensure accountability, and support long term sustainability. This year reinforced the importance of that responsibility. We are confident in the organization's leadership and deeply appreciative of the professionalism and dedication of the staff, whose frontline work is supported by careful planning, strong financial stewardship, and a clear organizational vision.



# A Message from **Our Board Chairs**

KAREN BUCKLEY & GARY WALLACE

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As partnerships across the organization continue to mature, including the ongoing work with **Prime Time House**, the Boards have seen firsthand how collaboration evolves into shared practice.

People and relationships remain at the center of this organization, even amid change. The Boards are grateful to the partners, donors, and community members whose continued engagement strengthens The Connection's ability to remain stable, responsive, and accountable. Your trust makes this work possible.



# A Message from **Our Board Chairs**

KAREN BUCKLEY & GARY WALLACE

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On behalf of our Boards of Directors, we remain committed to supporting leadership, strengthening governance, and ensuring that The Connection continues to serve with **integrity, compassion, and purpose.**

**With gratitude,**



**KAREN BUCKLEY, Chair,**  
The Connection, Inc.



**GARY WALLACE, Chair,**  
The Connection Fund, Inc.



# Our Board of Directors

## THE CONNECTION, INC.

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Karen Buckley  
Chair

Margaret Jordan  
Addo, Esq.  
Vice Chair

Bill Carbone  
Treasurer

Christine Cappiello  
Secretary

Raymond Bovich

Beverley Henry

John LaRosa

Yardley Messeroux

## THE CONNECTION FUND, INC.

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Gary Wallace  
Chair

Joann Zamparo  
Vice Chair

Lawrence Davis  
Treasurer

Elizabeth Bobrick  
Secretary

Thomas Watson



# Our Executive Team

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Lisa DeMatteis–Lepore  
Chief Executive Officer

Stephen K. Abshire,  
MPA, MBA  
Chief Financial Officer

Beth Connor, MBA  
Chief Business  
Development Officer

Kathleen Savino, Psy.D  
Chief Operating Officer

Jessica Smith, LMFT  
Senior Vice President  
of Strategy & Innovation

Raquel Lugo, MD  
Medical Director

Teresa Ferraro, LPC  
Senior Vice President of Programs

Rachel Doody, MS, LPC  
Vice President of Community  
Justice Services

Alison Friar, LMFT  
Vice President of  
Family Support Services

John Lawlor  
Vice President of Housing  
& Homeless Services

Susan Phillips, JD, Ph.D  
Vice President of Quality,  
Information, and Risk

Ritika Tripathi, MBA,  
SHRM–SCP  
Vice President of Human Resources



# Making Impact Visible



# Making Impact Visible

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In times of economic uncertainty, clarity and trust matter more than ever. While data and outcomes demonstrate scale, it is stories that show why our work matters and how it changes lives in real, human ways. For funders, partners, and community members alike, stories provide context, accountability, and connection to the mission behind the numbers.

At The Connection, storytelling is not an afterthought, it is one of our most important tools for **sustaining support, deepening understanding, and reinforcing confidence** in our work.

Stories show how resources are used, how relationships are built, and how people experience care and dignity every day.

In this year's annual report, we are sharing stories from the field that reflect The Connection at work—alongside people, in communities, and in moments that often go unseen. These stories remind us that stability is built through presence, trust is earned over time, and lasting impact begins with listening.



# Canvassing the Community: Meeting People Where They Are

HOW UNSHELTERED OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT  
SHOWS THE CONNECTION AT WORK ON THE FRONTLINES.

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The Connection at work starts with a simple choice to go where the people who need help are. Outreach and Engagement for people experiencing homelessness unfolds in parking lots, wooded areas, sidewalks, and encampments. These are spaces where life without stable housing is lived day to day, often unseen by most of the community.

Canvassing through downtown New Haven and the Amity neighborhood with the Outreach and Engagement (O&E) team makes one thing immediately clear: connection begins with presence.

The work starts not with questions or requirements, but with care. The team distributes water bottles, packaged food, coats, hats, gloves, and harm reduction supplies like Narcan.

These items meet immediate needs, but just as importantly, they signal something deeper, **“we are here, we see you, and we are here for you.”**



# Canvassing the Community: Meeting People Where They Are

This approach reflects a core belief that guides The Connection's work across all programs that trust is built over time, through consistency and respect. As the O&E team moves through the community, people recognize them. Conversations begin easily. There is familiarity, even warmth. The O&E team is known not as authority or enforcement, but as helpers who show up without judgment and without conditions.

**“The journey to shelter and housing looks different for everyone. Our task is to show up consistently, gain trust, break down barriers and be there to guide each individual through that journey.”**

Erin Russell | Outreach and Engagement Program Manager



# Canvassing the Community: Meeting People Where They Are

This work does not happen in isolation. Outreach is powered by collaboration, another essential element of The Connection at work. Community partners within the Coordinated Access Network stay in close communication, sharing information and supporting one another to locate people who may not have engaged with services for some time. This coordination is invisible, but it is essential. It ensures continuity, reduces duplication, and keeps people from slipping through the cracks when circumstances change.



# Canvassing the Community: Meeting People Where They Are

There is also courage embedded in this work. Approaching an encampment or stopping to speak with someone living on the street requires **bravery, awareness, and humility.**

The O&E team approaches each interaction carefully and respectfully, never assuming what someone needs or wants. Conversations are gentle and unhurried, shaped by listening first. While personal safety and resources are always addressed, encouragement toward services or housing comes only when someone is ready, and readiness is respected as much as urgency.



# Canvassing the Community: Meeting People Where They Are

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**When the conversation does turn toward housing, it is framed as possibility, not pressure.**

The team supports people in imagining what stability could look like and helps them prepare for next steps at their own pace.

This person centered approach reflects The Connection's broader commitment to **dignity, choice, and long term stability, not quick fixes.**



# Canvassing the Community: Meeting People Where They Are

Spending time with the Outreach and Engagement team offers a powerful reminder of what The Connection at work truly means.

It means showing up where the need is greatest. It means standing alongside people without conditions. It means building trust slowly, honoring humanity always, and believing that real change begins with compassionate connection.



# Investing in the People Who Care: Growing Leaders, Strengthening Services

**HOW LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT STRENGTHENS  
STAFF, SERVICE QUALITY, AND COMMUNITY TRUST.**

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Every day, The Connection's impact is shaped not only by the services we provide, but by the people who provide them.

Ensuring that staff are prepared to care for others, today and in the future, requires more than good intentions. It requires sustained investment in leadership skills, especially at the intersection of frontline and leadership levels where strategy becomes daily practice. This belief is at the heart of the I-RISE Leadership Academy, developed through The Connection's Institute for Innovative Practice.



# Investing in the People Who Care: Growing Leaders, Strengthening Services

Frontline supervisors, program managers and program directors are the critical link between organizational vision and lived experience. They translate values into action, policies into practice, and expectations into support. Yet too often, people are promoted into management roles with deep clinical or direct-service expertise, but limited preparation for leading people. I-RISE was designed to close that gap by equipping managers with the skills, confidence, and perspective needed to lead teams effectively and compassionately.

Grounded in five core domains: **Inclusive, Responsive, Inspiring, Strategic, and Empowering leadership**, the I-RISE Leadership Academy emphasizes that strong leadership is both relational and results-driven.

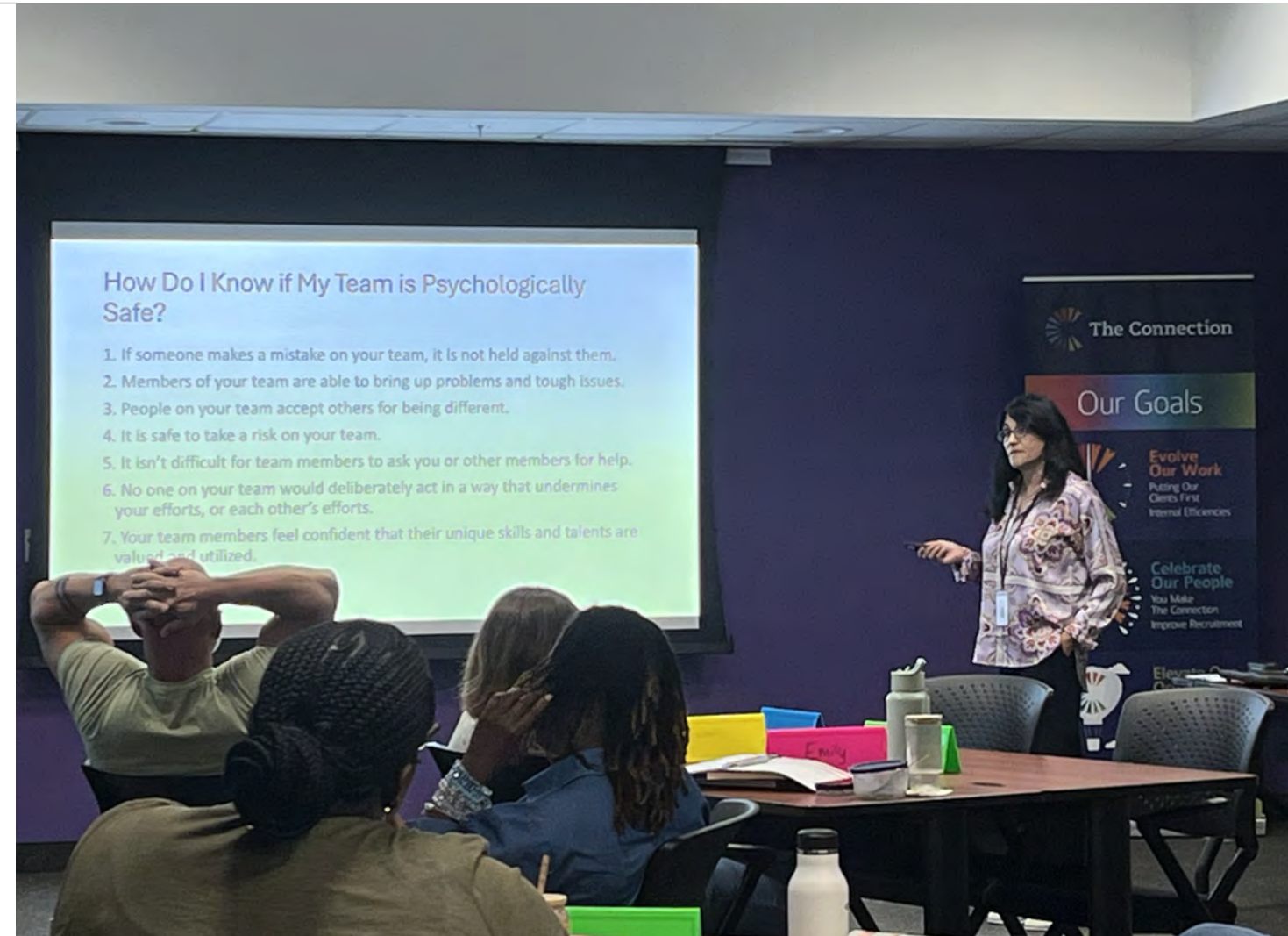


# Investing in the People Who Care: Growing Leaders, Strengthening Services

Participants build emotional intelligence, strengthen communication, and learn how to make thoughtful, data-informed decisions while staying anchored in empathy and accountability. The result is leadership that supports staff as whole people, not just as roles on an organizational chart.

“The I RISE Leadership Academy was a valuable experience, and I’m grateful for the insights, support, and learning the program provided.”

Alexis Davis | Eddy Shelter



# Investing in the People Who Care: Growing Leaders, Strengthening Services

When managers feel supported, they are better able to support their teams. That support shows up in clearer expectations, more consistent supervision, and a workplace culture where staff feel seen, heard, and valued. In turn, staff who feel supported are more likely to stay, grow, and show up with steadiness and responsiveness for the people they serve. The resulting chain reaction directly improves quality and trust for clients across our programs.

In the past year alone, the I-RISE Leadership Academy **supported 94 participants from The Connection and partner organizations** across the state, expanding access to high-quality leadership development through sponsored mixed-cohort offerings.



# Investing in the People Who Care: Growing Leaders, Strengthening Services

The mixed cohorts bring together leaders from multiple organizations, including strong representation from The Connection's frontline supervisors and program leaders. The I-RISE Leadership Academy creates a space for shared learning, cross-agency dialogue, and collective problem-solving. These relationships strengthen not just individual participants, but the broader human-services ecosystem in which we all operate.



# Investing in the People Who Care: Growing Leaders, Strengthening Services

“The I-RISE Leadership Academy was a transformative experience that elevated our leadership capabilities across each department. Through its engaging training sessions, our staff gained practical tools in communication, decision-making, and performance management. One of the best parts was how it brought people from different departments together—strengthening collaboration, leadership, and our shared mission.”

Chrissy Racho | Director of Marketing & Development, Lumibility



# Investing in the People Who Care: Growing Leaders, Strengthening Services

Generous corporate sponsorships have further expanded I-RISE's reach, allowing community nonprofit organizations to enroll their staff in the I-RISE Leadership Academy at no cost. By removing financial barriers, these partnerships ensure that high-quality leadership development is accessible to organizations that might otherwise be unable to participate.

The result is a ripple effect of stronger leadership, healthier teams, and more consistent, high-quality care across communities throughout Connecticut.



# Investing in the People Who Care: Growing Leaders, Strengthening Services

At its core, I-RISE reflects a simple but powerful truth: **investing in leaders is an investment in people and in the communities they serve.**

As a social enterprise of The Connection, the I-RISE Leadership Academy is deeply aligned with our mission of building safe, healthy, caring communities and inspiring people to reach their full potential as productive and valued citizens.

By strengthening those who guide, support, and mentor the workforce every day, I-RISE helps ensure that care is delivered with consistency, compassion, and trust. This investment in leadership builds not only stronger teams, but stronger communities, now and for years to come.



# More Support, More Connection: A New Chapter for Prime Time House

THROUGH ITS AFFILIATION WITH THE CONNECTION, PRIME TIME HOUSE IS PRESERVING WHAT WORKS WHILE BUILDING THE SYSTEMS AND PARTNERSHIPS THAT SUSTAIN RECOVERY, DIGNITY, AND BELONGING.

For more than three decades, Prime Time House has been a place of belonging for people living with mental health challenges in Northwest Connecticut.



# More Support, More Connection: A New Chapter for Prime Time House

**Built on peer connection, daily structure, and mutual support,** the Clubhouse model has long offered members a community where they are known, valued, and encouraged to grow.

In late 2024, Prime Time House entered a new chapter when it began an affiliation with The Connection — a partnership rooted in shared values and a common belief that people thrive when they are supported, connected, and empowered. While the affiliation officially took effect on January 1, 2026, its impact has already been felt in meaningful, people-centered ways.



# More Support, More Connection: A New Chapter for Prime Time House

Importantly, Prime Time House has remained Prime Time House. Its name, location, nonprofit status, and cherished traditions, including the annual Prime Finds holiday pop-up shop, continue unchanged. Members still walk through familiar doors, see trusted faces, and participate in the routines that anchor their days. What has grown is the level of support surrounding that experience.

Prime Time House is now backed by The Connection's broader network of expertise, infrastructure, and resources, **strengthening the organization's ability to focus on what matters most: its members.**



# More Support, More Connection: A New Chapter for Prime Time House

Behind the scenes, **improvements to technology and daily processes are helping staff work more efficiently and sustainably**, ensuring that the Clubhouse remains a stable and welcoming environment for years to come.



# More Support, More Connection: A New Chapter for Prime Time House

Transitions, even positive ones, can be challenging. Prime Time House leaders and staff are grateful to Clubhouse members for their patience, flexibility, and teamwork as new systems have been introduced.

Their willingness to adapt reflects the same resilience and collaboration that define the Clubhouse community itself.



# More Support, More Connection: A New Chapter for Prime Time House

**This affiliation is not about changing who Prime Time House is; it is about reinforcing what it has always done well.**

By working together, Prime Time House and The Connection are creating more opportunities for connection, expanding the organization's capacity, and strengthening the foundation that supports recovery, independence, and community engagement.



# More Support, More Connection: A New Chapter for Prime Time House

At its heart, this partnership is a living example of The Connection In Motion: two organizations aligned in mission, centered on people, and committed to ensuring that individuals living with mental health challenges have access to the support, dignity, and community they deserve.

As Prime Time House continues this new chapter, members remain at the center — supported by stronger systems, sustained by trusted relationships, and connected to a future filled with possibility.



# Momentum Through Partnership: A Pathway from Emergency Shelter to Stable Housing

FROM EMERGENCY SHELTER TO A PLACE TO CALL HOME, MARCO'S STORY REFLECTS WHAT'S POSSIBLE WHEN CARE EXTENDS BEYOND ANY SINGLE PROGRAM.

When Marco talks about the moment he realized he wasn't alone anymore, he doesn't describe a single program or service. He talks about people, **the people who found him when he had nowhere to go, who met his immediate needs, and who stayed connected long enough for something more stable to take shape.**

Today, that stability looks like an apartment at Liberty Commons.

Before coming to Liberty Commons, Marco was homeless. Like many emerging adults experiencing homelessness, he spent time couch surfing in an environment that made recovery difficult. When he recognized that staying there put his health at risk, he left and spent several days on the street.



# Momentum Through Partnership: A Pathway from Emergency Shelter to Stable Housing

Marco remembers the **Saint Vincent DePaul warming center** in Middletown as the place where everything began to shift.

The warming center and the soup kitchen became places where he could meet his most immediate needs and stay connected to others navigating the same circumstances. It was there that outreach and engagement staff from Columbus House first helped him begin moving forward.

Without a phone or a consistent way to stay connected, the outreach and engagement team had to locate Marco to tell him he was offered a bed at the Eddy Shelter. An emergency shelter bed would provide food, warmth, and a safe place to sleep. Marco accepted the placement, marking the next milestone in a long pathway of care that relied not on one organization alone, but on a coordinated network working together.



# Momentum Through Partnership: A Pathway from Emergency Shelter to Stable Housing

At the Eddy Shelter, Marco connected with case managers who helped him stabilize day-to-day necessities while focusing on recovery. At the same time, partners stepped in to cover essentials that can otherwise slow progress. A case worker from Columbus House helped him secure food assistance, while staff at the Eddy Shelter coordinated next steps. Because those foundational needs were addressed quickly, frontline staff could focus their energy on care, planning, and support rather than crisis management.

**What stood out most to Marco was how connected the system felt.** He described staff from Columbus House, the Eddy Shelter, and St. Vincent de Paul communicating regularly and working toward the same goal.



# Momentum Through Partnership: A Pathway from Emergency Shelter to Stable Housing

Rather than repeating his story at every step, Marco experienced the system as a team that shared responsibility and reduced the emotional strain that often accompanies navigating services alone.

“Anyone can become homeless. What matters is having a team that communicates, follows up, and keeps going.”

Marco



# Momentum Through Partnership: A Pathway from Emergency Shelter to Stable Housing

As stability increased, so did capacity. With consistent shelter, access to food, and support for recovery, Marco was able to focus on longer-term goals. He moved from emergency shelter into stable housing at Liberty Commons, where having his own space allowed him to begin rebuilding routines and relationships. For the first time in a long while, he could think beyond immediate survival.

Today, Marco describes his apartment as a place of **safety, pride, and possibility.**



# Momentum Through Partnership: A Pathway from Emergency Shelter to Stable Housing

It's where friends can visit and where community activities bring neighbors together. It's also where ongoing services, like the Vocational Arts program with occupational therapy students from Quinnipiac, continue to support his mental health and recovery. Stable housing didn't end his need for connection; it made it possible.

Looking back, Marco is clear about why partnerships matter. No single organization could have met all of his needs at once, but together, they created momentum. Emergency shelter, soup kitchen access, case management, and housing were not isolated steps; they were linked.

Marco's story is one example of what's possible when care extends beyond any single set of walls.

When partners collaborate to cover essentials, capacity grows. When systems align, people move forward. When collaboration is treated as a shared responsibility, stability becomes something that can be built and sustained.



# From the Frontlines to the Floor: Bringing Our Voices to the Capitol

HOW FRONTLINE EXPERIENCE INFORMS POLICY  
ADVOCACY TO STRENGTHEN SYSTEMS FOR PEOPLE,  
FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES ACROSS CONNECTICUT.

At The Connection, advocacy does not begin at the Capitol. It begins on the frontlines, **alongside the individuals and families we serve every day.**

The realities our staff witness in homes, shelters, and communities across Connecticut shape how we show up in policy conversations.

When we advocate, we carry those lived experiences with us, ensuring that decisions made at the systems level reflect the needs, strengths, and challenges of real people.

This approach is central to our participation in the Connecticut Nonprofit Alliance, where we work alongside other community-based organizations to strengthen the nonprofit sector as a whole.



# From the Frontlines to the Floor: Bringing Our Voices to the Capitol

Our policy priorities reflect these realities. We focus our efforts on housing and homelessness, child welfare and family stability, and the need for sustainable, reliable funding for community-based nonprofits. These are not abstract goals. They are the conditions that determine whether families can reunify, whether parents can remain housed, and whether children can grow up in safe, stable environments.

Through coalition advocacy and direct engagement with legislators, we work to ensure that systems are designed to support long-term stability rather than short-term solutions. This includes advocating for policies that acknowledge the complexity of family needs and the importance of flexible, well-resourced community-based programs.



# From the Frontlines to the Floor: Bringing Our Voices to the Capitol

The connection between policy and practice becomes especially clear when people with lived experience bring their voices directly into legislative spaces. During the past year, clients from our Supportive Housing for Families program testified at the Legislative Office Building, sharing firsthand how access to housing and coordinated supports made it possible to recover from crisis, reunify with children, and plan for the future.

Testimony from our clients puts a human face on the policies under consideration, reinforcing what our staff see every day.

When systems are responsive, adequately funded, and grounded in real-world experience, families are better positioned to thrive.



# From the Frontlines to the Floor: Bringing Our Voices to the Capitol

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“Supportive Housing for Families did not just help me find housing; they helped me rebuild my family, strengthen my future, and create a safe, stable place for my children to grow.”

Andre Holley | Supportive Housing for Families



# From the Frontlines to the Floor: Bringing Our Voices to the Capitol

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“The Supportive Housing for Families program provided more than housing. It has given me stability, direction, and the confidence to build a healthy and sustainable future for myself and my children.”

Aubrey Knudsen | Supportive Housing for Families



# From the Frontlines to the Floor: Bringing Our Voices to the Capitol

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**“I started out with nothing except for the clothes on my back and now I have created a life that I want to see continue. Supportive Housing for Families has helped me lay down the foundation my son and I need to succeed in life.”**

Danielle West | Supportive Housing for Families



# From the Frontlines to the Floor: Bringing Our Voices to the Capitol

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By bringing frontline experience into policy conversations through coalition advocacy and direct testimony, The Connection helps ensure that legislation reflects the realities of the people most affected by it. This work strengthens not only our programs, but the broader systems that families across Connecticut rely on.

**Advocacy is one more way we remain accountable to the people we serve.** From the frontlines to the floor, their voices guide our work today and into the future.



# Impact & Financial Overview



# Impact & Financial Overview

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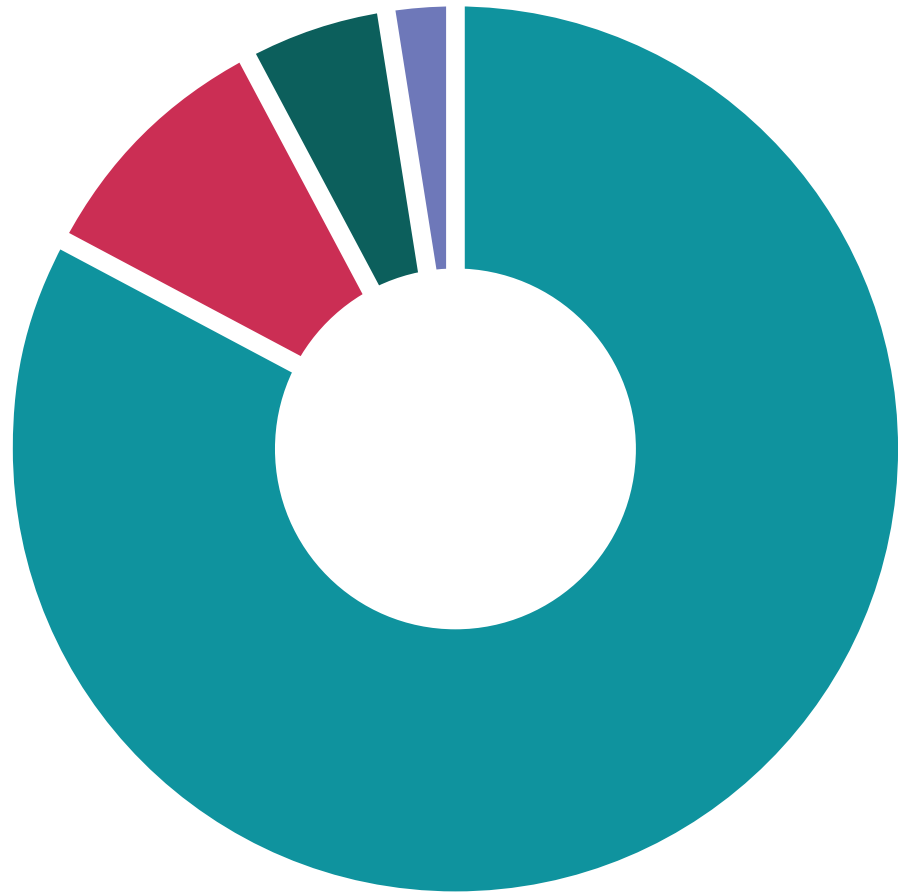
**Behind every statistic is a person, and behind every program is a commitment to stewardship.**

The Connection's responsible financial management ensures that investments in people, programs, and infrastructure advance our mission to build safe, healthy, caring communities.

The impact and financial information that follows shows how that support is translated into meaningful outcomes for individuals, families, and communities.



# Total Unique Count of Clients Across Agency: **9,134**



ADULT SERVICES:

**7,581**

FAMILY & CHILD SERVICES:

**860**

HOUSING & HOMELESS  
SERVICES:

**476**

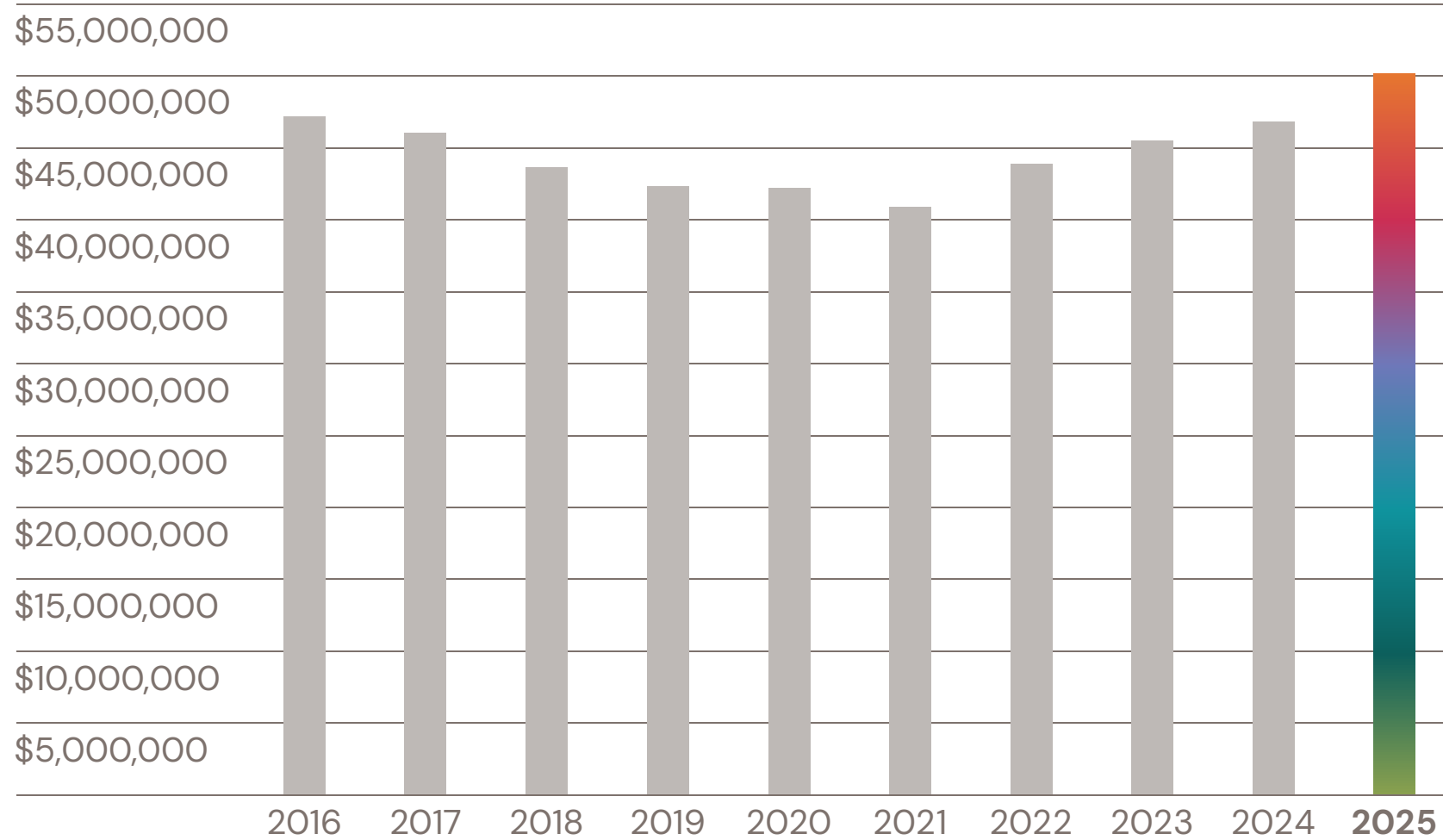
YOUNG ADULT SERVICES:

**217**

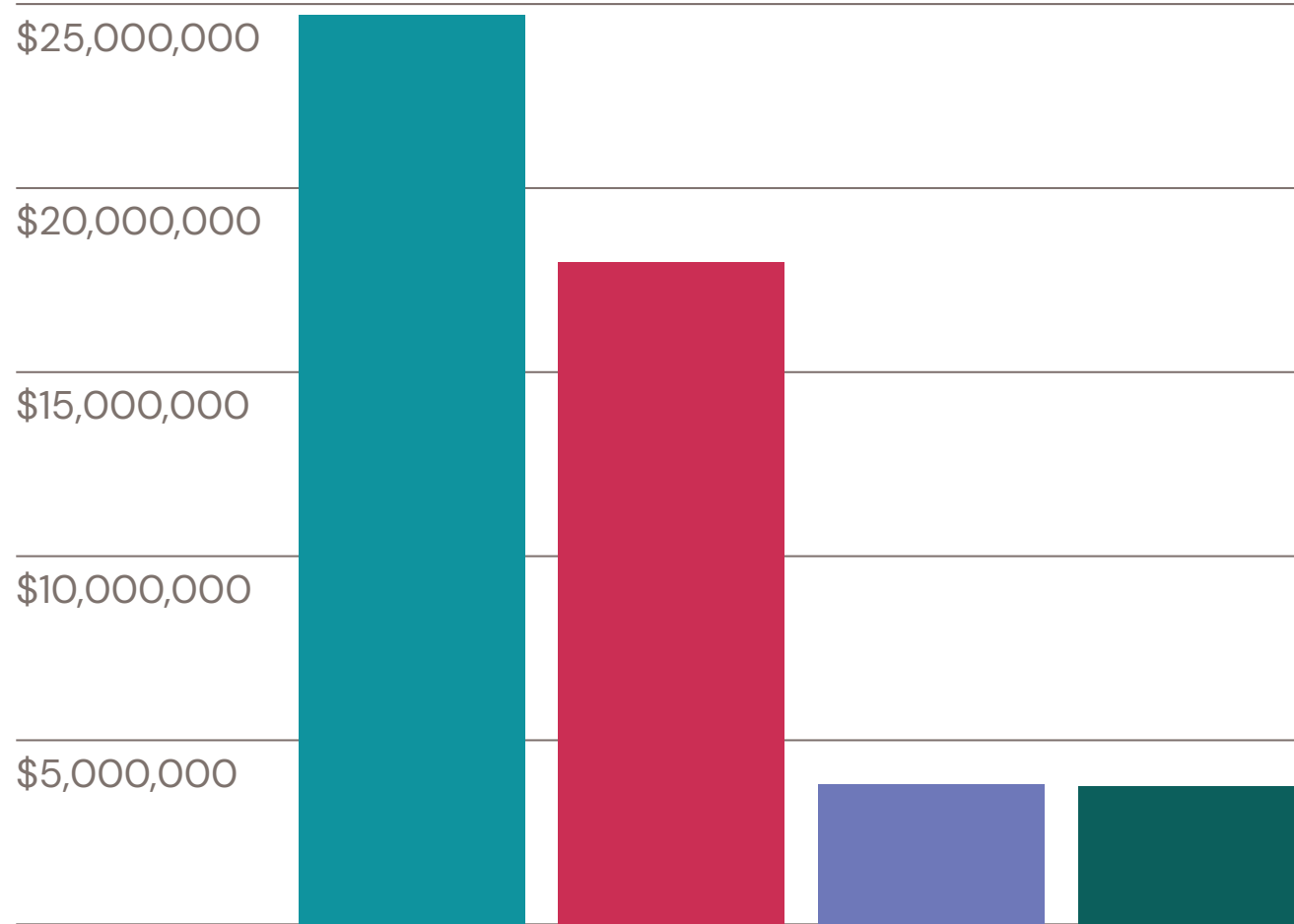


# Annual Support

2025 Data Based Upon Agency Budget, FY 2016 to FY 2025



# 2025 Financials by Category

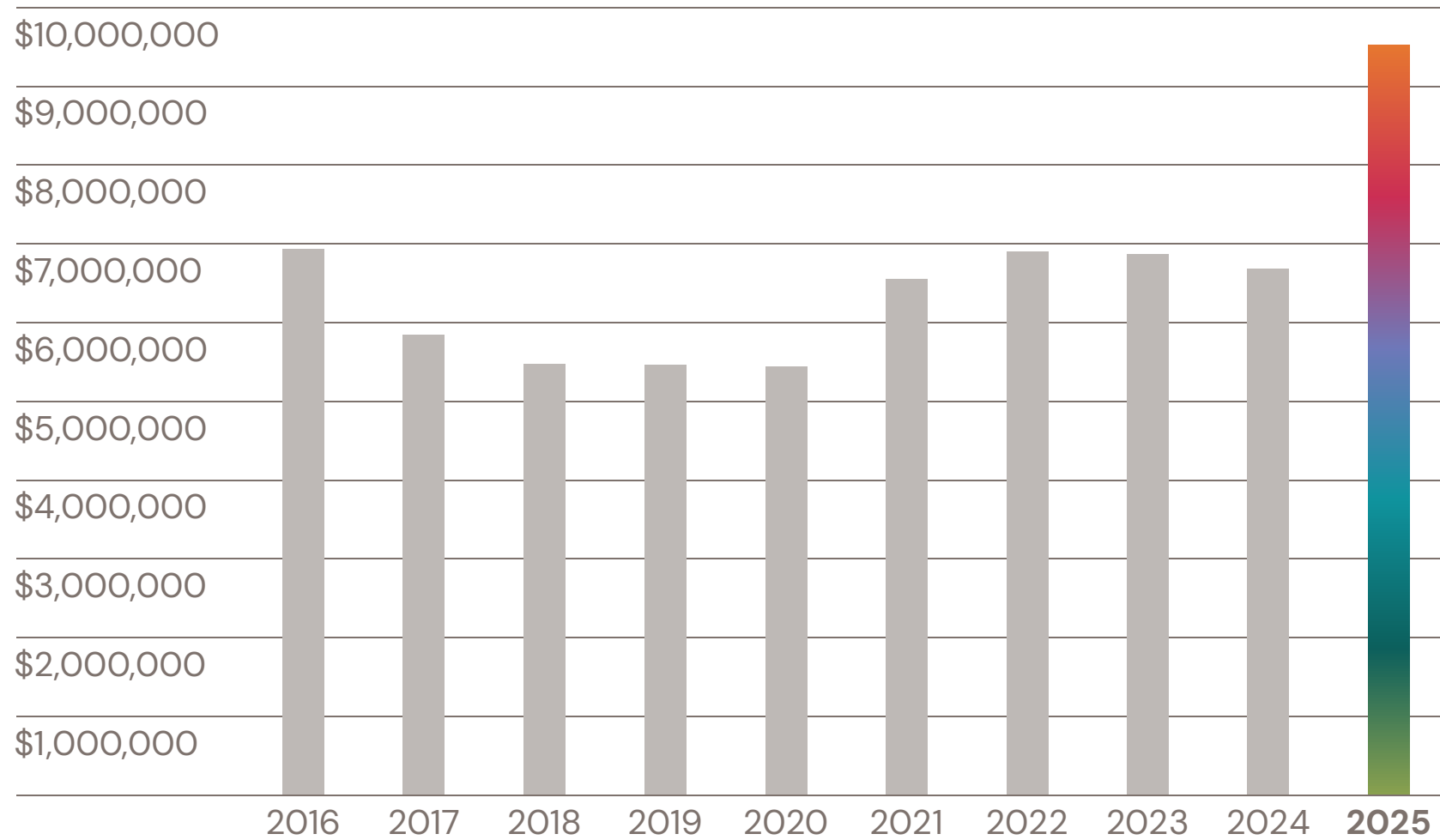


ADULT SERVICES	\$ 24,698,184
FAMILY & CHILD SERVICES	\$ 17,972,806
YOUNG ADULT SERVICES	\$ 3,805,210
HOUSING SERVICES	\$ 3,739,275
TOTAL	\$ 50,215,475



# Net Assets

FY 2016 to FY 2025





# The Connection Institute for Innovative Practice

TRAINING | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | CONSULTATION

The Institute for Innovative Practice supports individual employee well-being and organizational success through a combination of **instructor led training, custom training solutions, and consultation.**

As a social enterprise, the Institute creates a virtuous cycle where organizational investment in workforce development fuels mission driven services statewide. Each partnership, training, and consultation engagement strengthens both the participating organization and The Connection's ability to meet community needs.





# The Connection Institute for Innovative Practice

TRAINING | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | CONSULTATION

In FY25, the Institute expanded its reach and deepened its engagement across Connecticut and beyond.

Over the course of the year, the Institute delivered **244 training sessions**, engaging **4,936 learners** and partnering with **60 organizations**, including **22 new partners**.

These collaborations spanned human services, healthcare, education, municipal departments, and community-based organizations, reflecting the broad relevance of people-centered, frontline-informed learning.

The Institute's work extended beyond formal training environments. **By participating in 11 community conferences, the Institute engaged an additional 1,395 community members**, creating opportunities for connection, knowledge sharing, and relationship-building with individuals and organizations navigating complex human and organizational challenges.





# The Connection Institute for Innovative Practice

TRAINING | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | CONSULTATION

These touchpoints strengthen visibility, accessibility, and trust, critical foundations for long-term community impact.

Workforce development is not separate from frontline impact; it is part of what makes it possible.

The leadership growth, service quality, and community trust reflected in the stories throughout this report are supported by intentional investment in the people and systems behind the work. Through the Institute for Innovative Practice, training becomes a mechanism for translating values into practice by supporting consistency, care, and accountability across the human-services ecosystem and reinforcing the outcomes reflected in the pages that follow.



# Special Events & Media



# Special Events & Media: Community in Motion

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**In 2025, The Connection's signature events and media opportunities served as vehicles for supporters, partners, and neighbors to come together in support of our work.**

These moments celebrated connection beyond programs while making our mission visible in meaningful, human ways. Each activity did more than gather people, they directly supported the frontline staff and services that carry The Connection's mission forward every day.



# Special Events & Media: Community in Motion



# Special Events & Media: Community in Motion



# Special Events & Media: Community in Motion



# 2025 Golf Tournament

Rain clouds and resilience defined the 2025 Community Links Golf Tournament, our first year at **Lyman Orchards Golf Course**.

Supporters arrived ready to play, and stayed that way, even as heavy downpours swept across the course on **Monday, May 5th**. Some of our most committed golfers chose to finish the day by playing nine holes in the rain, a testament to the spirit that drives our community.



# 2025 Golf Tournament

That same spirit carried the event to a successful finish, **raising more than \$60,000** to support The Connection's work.

With **105 golfers** and the generous backing of **27 corporate sponsors**, the day became less about a perfect game and more about shared purpose, camaraderie, and the belief that showing up for one another is what truly matters. Funds raised through the tournament are directed where they are needed most, helping individuals and families to access stable housing, food, and behavioral health support when they need it most.



# 2025 Golf Tournament



# 2025 Golf Tournament



# 2025 Golf Tournament



# Third Annual Q Williams Taste of Middletown

The third annual Q Williams Taste of Middletown returned to the **Wadsworth Mansion on Wednesday, October 22**, as a powerful evening of remembrance, storytelling, and community pride. Nearly **250 guests** gathered to honor the life and legacy of Q Williams, sharing memories, laughter, and connection while experiencing the richness of Middletown's culinary scene.



**Q WILLIAMS**  
TASTE OF MIDDLETOWN



# Third Annual Q Williams Taste of Middletown

Twenty-four local restaurants, bakeries, breweries, and coffee spots filled the night with flavor, supported by 38 sponsors who made the event possible. Together, the community raised more than \$50,000 to benefit The Connection and The Q Fund at the Community Foundation of Middlesex County. The funds raised help to sustain The Connection's frontline teams working at the intersection of housing stability, education access, and racial justice, continuing the work Q believed in and championed. The evening reflected how food, memory, and collective action can come together to create lasting impact.



# Third Annual Q Williams Taste of Middletown



# Third Annual Q Williams Taste of Middletown



# Third Annual Q Williams Taste of Middletown



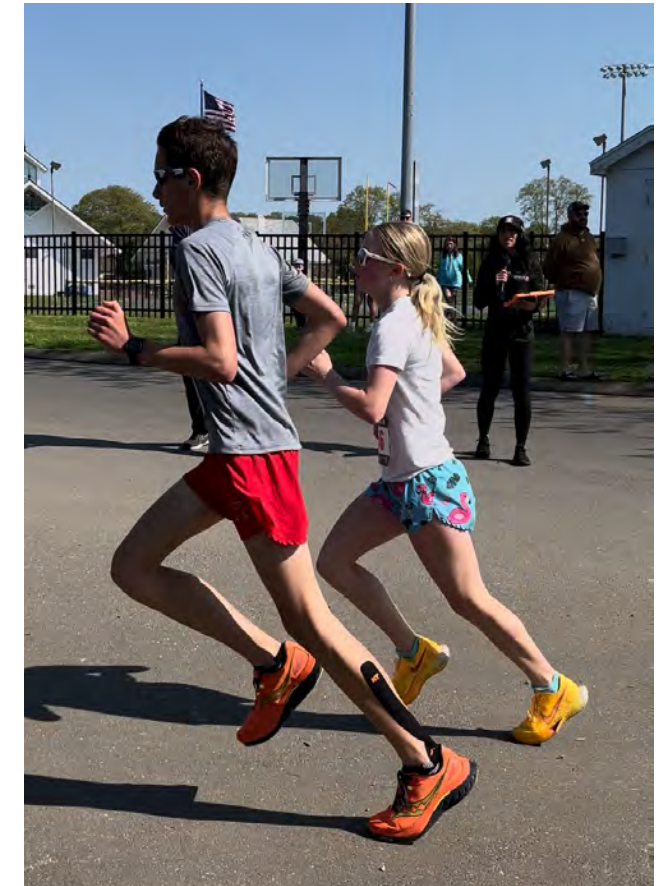
# Let Her Run Race With The WaveRunners

In **May**, The WaveRunners selected The Connection as a beneficiary of the **Let Her Run Race**, held on Mother's Day along the waterfront in Madison, Connecticut.

**More than 200 runners** completed the five-mile course under sunny skies, gathering in support of both The WaveRunners and The Connection. The race raised thousands of dollars to advance our mission while highlighting the strength of partnerships that extend beyond traditional fundraising spaces and into shared experiences.



# Let Her Run Race With The WaveRunners



# Media and Visibility: Building Trust Through Storytelling

In 2025, The Connection used media opportunities to thoughtfully extend the reach of our mission and strengthen trust with the broader community.

Through television segments, digital placements, and coordinated social content, we highlighted collaborations with partners including **Bob's Furniture Foundation**, **Foodshare**, and our affiliated organization, **Prime Time House**.

These stories emphasized shared responsibility, community partnership, and the real people behind the work.

Careful media preparation and message alignment ensured consistency and credibility across platforms. By centering dignity, accuracy, and human connection, our media presence complemented in-person engagement and reinforced The Connection's role as a trusted community partner. Together, these efforts made our impact visible beyond physical spaces and invited the community to see themselves as part of the solution.



# Media and Visibility: Building Trust Through Storytelling



# Media and Visibility: Building Trust Through Storytelling



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Your continued commitment provides stability, confidence, and momentum.

**Together, we are building safe, healthy, caring communities and ensuring that connection, dignity, and opportunity remain within reach for those who need them most.**



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