



Community Update

NORTHWEST CONNECTICUT

OCTOBER 2024

HEALTH • EDUCATION • ECONOMIC MOBILITY

Our Executive Director

Following a period of reorganization, the United Way board launched a search process that resulted in selecting Lisa Ferris to head up the agency. She started with us in August and she hit the ground running.



Since April 2017, Lisa Ferris has been Dental Program Manager and Director of Community Relations at The Maria Seymour Brooker Memorial in Torrington. She is co-chair of the Litchfield Hills Brewfest, a major fundraising event for Brooker. Prior work experience includes management and administrative positions she has held since 1995. Ms. Ferris grew up in the area, she has been involved in many community events and nonprofit board service. She has been an active United Way volunteer for 10 years. She is a founding member of Stock the Shelves, a nonprofit startup organization addressing food insecurity. She is currently vice president of the board of Prime Time House and a board member of Northwest Hills Credit Union, Litchfield Area Business Association, and the Women and Girls Fund. She is chair of the Chamber's WOW committee, and on the advisory board for Building Healthier Communities.

A resident of Goshen, Ms. Ferris is the mother of two adult sons.

Eversource Energizes the Growth of the United Way of Northwest Connecticut

In September, Eversource Energy presented a generous contribution of \$20,000 to us at the United Way of Northwest Connecticut. Their support will help us continue to build a stronger, well-connected community. Thank you, Eversource!



United Way Executive Director Lisa Ferris receives a \$20,000 donation from Tim Waldron of Eversource.

Some of What's Been Happening

Our partner organizations are always creating new ways to function – and in some cases, survive. Our United Way is working to meet today's needs, addressing a number of fundamental organizational tasks. We are committed to partnering with our agencies to support their work as they address the region's most pressing human service needs.

We have:

- Hosted a meeting with executive directors of United Way agencies to learn from them, and have updated our roster of official United Way agencies.
- Recruited new directors to the board and have been supported by experienced advisory committee
- Updated the by-laws
- Completed the financial audit for 2022-2023

- Engaged other United Ways in the region to explore best practices and operational efficiencies we can utilize, and reestablished communication and collaboration with United Way of CT

There is much more to do. We are excited and feel that as a united, caring community, we can do it!

From Lisa Ferris, our Executive Director

I am thrilled about the opportunity to move United Way forward and continue making a meaningful impact in our community. I want to extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who has supported me, especially the United Way Board of Directors. The past few months have been busy but incredibly rewarding, as I've had the privilege of meeting with other United Way leaders, community providers, various groups to discuss the vital role United Way plays in improving lives every day, and some of our major donors and key supporters.

I am also excited to announce some key initiatives we'll be leading in the coming months:

- **Stock the Shelves:** We are proud to take over this important program, which will help ensure local families have access to essential items.
- **Warm the Children:** We are partnering with FISH to keep this wonderful program going, helping children in need stay warm during the colder months.
- **VITA Tax Program:** Beginning in January, we will be running the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program to offer free tax prep services for qualifying individuals.
- **Day of Caring:** We are planning a community-wide Day of Caring event in Spring 2025. It will be a great opportunity for volunteers to give back and make a direct impact.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or for more information. Together, we are making a difference in the lives of those who need it most.

Warm regards,

Lisa Ferris

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So many people to thank!

As always, we thank our donors. Even without a formal campaign, donors continue to recognize the work of the United Way.

We are grateful for our partner agencies who continue to serve the people in our communities.

We are also grateful for the dedication of Jim Hutchison, who has been board chair and acting Executive Director of our United Way through difficult times. His leadership has given us the opportunity to sustain and expand our mission.

Likewise, Treasurer Kevin Sullivan has been a responsible steward of the agency's finances. His knowledge and assistance has been invaluable.

We thank Maria Gonzalez and New Opportunities, who were most generous in enabling us to move United Way materials from storage, where they had been for two years – eliminating our need to rent storage units.

We thank Christina Emery and Brooker Memorial for the

beautiful office space they have offered us at Brooker Memorial.

Our hats are off to our own directors, advisors and other volunteers who have been so supportive.



Directors, advisors and friends volunteered to help move the United Way office into space provided to us in Brooker Memorial.

Supporting Our Agency Partners:

2-1-1 • Canaan Child Care Center • Community Mental Health Affiliates' Northwest Center for Mental Health
Falls Village Day Care Center • FISH of Northwestern Connecticut • McCall Behavioral Health Center
Northwest CT YMCA • Nutmeg Big Brothers/Big Sisters • Pleasant Valley Day Care Center
Susan B. Anthony Project, Inc. • Winsted Area Child Care Center, Inc.

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