



## **Power of Together 2**

### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **Meeting of May 14, 2024**

Barb Silver opened the meeting by observing it has been a year since the death of our co-founder and organizer, Gae Melford. Gae was a bright light in the world who cared deeply about those around her and embodied PoT2's mission of joining together to help those in need. We miss her greatly.

Barb welcomed new members Rob Christian and Carol Barnard, who joined that evening, as well as Jennifer Pryor and Bill Fuchs, who joined in February 2024. Power of Together 2 was formed eight years ago in April 2016 and currently has 122 members.

David Schulz reported that Groton Community Meals was extremely grateful to receive our February 2024 donations. They have experienced tremendous growth over the past several years and have gone from serving 60 meals each week at one location to 360 meals each week at two locations (180 meals at each site). Their largest expenses are "to-go" containers, refrigerators/freezers, and chefs' salaries. The funds from Power of Together 2 will be used to support the chefs.

Debby reported that we are setting up a system to share volunteer opportunities at past recipients' facilities with the members who might be interested in getting more involved. She will update us on the progress of that effort at a future meeting.

#### **Shannon DePerry – Operation Fresh Start**

Operation Fresh Start provides assistance to children entering and graduating from the Foster Home system, young adults threatened by homelessness and families in need who are starting out in new homes. They provide sets of toiletries, and move in kits of cooking and cleaning supplies, bedding and linens depending on their clients' needs. They also provide other types of support for foster children, including summer camp tuition for a camp run by Stonington Human Services. Their storage facilities have recently moved from Shannon's home to a church in Pawcatuck. The demand for services has grown, exceeding

their donated funds and supplies. Their “welcome baskets” cost \$200-400 each and they have given out 40 in the last 6 months. They have also launched a Career Workshop for young women with resume and interview coaching as well as clothing, hair and makeup assistance. The transformations have been remarkable, and they give these young women a boost in confidence and a greater chance of success in finding a job.

### **Holly Carboneau – The Blue Door Foundation**

The Blue Door Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit in East Lyme providing equipment and supplies to those caring for elderly relatives. They have a warehouse full equipment such as wheelchairs, walkers, hospital beds, bed pans, and incontinence supplies. These are loaned or given to the families of elders who have experienced a fall or other adverse health event. They remove some of the stress families experience when they get the call that “Mom has taken a fall”. The foundation is operated by a husband and wife team who cover all aspects of the service including interviewing families to determine their needs; cleaning, repairing and storing equipment; and providing transportation for elders to doctor’s appointments and hospitals. The funds are needed to pay for the monthly rent on their warehouse space.

The membership voted and Operation Fresh Start received the most votes and, therefore, is the May 2024 recipient of our donations.