



Power of Together SECT 2

Meeting Minutes, August 8, 2023

Dave Schulz called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. He announced that we now stand at 128 members, and have raised over \$300,000. He also shared that Debby O'Brien has agreed to step in and help out as one of the organizers.

Cindy Palmer, board member of A Sacred Place, spoke about how the PoT2 funds awarded to a Sacred Place last quarter were being put to use. She read from a letter from the Board Chair, who noted that they were overwhelmed by our support, which is being used to support the Barbara Mahon Fund, started in 2013. This program provides tuition for educational programs and spiritual enrichment for incarcerated women at York Correctional Institute in Niantic, CT. As the vast majority of inmates are mothers, the women are not only helping themselves find a better path through this program, but provides a model for their children.

The hat was passed and three people submitted their names.

1. Susan Charette, represented **Loving Hands of SE CT.**, a small organization that helps local homeless people. Started by Kim Grillo, the group began on the Groton town Facebook page, with Kim reporting what people needed and people donating through Venmo. They provide food, clothing, tents, toiletries, etc., and goes to people she finds are most in need. This is not a 501c3, and would need to be processed through Cactus Jack Foundation. Kim Grillo, recognized as Groton Elks as Citizen of the Year, manages several volunteers and maintains 2 storage units for donated items.
2. Shannon Duperry – founder and president of **Operation Fresh Start** – Pawcatuck CT – presented their mission to help children in foster care, and families in crisis, primarily in New London County, as well as Westerly, RI. Now 4 years in, their funds are low. Doing backpack drive now, filling and donating 200 packed backpacks to children in need. They also do a Christmas drive among other initiatives, such as interview skills training to those struggling to find employment or better employment.
3. Paul Geise presented **New Heights**, a new facility in Pawcatuck, CT, which is a branch of Vista Life Innovations, based in Madison, CT, and in operation for 34 years. New Heights offers a day program teaching life skills for adults with disabilities and their families. They currently serve 18 people +/- . Their programs are community immersive experiences. Some enrolled work in stores, and are managed with personal coaching, for example. Their funding needs include staffing costs, transportation, and operational expenses.

The organization receiving the most votes was New Heights. The meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.