

Vincent J. Tufo

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Vincent J. Tufo, executive director and CEO of Charter Oak Communities, speaking at the Summer Place groundbreaking November 3rd.

Board Meeting for 2015:

- **December 16th**

The meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m. at Post House, 40 Clinton Avenue in the first-floor meeting room.

Procurement

Charter Oak Communities will be procuring A&E Services for Multi-Locations and Plumbing & Heating in December and January.

Groundbreaking held for new apartments at Summer Place

Charter Oak Communities (COC) and Inspirica hosted a groundbreaking ceremony on November 3rd to develop a new apartment building called Summer Place at 992 Summer Street. The development is for near-elderly and elderly residents (age 55 years and older). It is intended to replace Czescik Homes, a 1960's era state-assisted housing complex that is both physically and functionally obsolete. The project is expected to be complete by spring 2017.

Special guests included Commissioner Evonne M. Klein, Department of Housing; Alanna C. Kabel, representing the HUD Field Office for Connecticut; and Stamford Mayor David R. Martin. Vincent J. Tufo, executive director and CEO, COC, and Jason T. Shaplen, CEO, Inspirica, Inc. officiated at the ceremony.

Summer Place will comprise 40 one-bedroom apartments and eight studio apartments in a five-story, 41,000-square foot building. Standard apartments will feature a living room, dining area, bedroom, kitchen and bathroom. The ground floor of the new building will include a communal kitchen and meeting room, lounge and offices, common

laundry facilities and a property management office. The building will feature a landscaped rooftop deck!

Summer Place will be a “caring community,” intended to foster independent living and a positive experience for residents as they age. Located adjacent to Inspirica’s main facility on Franklin Street, residents will be encouraged to utilize services as well as act as volunteers. Inspirica will provide Summer Place residents with supportive services on-site and also at their facility next door, including counseling and clinical services, healthcare screenings, as well as nutrition and intervention assistance.

The rental structure for Summer Place will incorporate HUD Section 8 operating subsidies for 24 of the 48 units. With rental payments based upon 30 percent of adjusted household income, it will enable the occupants of these apartments to live at Summer Place regardless of income. The remaining 24 units, while not receiving operating subsidies, will feature restricted rents for families earning no more than 60 percent of the Area Median Income.



From left to right: Alanna Kabel, Evonne Klein, Vincent Tufo, Kenneth Boroson, Jason Shaplen, Mayor Martin, and Anthony Gaglio



COC Employee Profile: Ed Poole



Ed Poole began working at COC as a temporary employee several years ago. As of August 2014, we were happy to call him our full-time Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) clerk. Proud to be a member of the COC staff, Ed exclaims, "It is an awesome place to work!" Ed's organizational skills are a significant help to the community and to COC. He is part of the Section 8 team that assists people with affordable housing in the community. Ed is a true asset to the organization, always ready to lend a hand, with a dynamic smile and bounty of energy.

Ed graduated from Central Connecticut State College with a BA degree in

communications. Prior to working at COC, he held various administrative assistant positions and worked in customer service for a truck rental company.

Ed loves spending time with his family. Currently, he is caretaker to his 94-year-old father, a retired World War II Army veteran.

Playing the guitar since the age of 13, Ed is a fascinating musician and lead guitarist in the six-piece "Parker Avenue Band." He practices weekly and plays at various venues in the Stamford/Norwalk area. In September, his band played at the Norwalk Oyster Festival, a performance that can be experienced on *YouTube*. Also, this past summer at the COC picnic, Ed, Dan Persaud, assistant property manager for the East Side, and a friend performed as the three-piece "North Clinton Sound Advisory Band" and put on a great show!

When Ed is not practicing or playing at local venues, he enjoys songwriting. After all, you never know when he'll get that big break!

2015 Holiday Food Drive a Big Success

For the fourth year in a row, the COC employee Food Drive Challenge was a great success! Four teams, comprising employees from COC and Rippowam Corporation, gathered food for Person to Person, a local food bank located in Darien. Team leaders, Ed Poole, Jamie Perna, Sam Feda, and Christine Young, worked strategically and engaged in some "friendly competition" to collect more food this year than last! The winning team will be announced in December.

One of COC's informal missions has been to bring the spirit of caring and giving to those in need. Once more, our collective efforts as a team are providing for the greater good of the community in need!



Making Timely Rent Payments

Tenant Statements are mailed out by the 25th of every month. Please be sure to include the bottom portion of the statement for proper credit to your account, and use the return envelope with your monthly statement. When mailing your payment, allow **three to four business days** for your check to reach the Webster Bank lockbox in Hartford, or the 22 Clinton Avenue address.

COC has a drop mailbox at the main entrance of 22 Clinton Avenue for rent payments – this is only for Clinton Manor, Post House, Rippowam Manor, Glenbrook Manor, Taylor Street, and Lawnhill Phase I residents. **Checks must be placed in this drop mailbox by the 10th of each month to avoid a late fee.** Any rental payment received after the 10th of the month, depending on the property, will incur a late fee. Information on late fees can be found in the Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP) binder located in the Executive Office.

If interested in an automatic rent deduction from your bank account, a form can be obtained from your property manager.

Special Dedication Ceremony Honors Marion Haynes

COC staff and residents of Clinton Manor came together for a special dedication to honor Mr. Marion Haynes who passed away in the spring. Marion had been a resident of Stamford for over 89 years and served as the president of the Clinton Manor Resident Association for over 20 years. A plaque in recognition and appreciation of his service was presented to the family by Vincent Tufo, CEO, Charter Oak Communities.



Resident Corner: Christie Metellus



Photo courtesy of Taylor Lenci Photography

From a very early age, Christie Metellus was encouraged to figure out even the hardest of situations on her own. When she decided to embark on a new career path, she relied on sheer determination to accomplish her goals.

Christie worked at a local hospital for a number of years, but always dreamed of one day opening a restaurant. Although she had no experience working in the food industry, Christie enjoyed cooking, and her culinary creations always received rave reviews. Despite raising three young children and holding a full-time job, Christie jumped in feet first, enrolling at Norwalk Community College's (NCC), Hospitality Management and Culinary Arts program, to help develop the right skills.

In March 2015, she won a coveted place as one of eight finalists in NCC's first "Got an Idea?" business pitch speech contest. She pitched her idea for a catering service, "3D Bites." She didn't win the contest, but she was offered, and accepted, a place in the new NCC Summer Entrepreneurs Institute Program.

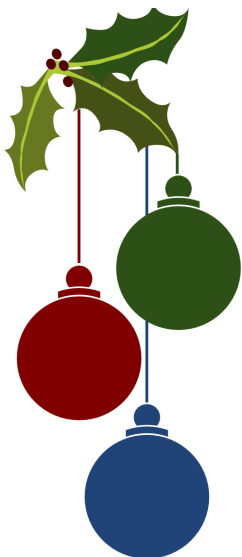
The pressure associated with balancing work, family, and school was difficult at first. To add to her stress, Christie was also trying to get her new catering business, 3D Bites, off the ground. While she admits there were times when she could have used some help, Christie didn't know where to turn. She was aware that Family Centers offered resident support at Charter Oak Communities; however, she thought assistance was reserved for those either looking for work or needing housing assistance.

Christie's perception changed when she met with a Family Centers' onsite Resident Services Coordinator at the Lawnhill Terrace complex to obtain relocation information. She learned that in addition to providing self-sufficiency support, Family Centers' Community and Supportive Services program also aimed to create an

improved sense of community among Lawnhill's residents. At the time, Christie didn't know many of her neighbors, and welcomed the idea.

At the urging of the site's Resident Services Coordinator, Christie put her culinary training to the test by catering a Family Day for 30 Lawnhill families. Her menu included her signature dish--Baked Chicken in Creole Sauce. The positive feedback she received from the residents and Family Centers staff was the encouragement Christie needed to forge ahead with her plans. In addition, the Resident Service Coordinator had become a trusted confidant Christie could turn to for the advice and support she desperately needed to help make her dreams become a reality.

"I can't believe I waited so long to seek help from Family Centers," She said. "They've done so much for me personally, and I'm grateful. My Resident Services Coordinator has become my cheerleader and opened my eyes to options I've never considered. More importantly, Family Centers has created an atmosphere in which residents of Lawnhill Terrace are working together to make this a better place to live."

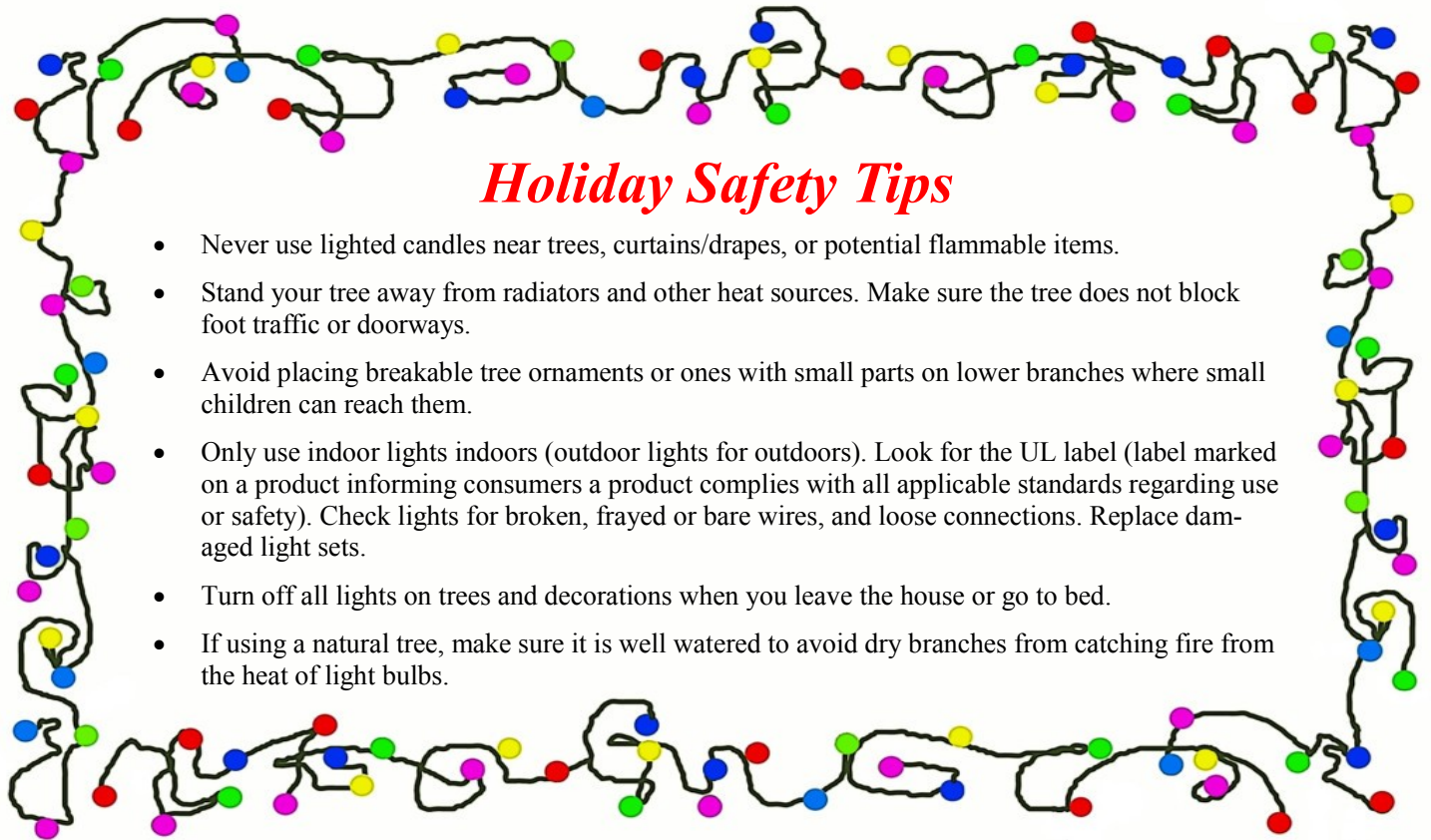


Holiday Word Search

Find the following words in the puzzle:

- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| Angel | Ornament |
| Dancer | Peace |
| Dasher | Pie |
| Dreidel | Presents |
| Festival | Reindeer |
| Gingerbread | Ribbon |
| Grateful | Santa |
| Hanukkah | Scrooge |
| Kwanzaa | Sleigh |
| Lights | Snowflakes |
| Menorah | Thankful |
| Nativity | Tree |
| Nutcracker | Wrapping |

T I L I G H T S E E R T D A S H E R
 Y T I V I T A N G E L A V I T S E F
 N U T C R A C K E R L U F K N A H T
 E G O O R C S D K M P E A C E A A N
 W R A P P I N G F U A T N A S Z R O
 G E D R E I D E L L N N P I E N O B
 D A N C E R L U F E T A R G R A N B
 D A E R B R E G N I G S H O P W E I
 H G I E L S N O W F L A K E S K M R



Holiday Safety Tips

- Never use lighted candles near trees, curtains/drapes, or potential flammable items.
- Stand your tree away from radiators and other heat sources. Make sure the tree does not block foot traffic or doorways.
- Avoid placing breakable tree ornaments or ones with small parts on lower branches where small children can reach them.
- Only use indoor lights indoors (outdoor lights for outdoors). Look for the UL label (label marked on a product informing consumers a product complies with all applicable standards regarding use or safety). Check lights for broken, frayed or bare wires, and loose connections. Replace damaged light sets.
- Turn off all lights on trees and decorations when you leave the house or go to bed.
- If using a natural tree, make sure it is well watered to avoid dry branches from catching fire from the heat of light bulbs.

Volunteerism: Paying it Forward

Volunteerism is defined as the policy or practice of volunteering one's time or talents for charitable, educational, or other worthwhile activities, especially in one's community. With busy lives, it can be hard to find time to volunteer. However, the benefits of volunteering are enormous to you, your family, and your community. The right match can help you find friends, reach out to the community, learn new skills, and even advance your career. Volunteering can also help protect your mental and physical health.

Volunteering allows you to connect to your community and make it a better place to live. Even helping out with the smallest tasks can make a real difference to the lives of people, animals, and organizations in need. Volunteering is a two-way street: It can benefit you and your family as much as the cause you choose to help. Dedicating your time as a volunteer helps make new friends, expand your network, and boost your social skills.

Family Centers is seeking community-based volunteers to provide social support to home-bound neighbors through the "Friendly Visitor" program. Volunteering as a "Friendly Visitor" gives you the chance to make a significant impact on an aging individual's life. Meet with a home-bound or isolated senior residing in their home, where you will provide not only support and socialization, but friendship as well. Activities can include anything from going on walks to playing games to engaging in meaningful conversation. Schedules are flexible and determined between the volunteer and client. Being a Friendly Visitor is a rewarding opportunity and a way to brighten up a person's day! **For more information, contact your Family Centers' Resident Service Coordinator.**