

Hartford Performs - <https://www.hartfordperforms.org/>

Students learn in diverse ways, and, for some, traditional teaching techniques are just not enough. Some children need music, movement, acting, or drawing to understand academic concepts. This is where Hartford Performs fits in, bringing teaching artists into Hartford Public Schools (HPS) to provide arts-based programming in PreK to 8th-grade classrooms.

We provide 3,000 program hours each school year to more than 11,000 HPS students, including nearly 600 students from Dwight-Bellizzi Dual Language Academy, a community school in Hartford's South End. All of our engaging and enjoyable programs - which also meet Common Core State and National Core Arts Standards—have clear, grade-appropriate learning objectives. Also, by using the universal languages of music, dance, theater and visual arts, our programs are particularly effective for English language learning and students with special needs. Data from years of program evaluations show that teachers find that our programs benefit students in a number of ways.

Our programs are held throughout the school year in alignment with the curriculum and are scheduled jointly by the teachers and teaching artists. We consistently evaluate our programs through teacher surveys and student work submissions, which help us measure how students apply the creative strategies they learn to such academic standards as vocabulary acquisition, critical thinking, inferencing and communication skills, among others; we also look for how our programs affect student engagement, self-confidence, motivation and attendance. Additionally, after nearly two years of pandemic-related disruptions, we believe that making the classroom a joyful place is also important.

Hartford Performs' provides a range of age-appropriate and culturally relevant programs, including workshops that integrate the arts into daily lessons, short-term artist residencies, and live music or dance performances. Every program is connected to the teachers' curricula and has clear learning objectives.

Through our regular evaluation process, teachers report that our programs help students stay engaged and connect with the subject matter in ways that are more personal. Our hands-on programs not only help students grasp complex or abstract concepts in a more lasting way, but also help them collaborate with their peers and express themselves.

This year, teachers again selected a diverse array of programs that connected with science, math, social studies and language arts curricula. As examples: Dwight-Bellizzi students learned about Mexican history and folklore through a dance performance and workshops with the artist; middle-school students at Bellizzi used the science of sound waves to create songs; and 5th-grade students learned algebraic and geometric concepts by creating origami shapes. Teachers this year also had the opportunity to choose to visit the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, view films with social justice themes at Real Art Ways, or visit Hill-Stead Museum. Whether teachers select an off-site visit in a given year, we have learned through student and teacher feedback that making them available is important because they often are the students' first exposure to professional arts and performance venues, and because of the district's limited resources, such opportunities would be impossible for many of the students absent Hartford Performs.

We serve all students at Dwight-Bellizzi Dual Language Academy, who number nearly 600 in grades PreK to 8. About 80% of them are Latinx, 12% Black, 4% White, and 4% two or more races; and they include 43% English language learners, 13.5% students with special needs, and 80% who qualify for free/reduced-priced lunch.

Like many urban school districts facing financial challenges and other daily pressures, Hartford students would not have access to arts education and community engagement programs absent Hartford Performs. For these reasons, we have been endorsed by four consecutive HPS superintendents to recruit, train and deliver community-based arts-integration programming to students throughout the school system during the school day.

Hartford Performs is requesting \$10,000 to fund Arts Integration at Dwight-Bellizzi Dual Language Academy, Pre K - Grade 8

MARC Community Resources - <https://www.marccommunityresources.org/>

The COVID-19 pandemic has been particularly difficult for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). They have experienced isolation, anxiety, weight gain and a loss of learned skills. For these reasons and more, we believe that this health and wellness garden program is an important component of the ongoing healing of this vulnerable population of individuals.

Individuals in our Adult Skill Development and Leisure (ASDL) program have met for several years with members of the Middletown Garden Club on the rooftop of the Community Health Center in Middletown to plant, tend and harvest vegetables which they then donated to the St. Vincent de Paul's Soup Kitchen. This has been a wonderful partnership which has broken down social barriers and led to increased communication skills, socialization, and overall happiness for MARC participants. These activities have also provided a wonderful base of knowledge related to how to successfully garden and the nutritional benefits of fresh vegetables.

We would like to expand this program to more individuals who participate in MARC's on-site programs so that they, too, can experience the many health benefits that come from gardening. Four raised garden beds were built onsite at MARC's new home on Industrial Park Road this past fall, and more are needed to run a full and comprehensive gardening program that will provide valuable opportunities for all our program participants. As an extension of the garden program, a nutrition and cooking component will be added to round out the program.

The major goal of this project is to expand our Health & Wellness Garden program to include more individuals who participate in MARC's Day and Residential services. Expanding this program will provide more opportunities for individuals with autism and I/DD to learn about gardening, the lifecycle of herbs and vegetables, the importance of vegetables in our diet, and how to cook healthy meals with them. Gardening and cooking provide a perfect platform for building community, expanding communication skills, further developing motor skills and increasing flexibility and movement.

Currently there are no other programs which provide these types of activities and learning opportunities for individuals with autism and I/DD. While there are community gardens sprinkled throughout the region, there are none which are specifically aimed at teaching the individuals who are in our programs.

While general nutrition and cooking classes are available for the general population, there are not classes available for the population that MARC serves.

In 1955, a group of eight families with children with an intellectual and developmental disability (I/DD) came together to offer each other support and resources. That year, they successfully petitioned the Middletown Board of Education to allow their children to attend public schools. On May 7, 1956 MARC Community Resources was officially incorporated as the Middletown Association of Parents and Friends of Retarded Children. In 1965, the name was changed to Middlesex Association of Retarded Children and changed again in 1991 to MARC Community Resources, Ltd.

Today, MARC Community Resources is a multi-service agency providing services and supports to over 200 individuals with I/DD throughout Middlesex and Greater Hartford Counties and the Shoreline. We offer employment and day services, residential options, advocacy and social/recreational programs. MARC Community Resources, Ltd is a non-profit organization dedicated to empowering individuals with autism and I/DD. The organization uses employment, housing, social involvement, community involvement, and advocacy as the conduits to assist persons with I/DD to move towards greater independence. We envision a society where all people with disabilities become integral and celebrated members of the community.

MARC Community Resources is requesting \$7,500 for the Health & Wellness Garden Program.

Prudence Crandall Center – www.prudencecrandall.org

Prudence Crandall Center (PCC) respectfully requests funding to support the expansion of our Supportive Housing Program, which will add 15 more units in the coming year, helping more victims and families experiencing domestic violence move into newly available safe, stable, and affordable long-term housing— where they can continue to receive our vital services -- empowering them to break cycles of homelessness and abuse.

For many low-income victims of domestic violence, especially those with children, one of the greatest challenges they face is finding a safe, affordable, long-term home after leaving their abuser. Although our emergency shelter program provides a vital safety net, it is a short-term solution, with most clients staying an average of 60-90 days. And while our Emergency Shelter offers victims and their children the same access to life-saving services, our shelter has been over capacity for nearly two years, as high as 250%, with as many as 55 adults and children on a single day in a program funded and designed to serve 22. The victims and children for whom we have no bed for in our shelter are provided hotel rooms and access to all of our services.

Now, more than ever before, it is critical that we expand our Supportive Housing, so victims can move forward into homes with access to our specialized support services that empower victims to regain control of their lives, establish economic stability and move forward from the complex emotional, psychological, legal, and financial impacts of domestic abuse. Depending on each client's circumstances, needs and goals, other objectives may include: achieving education and/or employment goals; improving parenting and budget skills; legal advocacy in court regarding child custody, marital, and/or criminal prosecution of their abuser; and connections to other community resources needed to improve their health, wellness, and financial self-sufficiency.

Generous, vital funding from JewGood Hartford would support the expansion of our Supportive Housing Program and help us meet the required private funding match of 25% (\$82,000). Funds would help us meet this urgent and critical need, one which we've heard expressed time and again by case managers in all of our programs -- survivors and victims and their children NEED the incredible and empowering gift of a safe, secure home-- with all our services included-- to heal and care for their family, so that they can ultimately move forward to safe, happy, healthy lives, free from violence.

Olivia began her marriage hopeful for a future of love, happiness, and children. At first, her husband was protective of her; he told her he would always "look after" her. She soon realized his "protection" meant controlling her life: whom she could talk to, where she went, her paycheck, spending, the way dishes were arranged in cabinets. When tasks were not done to his liking, there were verbal and emotionally derisive tirades, which later turned to pushing, shoving, hitting, and choking. When the family lost their home they lived in a van for over 6 months.

During a hospital visit one brutal night, Olivia told hospital staff about the abuse, and the staff contacted the police. The police connected her to Prudence Crandall Center and the counselor on the phone assured Olivia there was an understanding and a safe home for them in our emergency shelter program where Olivia and her children could start their journey to healing and hope. With support, she and her children are working on getting through the trauma they experienced. They are living in Supported Housing and her children are receiving PCC services along with school-based services to heal and thrive. Olivia is working with our Housing Coordinator to find employment and a permanent home. They are all in the process of rebuilding their lives, free from violence and abuse. Their future is brighter than they ever imagined.

Prudence Crandall Center is requesting \$10,000 for Safe Home-New Life Program for Domestic Violence Victims & Families.