

# Legacy *Matters*



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# Smart Investment Disaster Preparedness



*Echo Hose Ambulance Training Center offers a range of programs for both those gaining certifications for the first time and for veteran first responders maintaining credentials.*



*American Red Cross trained volunteers install free smoke alarms and work with families to develop emergency plans.*



*VCF partnered with the following donor advised fund holders to support the purchase of a disaster response trailer for the American Red Cross in 2013 for the benefit of the Valley: Dorothy Palazzi of the Palazzi Family Fund; the Pagliaro and Haywood Families of the Joseph A. Pagliaro, Sr. Family Fund; the Stamos-Vartelas Family, of the John and Paraskeve Vartelas "Agape" Fund.*

Disaster planning and emergency preparedness have been one of the main topics of conversation in recent months. For some, planning for worst case scenarios is in their DNA and plays a significant role in the work they do within their organization.

Joe Laucella, Echo Hose Ambulance Corps Assistant Chief, described the Community Training Center in Shelton. "We are constantly preparing our folks on a regular basis, reviewing plans, and conducting drills on different types of scenarios. Take the current pandemic, for example. Every year, we review procedures and protocols with the Naugatuck Valley Health District and review responsive measures such as mass immunizations."

Laucella knows the Valley is in a better position now because of the groundwork was laid before the first case of COVID-19 was diagnosed locally. "We have also conducted classes on bio-pandemics through federal programming," he added.

Teams rehearse the act of setting up medical distribution points to ensure communities would be able to access what they need to remain safe from illness when this kind of response is needed.

The Echo Hose Training Center hosts a wide range of classes for first responders and healthcare providers. "It's important for everyone to be prepared. We also address planning for the business community so they know what to do if situations impact their workforce or if employees must work remotely. All of this information is critical," said Laucella.

In addition to positioning people and resources ahead of a disaster, Echo Hose also works to address the finer details of crisis management:

paperwork. "We are able to create thorough documentation on file and maintain logs of time and resources allocated so we can submit accurate data for federal reimbursement opportunities."

Laucella said that emergency response is a two-way street. "It's great to see the community coming together to support the folks on the front lines. The Valley community always steps up," he said. "We appreciate how individuals and organizations like VCF are there for us, take the time to understand who we are, what we do, and provide us with critical resources that we need. Most of our training is funded by the federal government but that amount doesn't extend to the training center - space that not only allows us to support the Valley, but the region and the state as well."

He added, "I can't express enough gratitude for the people who are putting themselves out there to help others. Attribution oftentimes goes to police and firefighters—and rightly so—but, thankfully, we rarely have health emergencies that shine a light on what our healthcare providers do. We know they've been working hard every day putting aside their fears to help as many people as they can."

The work at the training center never ends. "We're constantly adjusting procedures and ever changing safety measures because we're always learning how to continuously improve and be more prepared for next time," Laucella said.

Just as there are individuals who respond, so too, are there organization who aid individuals and families most closely effected. Some elements of this responsive effort is the ability to mobilize various forms of support. The



# Smart Investment *Disaster Preparedness*

American Red Cross (ARC) is one such institution.

Lynn G. Fairfield-Sonn, ARC Regional Philanthropy Officer and Susan Shaw, Senior Director, Disaster Cycle Services, noted that of the four areas in which ARC specializes—humanitarian, biomedical, training, and armed forces services—the key to transforming compassion into action is to make sure there are always trained individuals nearby, ready to use their Red Cross skills to save lives.

“We make sure we have the capacity to respond when we’re needed,” Shaw said.

on top of everything else, would be absolutely devastating. We operate with volunteers, many of whom assist with support functions like checking the availability in nearby hotels on a regular basis to make sure we can secure accommodations for displaced families in need,” Shaw said.

Training is still needed and continues with people learning CPR in a combination of both virtual and real-world settings. She added, “Training and how to deliver it safely is at the top of our minds, including psychological first aid that mental health teams are putting together.”

Fairfield-Sonn pointed out, “When

providing 40% of the nation’s blood supply, they and other volunteers are working to ensure that people suffering from accidents or chronic illnesses can access the blood product they need to survive. The ARC is currently working with FDA to collect plasma from patients convalescing from COVID-19 in an effort to better understand the nature of the virus and investigate how transfusions from those who have since recovered may assist those currently fighting the virus.

The ARC works in partnership with the Valley community, participating in meetings and communicating both needs and resources to benefit residents and businesses. “You don’t need us until you need us, but we’re always working,” said Fairfield-Sonn.

Services are also in place from ARC that help active and retired members of the armed forces, including training for their families. “They need to know how to access support because we can help communicate information like family emergencies when our men and women are serving overseas. Working with the military was a priority for Clara Barton, founder of the ARC.”

Impressively, 90% of the ARC workforce is volunteer. Shaw said, “Everyone participates in ongoing training and we couldn’t do this work without the committed people who get up in the middle of the night to help people they have never even met. Right now, we understand why we can’t hug someone in trouble, but we can still be there for them.”

While disasters vary by type and from time-to-time, one thing remains true – there are those who are doing everything they can to remain prepared to respond.



Echo Hose Ambulance has more than 70 volunteers who work over 10,000 hours each year. During the COVID-19 pandemic, volunteers continue to work around the clock and have staffed an additional two-to-three ambulances each day to provide enhanced coverage throughout the City of Shelton.

“Susan and her team respond to almost every fire in her territory, working with local EMS, police, and firefighters,” Fairfield-Sonn noted. “Under the new social distancing protocols, the teams are doing more work remotely, such as helping families find long-term lodging and connecting them with social services, but there is still a Red Cross representative who goes to the site.”

“So many people are facing hardship right now, so something like a fire,

we talk about disaster cycle services, preparedness comes in many forms. In the past, VCF and its fund holders have supported the purchase of a trailer, cots, and supplies so that we could open an emergency shelter for a large group of people. Funding from an additional grant was used to purchase smoke alarms, which we were able to provide at no cost to families while we educated them about fire prevention.”

Acknowledging that ARC is known for

## Featured Fund

### *Edward J. Cotter, Jr. Memorial Fund*

According to David Lenart, his grandfather was a bit of a local legend and, when he passed away, it made sense to honor a life dedicated to the community by establishing the Edward J. Cotter, Jr. Memorial Fund.

Edward J. Cotter, Sr. served as Chief of the Derby Fire Department a century ago. When his son, Edward J. Cotter, Jr. graduated from high school and accepted a job as a sports reporter for the Evening Sentinel in 1939, the elder Mr. Cotter pointed out that the firehouse was right next door to the newspaper office. "That started my grandfather down his path of volunteering and saving lives."

The young Ed Cotter Jr. enlisted with the U.S. Navy at the start of World War II, sharing his lifesaving knowledge and skills by teaching shipboard firefighting techniques.

"The Navy has always been on the forefront of firefighting technology because you really only have two choices on a ship—put out the fire or swim," David said. His grandfather returned to volunteer at the fire department after the war. Just a few years after returning, Ed and fellow firefighter, Richard Kieley, saw a need in 1948 for ambulance services to better transport people to the hospital."

At the time, police departments and funeral homes answered calls for emergency healthcare. "The early ambulances looked like hearses because they actually were hearses built for a new purpose," David said. Local Valley businesses helped raise enough money to fund the Storm Ambulance Corps' first ambulance. "My grandfather ran the Corps from that point until 1985 and, shortly after, my father, Thomas Lenart, took over and ran the Corps until 2010."

Ed Cotter Jr. went on to be a Fire Chief of the Derby Fire Department and a Fire Commissioner in Derby. Cotter Jr. would become instrumental in starting the Valley Fire Training School and was a drillmaster in the New Haven Fire School. Mr. Cotter was also a photographer for the Derby Police Department.

David also ran the Storm Ambulance Corps after his father and is proud of his grandfather's legacy. He is currently the Assistant Chief of the Derby fire Department. In addition, David's mother, Ellen Lenart, and his sister, Brie are EMTs. His older brother, Thomas Lenart, Jr., is a past Chief of the Derby Fire Department.



Edward J. Cotter, Jr.

Edward J. Cotter, Jr. dedicated his life as a volunteer firefighter, leading the community through events such as the Flood of 1955, and was inducted to the Connecticut Halls of Fame for both Journalism and Firefighters. The fund in his name benefits Storm Ambulance Corps and St. Mary's Church in Derby, where he attended mass several times each week. David said. "Supporting these two groups through this fund was a natural fit and a great way to honor his legacy."



## Planned Giving

VCF welcomes Lynn Wozniak to the Gates Society, the Foundation's planned giving community.

Your planned gift will impact the charities you're passionate about forever, regardless of the amount. Call us at 203-751-9162 or learn more at [valleyfoundation.org](http://valleyfoundation.org)



# Community Investment

## Valley Community COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund

In response to COVID-19, the Valley Community Foundation, Valley United Way, Greater Valley Chamber of Commerce, and the Valley Council for Health & Human Services established the Valley Community COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund. The Fund will complement the work of federal, state, and local government efforts and expand capacity to address all aspects of the outbreak as efficiently as possible.

Together, Inc.; BHcare; Christ Episcopal Church; Community Residences, Inc.; Cornell Scott Hill Health Corporation; Echo Hose Hook and Ladder Volunteer Ambulance Corps, Inc.; Griffin Hospital; Naugatuck Valley Health District; Salvation Army, Greater Valley Corps; Seymour Oxford Food Bank; St. Vincent de Paul of the Valley; Storm Engine Company Ambulance Corps, Inc.; TEAM, Inc.; United Methodist Homes; Valley Council for

## The Great Give®

The Great Give® 2020 was a spectacular success in bringing Greater New Haven's community together during difficult times to raise \$3.5 million online for nearly 400 nonprofits. Not only was the amount raised nearly double that of the prior year, but the number of total donors was up by approximately 40% – a sign of the commitment and generosity of the region to rally for its continued well-being.

With the help of Valley residents, employees, and VCF donor advised fund holders, \$488,000 was raised for nonprofit organizations located in Ansonia, Derby, Oxford, Seymour and Shelton. This total represents an increase of nearly \$200,000 over 2019 and includes prizes and sponsorship support from VCF, which was used to match Valley donations. A total of 2,569 gifts were made by donors who identified themselves as living/working in the Valley. These donors gave to 254 different organizations.

The Great Give® is Greater New Haven's online giving event, created by The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven and conducted annually since 2010 to increase philanthropy in the Greater New Haven region of South Central Connecticut.



**THE great Give®**  
**MAY 5-6, 2020**  
A 36-hour, online-giving event  
to support local nonprofits

 The **COMMUNITY** Foundation  
for Greater New Haven 

### Support the Valley Community COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund



Give at [www.valleyfoundation.org](http://www.valleyfoundation.org)

As of May 1st, the Fund has raised more than \$210,000 thanks to contributions made by individual donors, businesses, and VCF donor advised fund holders, which also includes \$50,000 in funding from VCF.

Two rounds of grants totaling nearly \$130,000 have been distributed to 30 of organizations within the first six weeks of the Fund's inception. These grants are made possible thanks to those generously supporting this Fund. Donations to the Fund are still urgently needed and can be made at [www.valleyfoundation.org](http://www.valleyfoundation.org).

**Round One – \$78,800 to 18 Organization Awarded on April 20th**  
Grants to the following organizations: Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut, Inc.; Area Congregations

Health and Human Services; Visiting Nurse Association of South Central Connecticut; Central Connecticut Coast YMCA.

**Round Two – \$50,900 to 12 Organizations Awarded on May 1st**  
Grants to the following organizations: American Federation of State County & Municipal Employees; American Red Cross, Connecticut Chapter; Ansonia Rescue Medical Services; BHcare; Boys & Girls Club of the Lower Naugatuck Valley; Central Connecticut Coast YMCA; Christian Counseling & Family Life Center; Cornell Scott Hill Health Corporation; Family and Children's Aid; Girl Scouts of Connecticut Inc.; Lower Naugatuck Valley Parent Child Resource Center; Seymour Ambulance Association.

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# Good News About the Valley

## VCF Awards Community Grants to Support Local Programs

The Valley Community Foundation (VCF) awarded a total of \$19,592 in its annual Community Grants Program to 10 community groups serving the Valley. These grants will support health initiatives, students, athletics, and more in the region.

Applications for the Valley Community Grants Program are considered through a request for proposal process. These grants are responsive to community groups that are volunteer or nonprofit in nature, serve Ansonia, Derby, Oxford, Seymour and/or Shelton, and have less than two full-time or four part-time staff. Community Grants range from \$250 to \$2,500 and can be for new or recurring programs to support civic and community engagement efforts.

### 2020 Community Grant Recipients:

**Adam Wysota Foundation** - \$2,500 to support a pilot program of grief education and peer support for college-aged young adults.

**All-America Valley Basketball Club** - \$1,800 to support the purchase of basketballs and uniforms for club participants.

**Annual Thanksgiving Basket Committee** - \$2,500 to support Valley families in need with a basket of food for Thanksgiving 2020.

**Ansonia High School** - \$1,682 to support the publication of a multicultural cookbook created by students at Ansonia High School.

**Derby Pop Warner** - \$2,000 to support the purchase of new cheerleading uniforms.

"This is my mom's sausage cavatelli and broccoli. It's usually with chicken but she changed it up a little tonight. It's an Italian dish which is all of our dishes every night."

-Hailey Cook, AHS



"Ansonia Cooks!" represents the very best in culinary diversity featured by Ansonia High School students. Recipes appearing in the cookbook will feature Latino, Italian, Polish, Turkish, and cuisine from many more traditional dishes.

**Music Mends Minds (Valley Chapter)** - \$500 to support the improvement of the lives of patients with dementia, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, traumatic brain injury, stroke, and PTSD through the healing power of music.

**Shelton CT Farmers Market** - \$2,500 to support the Shelton, CT Farmers Market 2020.

**Southford Falls Quilters, LLC** - \$2,500 to support the Southford Falls Quilters programs for 2020-2021.

**Town of Seymour** - \$2,500 to support ongoing programs (including remote and online) for senior citizens.

**Valley Parish Nurses** - \$1,110 to support wellness programs and blood pressure clinics for seniors in the community.