

Computer Crashes Hinder Agency’s Capabilities

After years of faithful service, our computer server appears to be in "terminal" (no pun intended) condition, with multiple crashes being experienced almost daily, requiring constant rebooting. This problem affects all aspects of CCA’s core operations, including basic

bookkeeping; the operation of our food pantry and Hillside Family Shelter, to our ability to record and thank supporters for their gifts in a timely manner. We are told \$2,500 would allow us to purchase a new server and the corresponding software needed to bring us back to top

operational efficiency once more. If you can help, please send you donation, marked "Server Fund," to Development Department, Christian Community Action, 168 Davenport Avenue, New Haven, CT 06519. Questions: call Al May, Director of Development, at 777-7848 x 112.

Hundreds Help CCA Brighten Holidays for Many

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efforts to help families that are homeless and people who are poor. Top sponsors for the evening were the law firm of **Stratton Faxon** and the **NewAlliance Foundation**. Their names, along with those of all other major sponsors, can be viewed on CCA's website - www.ccahelping.org.

Also meriting special mention are CCA's Adopt-An-Apartment sponsors. They include **Dennis Brown of Milford**; **Episcopal Church of St. Paul & St. James (New Haven)**; **First Congregational Church of Madison**; **National Association of Negro Business & Professional Women**; **Spring Glen (Hamden)**; **United Church of Christ and Shalom United Church of Christ (New Haven)**.

Also meriting special attention for the support they provided for Thanksgiving are **Second Star of Jacob Christian Church**; **Church on the Rock (New Haven)**; **Jack and Jill of America, Inc., New Haven Chapter**; **Just Rite Comfort Shoes, LLC**; **Konover Construction Company / Winstanley Enterprises, LLC**; **Local 478, International Union of Operating Engineers**, **Proliance International and Yale University African American Affinity Group**.

While space does not permit acknowledgement of all individual donors and volunteers, we would like to recognize the following businesses, houses of worship, civic groups and schools for their assistance and support:

A-1 Toyota;; **ACES Early Childhood Services / ACES Whitney High North**; **Adoni Spiritual Formation Center**; **APT Foundation**; **AT&T Employees' Community Service Fund**;

Compassionate Community Services (Bethany); **Bethesda Lutheran Church (New Haven)**; **Betsy Ross Arts Magnet School (New Haven)**; **Black Power Couples, Inc.**; **Coachman Square (Woodbridge) group**; **CAMA Inc.**; **Carmel Gardens Flower Shoppe (Hamden)**; **Carmody & Torrance, LLC (New Haven & Waterbury)**; **Center Church on the Green (New Haven)**; **Cheshire Lutheran Church and Christian Tabernacle Baptist Church (Hamden)**. **Congregation Mishkan Israel (Hamden)**; **Dava (Hamden)**; **Connecticut Department of Children and Families**; **Dixwell Avenue Congregational Church, UCC (New Haven)**; **Dominican Nuns (North Guilford)**; **Elements, LLC (New Haven)**; **Emanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church (New Haven)**; **FBI / New Haven Office**; **First Baptist Church (Milford)** **First Baptist Church (West Haven)** and **First Church of Christ (Bethany)**. **First Congregational Church (Guilford)**; **First Congregational Church (Redding)**; **First Presbyterian Church (New Haven)**; **First and Summerfield United Methodist Church (New Haven)**; **Foote School (New Haven)**; **Gateway Community College (New Haven)**; **Georgina's Hair Studio (Orange)**; **Grace and Saint Peter's Episcopal Church (Hamden)**; **Grace Baptist Church (Milford)**; **Greater New Haven NAACP Youth Council**; **Guilford High School Girls' Hockey**; **Hamden Hall Country Day School and H Pearce Co/ New Haven Office and H Pearce / Edg Hill Realtors**. **Interact Club - High School in the Community (New Haven)**; **Jewish Home for the Aged (New**

Haven); **Knights of Columbus Supreme Headquarters (New Haven)**; **Lane Construction Corp. (Cheshire)**; **The Lutheran Church of Madison**; **Mary Taylor United Memorial Methodist Church (Milford)**; **Montowese Baptist Church (North Haven)**; **New Haven Police Department**; **Office of Cultural Affairs / City of New Haven**; **Pfizer New Haven CRU**; **Neubert, Pepe & Monteith, PC (New Haven)**; **North Haven Congregational Church**; **North Pole Enterprises**; **Notre Dame High School (West Haven)**; **The law firm of Diane Polan, LLC**; **Rascals Gym (Hamden)** and **Planned Parenthood of Connecticut (New Haven)**. **Pratt & Whitney Aircraft workers**; **Regional Water Authority of South Central Connecticut**; **Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo & Associates (Hamden)**; **Rotary Club of North Branford**; **Sacred Heart Academy (Hamden)**; **Saint Aedan's School (New Haven)**; **St. Andrew Episcopal Church (Madison)**; **St. Basil's Greek Orthodox Church (New Haven)**; **St. George's Peace and Justice Center (Guilford)**; **St. Rita Church (Hamden)**; **Senator Joseph Lieberman's Hartford Office**; **Sickle Cell Disease Association of America, Southern Connecticut, Inc.**; **South Central Association**; **Southern Connecticut Gas Company and Stone Academy (Hamden)**. **Temple Emanuel (Orange)**; **TPA Design Group**; **Trinity Church on the Green**; **Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church (New Haven)**; **United Church on the Green (New Haven)** **United Presbyterian Church (Milford)**; **Unity Temple Church (New Haven)**; **Walgreens**; **Westville /**

West Hills Community Management Team; **Yale-New Haven Hospital**; **Yale Printing and Publishing**; **Yale School of Medicine / Department of Psychiatry and Substance Abuse Research**; **Yale School of Music and Youth Department / City of New Haven**.

Car Sales=Donations

Premier Subaru in Branford has joined the the list of area car dealers willing make a donation to CCA for referrals that result in a new or pre-owned car sale. Others: A-1 Toyota and Crest Auto Mall. For details and the names of contract persons at each dealership, call (203) 777-7848 x112.

Leave A Legacy:
Consider A Gift
To CCA
In Your Will.

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W I N T E R / S P R I N G 2 0 0 9

Small Minimum Wage Hike Makes Big Difference for One Working Mom

By Paul Bass
(Edited version reprinted with permission from the New Haven Independent, January 5, 2009)

(Editor's note: A 35-cents-an-hour pay raise might not seem like much for many people, but for people making a minimum wage - even at a part-time job. - it can mean a lot. For Kim Clark, a working mother living with her son at CCA's Stepping Stone Transitional Housing complex on Winchester Avenue in New Haven, it meant cleaner dishes for one thing, as New Haven Independent Editor Paul Bass noted in a recent issue of his online newspaper (www.newhavenindependent.org). Since this article first appeared, Kim has secured another part-time position, which will mean additional income for her household).

As one of 65,000 minimum-wage workers about to collect a raise, Kim Clark knows how her life will change: She'll start using dishwashing liquid instead of laundry detergent on dirty dinner plates.

Connecticut's 35-cent hike in the minimum wage went into effect January 9th. That



CLEANER DISHES AND NEW SOCKS FOR HER SON ARTHUR ARE JUST TWO OF THE BENEFITS KIM CLARK HAS REALIZED, AS A RESULT OF AN INCREASE IN THE STATE'S MINIMUM WAGE THIS YEAR.

means Kim Clark's hourly pay rose from \$7.65 to \$8.00. Next January, the minimum

\$5.00 more per week can make a big difference in the life of a working mom and her family.

wage will rise another quarter. She collected her first larger check on January 15 for her job answering phones and sending out mailings at the West Rock Family Center. Unlike full-time workers, Clark won't see the \$14 weekly boost that, in some cases, will enable families to put a meaningful amount of food on the table or help make the rent. Clark only works up to 15 hours a week. But even that \$5 boost will change how she lives, she said. She plans to use her first checks to buy long-needed new socks for her son Arthur, a bright-eyed Amistad Academy first-grader who loves reading; and to start purchasing dishwashing liquid. Until now, she said, she needed to use her box of Power Cycle 2x laundry detergent (pictured) not just to wash her clothes, but to mop the floor and to clean dirty dishes.

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Businesses, Churches and Schools Asked To Join in “Food”-Raiser

This March and April, for the fifth year in a row, CCA will be participating in the nationwide \$1-million Alan Shawn Feinstein Foundation Anti-Hunger Challenge

As part of this effort, any donations of canned food items or cash made to CCA during these two months will be eligible for a financial match from the Rhode Island-based Feinstein Foundation, using a formula that compares what is donated to CCA to what other agencies participating across the nation collect. As part of this formula, every food item collected is valued at \$1.00.

Last year, food items and cash with a total value just over \$63,000 were collected as part of the Feinstein Challenge. Here's how you can help us exceed that amount this year.

- Ask your church or synagogue if they are willing to hold a food drive to help us sometime during March and April. Many already have plans (sometimes involving their youth groups) to hold drives in connection with Easter or Passover.
- Ask any club or civic group you belong to if they might be willing to hold a canned food collection in your community as part of the Anti-Hunger Challenge. We can provide flyers and publicity to help you out.
- If you are a teacher or parent, see if your school might be willing to do a food drive. We can arrange for pick-up once the drive is finished, and publicize the drive itself in your local weekly.
- Ask your employer if a food drive can be held where you work. Ask also if your com-

pany might be interested in serving as a drop-off point for food donations. If you own your own business, consider both these options as well. If walk-in business is important for sales, serving as a drop-off point could increase such traffic. We will be publicizing the names and locations of all businesses serving as drop-off points both in local newspapers and through mailings to our 3,500 supporters. Remember, research has shown consumers prefer to do business with companies that are community-minded and share their values.

To discuss these and additional ways you can help, call the CCA Development Department at (203) 777-7848 x 112.

Rev. Bonita Grubbs

At the heart of what we do at Christian Community Action is the compassionate support that we offer to families who are poor and/or homeless. We do so as we distribute food; house families; advocate for public policy and funding changes; host workshops and activities for children and youth, and make referrals to and work with other organizations in New Haven and throughout Connecticut.

We are about to celebrate our 42nd anniversary in February, and I thought it was fitting to reflect on what we have achieved, what challenges we have faced and what the future holds.

This newsletter only highlights some of what we have achieved in the last few months. Most of it could not have been done without the deeply generous contributions we have received. Without donations of food and funds, we would not have been able to distribute 1,583 turkeys and the fixin's at Thanksgiving. Without sponsors, advertisers and people who purchased tickets, we would not have raised around \$40,000 at our December Capitol Steps show. Without the gifts and food baskets donated by organizations and kind individuals, the families



in our housing programs would not have been able to celebrate Christmas in the bountiful and blessed fashion that they did.

Finally, and without any doubt, without the tireless efforts of the CCA staff members, we would not have been able to do any of this and so much more that has gone unspoken during 2008.

I have been known to say that we do so much with so little that it is sometimes amazing that we are able to accomplish all that we do.

For that I am grateful, but I do wish we could do more to help people, especially these days. I am well aware of the economic challenges that people face. Job losses, income reductions, housing shortages and funding reductions have had a huge impact on too many families.

They have also had an impact on us at CCA.

When the funding for PIVOT (Program for Internships Vocational Opportunities and Training) was eliminated, I tried desperately to get it restored, but was unsuccessful. This very necessary program, so beneficial to countless heads of household, now has to be suspended. I have no idea as to when this funding will be restored.

We continue to have computer and technology problems and, because we are an administratively lean organization, we have to measure our remedies by how much money we have to solve them. We

hardly ever have enough income to feed, house and serve people so we tend to stretch the dollar until it screams...and it does often. In 2009, I anticipate a reduction in contributions and grants. Therefore, I will have to make the dollar scream even louder.

Yet, in spite of these challenges, I rejoice in the fact that we have survived another year and that we were still able to do what we could within the resources that we have available.

We were motivated to do so because we know that so many families would not have anywhere else to turn for assistance. That is the reason we exist.

I am encouraged by the fact that we have a new president who was elected with a message of hope and change. I know that the months ahead will be difficult, with the pervasive economic pressures that he and members of his administration face, but I look forward to a turnaround. I have faith. Faith in better days, better ways and better pays.

In the book of Hebrews, faith is described as the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. Sometimes, I describe it as believing in the good to come without having a sign that it will.

That is what keeps me going, along with the support of you who are reading this article and this newsletter.. My faith in God does the rest.



Taimara Hoffer, 8, top, and Selinnet L. Vega, 11, both of New Haven, are among the 19 children, ranging in age from 4 to 12, taking part in CCA's 20-week Children Leadership Training Institute, being held at the Hospital of Saint Raphael. Curriculum for the program was developed by Sandy Malmquist, director of the CT Children's Museum in New Haven. The program parallels a similiar program being held at the same time for the children's parents/guardians.

Mark Your Calendar Today

Thursday, April 23rd, 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.,
20th Anniversary Share Our Strength's Taste of the Nation New Haven,
Omni New Haven Hotel at Yale.
Featuring more than two dozen talented chefs and beverage distributors from Greater New Haven and Fairfield counties. Benefiting the Connecticut Food Bank and CCA.
Regular tickets are \$75 a piece and can be ordered at www.tasteofthenation.org.

Saturday, May 9th , 7 to 9 p.m.,
CCA's Second Annual United in Praise / Unidos para Adorar concert.
Star of Jacob Christian Church, 506 Howard Avenue, New Haven, CT
You will be amazed at and thoroughly enjoy the professional quality of the all-New Haven-based musical talent on display at this bilingual and multicultural family-oriented event. The concert benefits CCA's Hillside Family Shelter. Tickets are \$10 (for adults 18 and over); \$7 (ages 11-17) and \$5 (ages 5-10), with children under 5 free. Program ads are also available for as low as \$25 a half-page (if purchased by March 1st). For tickets or program book ad, call 777-7848 x 112.

Small Minimum Wage Hike Makes Big Difference for One Working Mom

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"This is horrible on dishes," she said in an interview inside her Winchester Avenue apartment. "You have to rinse it so much more. It leaves a film on your dishes. When they say "laundry," they mean "laundry."

"But," she added, "you have to make it work."

Making it work has proved a challenge for Clark, 47, who grew up in the West Hills McConaughy Terrace projects.

Her story illustrates in part why state Democrats overrode a gubernatorial veto last June to pass the minimum wage hike. Gov. M Jodi Rell said the state couldn't afford to add costs to businesses in a recession. Democrats pointed to studies that minimum wage hikes don't lead to job losses. And they argued that even 35 cents an hour, or \$500 to \$700 a year at full-time pay, could make a real difference in the lives of working families struggling to make ends meet in tough times.

"Trying to make ends meet right now on a minimum wage job is nearly impossible," said New Haven State Senator Martin Looney, an organizer of the veto

Kim Clark is thankful for all the help she has received. "If the Lord don't do no more for me, he's done enough," she says.

override. "This very modest increase will help hard-working people put food on the table"

Clark reflects the face of minimum-wage workers in Connecticut: a majority are women over 24 who are supporting children. (According to the state Labor Department, minimum-wage earners constitute 3.5 percent of some 1,865,000 people working in Connecticut and 7 percent of 923,000 hourly workers).

Clark has traveled a road walked by many Connecticut workers, a road posing challenges for policy makers. Like many displaced workers, Clark used to work in manufacturing. She earned \$11 an hour repairing car distributor caps at Echlin in Branford. In 2001, she earned her last paycheck. Her job was gone. She couldn't find another comparable one.

She eventually took to stealing. "WalMart, Kmart, Stop 'n Shop, Shop Rite. I had to provide for my family." The police caught

her. She did not go to jail. But like thousands of New Haveners, she now had a felony record - a barrier to finding a new job paying a living wage (New Haven is working on a series of proposals to help convicted felons find work).

Then Clark became a bit player in another social policy change: the foreclosure crisis. Her landlord on Sheffield Avenue lost his house. Kim had to leave in December 2007. The lender gave her the original \$750 deposit back, but that wasn't enough to get a new apartment for her and her son.

Suddenly homeless, Clark called on her alderperson, Alfred Edwards, who, together with Probate Judge John Keyes, found Clark a space at the Life Haven shelter for women and children. Life Haven helped her get funds for treatment for depression, which helped her immensely, Clark said.

Clark next hooked up with CCA and Stepping Stone, which

got her the part-time work at the West Rock Center. She also landed an apartment at the Stepping Stone complex, a converted former school where CCA offers not just job counseling, but life counseling.

In addition to her paycheck, Clark receives \$257 a month in food stamps and has qualified for energy assistance.

"Between the gas bill, the light bill and the telephone bill" Clark's budget was tight enough before the minimum wage increase to require waiting on Arthur's new socks and engaging her laundry detergent in triple duties.

Clark thanks God for all the help she has received. She echoes the words of a gospel song she knows, "He's done enough. If the Lord don't do no more for me - He's done enough."

Asked what brand of dish-washing liquid she'll buy now, she answered without missing a beat.

"Ajax, of course," she said. The grapefruit-scented brand, to be specific. "It's what my Dad uses. It smells so good."

Efforts of Many Make Holidays Happier for Families, Individuals in Need.

Despite the steep downturn in the economy, Christian Community Action was able to make this past holiday season a little brighter for many living in the Hill section of New Haven. This was possible, thanks to the support of hundreds of individuals, businesses, houses of worship, civic groups and schools from throughout greater New Haven.

Thanks to the cash donations, food drives and the volunteer services of many, CCA was able to provide Thanksgiving food baskets, complete with turkeys, to 1,583 families and individuals, nearly 200 more than the year before. This outpouring of support also ensured that the children in the 35 families staying in CCA's Hillside Family Shelter and its Stepping Stone Transitional Housing Program had gifts of toys, clothing and gift cards under their trees on Christmas Day.

Besides individuals and groups, CCA was

extremely grateful for the support received from the **Connecticut Food Bank**, which provided more than 1,200 holiday birds and numerous boxes of canned food items for our Thanksgiving initiative and the **Community Foundation for Greater New Haven**, whose "Make a Gift Better" matching gift campaign helped to push individual donations to record levels during November, December and the first part of January.

CCA also appreciated all of the sponsors, advertisers and nearly 900 attendees who came to its Capitol Steps show on December 18th, which resulted in \$40,000 net being raised to support the agency's



STUDENTS AT **STONE ACADEMY** IN HAMDEN WERE AMONG THE HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE DONATING CLOTHING, FOOD, TOYS, AND OTHER GIFTS TO CCA FAMILIES DURING THANKSGIVING AND CHRISTMAS.

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