



Center for Community Engagement & Social Research

Monthly Newsletter



SEPTEMBER 2023 EDITION



CCSU RECEIVES A GENEROUS GIFT

The shelves at Central Connecticut State University's food pantry, largely supported by Stop and Shop, will get another boost thanks to a recent donation from KBE Building Corporation of Farmington. KBE's nonprofit foundation awarded \$500 to Maria's Place, the on-campus food pantry at Central. Members of the KBE team visited campus on Sept. 27 to present a check to Central President Zulma R. Toro and members of her executive team including Vice President for Student Affairs Dr. Kellie Byrd Danso and Associate Dean of Student Affairs Ramon Hernandez, among others.

Approximately 50% of Central's student population are food insecure. Maria's Place provides more direct access to the nourishment Central students need to thrive academically.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: CITIZENSHIP AMBASSADORS

The Hartford Public Library has established a new position to assist individuals interested in obtaining their US citizenship. This position is being designated as Citizenship Ambassadors. The library will select, and train students interested in serving in these positions. The O'Neill Endowed Chair has informed us that eight CCSU students have expressed an interest in applying for these positions. Those selected will be able to help individuals navigate the necessary steps to obtain their US citizenship. This is a wonderful way for students to become civically engaged while helping others.

Community Engagement Around Campus

CAROL A. AMMON COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

The Criminal Justice Club hosted a fantastic social event for Vinal Technical high school students and Criminology majors. The partnership between Vinal Tech and the Criminology department bring students together for collaborative learning and fun experiences and was made possible through a Next Generation of Student Success grant from CCSU. Music, trivia and a taco bar make for a great time.



SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

The College to Career Summit was hosted by the School of Business from August 22nd to August 24th, 2023. This program was designed to equip CCSU students with the essential tools to transition seamlessly from the campus to the professional world. Students gained invaluable resources and knowledge from industry leaders through interactive workshops, career panels, and networking opportunities. Beth Merenstein and Christian Reyes of CCESR gave attendees a presentation that stressed the importance of experiential learning and co-curricular transcripts. Students also heard from a CCSU School of Business recent alumni panel on potential post-graduate career paths, which gives our students a competitive edge in the job market.



Community Engagement Around Campus

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

On September 22nd, the CCSU nursing department hosted a book launch, *Latinas in Nursing: Stories of Determination, Inspiration, and Trust*. Tina Loarte-Rodriguez has written this book which shares the stories of several Hispanic nurses. She read excerpts from the book and also signed copies of the book. The CCSU nursing department

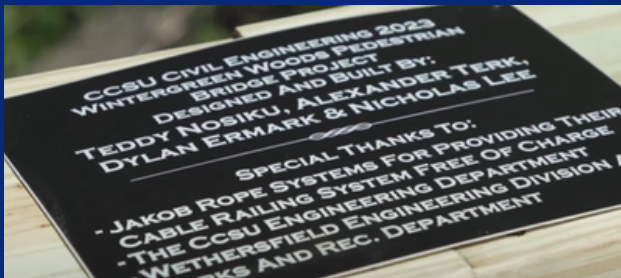
Panelists included:

- Bridgitte Prince & Cynthia R. Jennings, Esq: Hartford North End residents and organizers whose community is plagued by sewage overflows and flooding
- Angel Serrano: Environmental Organizer, Connecticut Citizen Action Group
- Mixashawn: Indigenous Wave artist, author and educator
- Amelia Kearney: Climate Advocate and Activist, Sunrise Movement Connecticut
- Kimmy Reindl: Co-Director, Sunrise Movement Connecticut
- Moderators: Taina Manick and Morgan DeCarlo, CCSU Social Work Club Officers



SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING, SCIENCE, & TECHNOLOGY

Visitors to Wintergreen Woods in Wethersfield can now access more areas of the park thanks to a gift to the town from Central Connecticut State University's Department of Civil Engineering. During the spring semester, students collaborated with town officials on the design and construction of a timber bridge for the park. Engineering professor Dr. Bin (Brenda) Zhou welcomed town officials to the campus for a ceremony to load the bridge onto a flatbed truck so it could be taken to Wethersfield. In addition to workers from the town, Central staff and student interns from Facilities Management were on hand to assist with the transfer and transport. In welcoming the group, Zhou noted, "This bridge was built by four Civil Engineering seniors in the spring of 2023. Dr. (Young) Sohn and I are the faculty advisors to this team, and we have the town in full support of the design and the placement of this bridge. We also have a big crew from CCSU to witness this moment to celebrate how CCSU students can utilize their engineering skills and knowledge to help the local community." Wethersfield Town Manager Frederick J. Presley said the bridge project was on the town's capital improvement wish list for years.



Community Engagement Around Campus & the Community

ATHLETICS

CCSU's student athletes were asked to bring non-perishable food items for donation to Maria's Place as part of the opening night meeting. The student-athletes donated more than 1,000 items.

The Men's soccer team, organized a food drive before during a home match against Umass. The items were brought to donate the next day.



COMMUNITY PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

New Britain Downtown District is a volunteer Board of Commissioners formed in 1983 to create a vibrant, secure, and prosperous downtown. They work in cooperation with the City of New Britain, developers, and property owners to the benefit and engagement of the community.

CCESR has worked with New Britain Downtown District (NBDD) to strengthen the relationship between the on-campus and off-campus community! For First Year Orientation leading up to the Fall 2023 semester, NBDD joined CCESR to table at the Resource Fair to let incoming students know about what New Britain has to offer our students, including discounts at restaurants and recreational facilities, free student parking after 5PM and on weekends, and the U-Pass that gives students free access to CTfastrak!

This year, we will be joining NBDD for their annual Halloween Trick or Treat Safe Zone on October 31st from 5:00 to 8:00 PM! Main Street from Columbus Blvd. to Chestnut St. will be closed to vehicles during the event - we hope you can join us!

Community Engagement Around Campus & the Community

NATIONAL VOTER REGISTER DAY

CCESR was proud to co-host National Voter Registration Day alongside Greater Hartford Chapter of The Links on September 19th. Secretary of State Stephanie Thomas, accompanied by Provost Kimberly Kostelis, AVP of Community Engagement and Experiential Learning Beth Merenstein, and O'Neill Chairholder Ed Vargas, spoke on the importance of voter registration and participating in elections. JLI Scholar Niya Blizzard-Ireland and SGA President Haneen Alkabasi provided a student perspective on the issue.

