



# Center for Community Engagement & Social Research

Monthly Faculty Newsletter



MARCH 2024 EDITION



# Central Community!

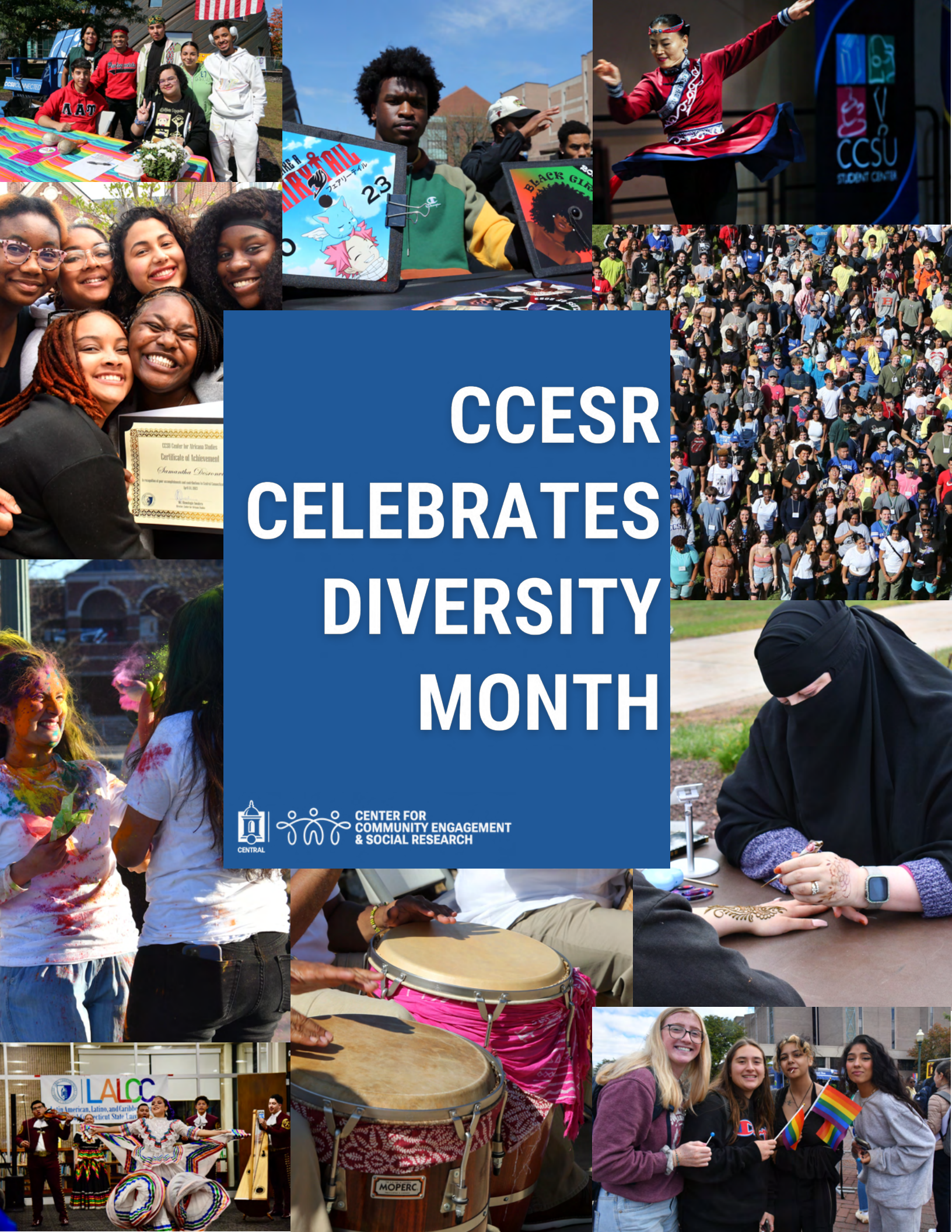
Dear Central Family,

The Center for Community Engagement & Social Research (CCESR) has been working hard on collecting the many events and projects that center around community engagement and applied research. Our commitment to integrating teaching, research, and service through community engagement has flourished! We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has collaborated with us, including students, faculty, and community partners. Your dedication has played a pivotal role in addressing the most pressing needs of our community. As always, we look forward to continued collaboration and making a positive impact through community service. Thank you for your unwavering support and commitment to the shared vision of CCESR.

Sincerely,

The Center for Community Engagement & Social Research Team:

- Beth Merenstein, Executive Director
- Ed Vargas, O'Neill Endowed Chair in Public Policy & Practical Politics
- Christian Reyes, Assistant Director and Community Partner Liaison
- F. Kamilah Hastings, Administrative Assistant
- Diana Velasco, Faculty Liaison
- Shealin R. Callahan, Community Engagement Student Ambassador
- Megan Lott, Social Media and Marketing



# CCESR CELEBRATES DIVERSITY MONTH



CENTER FOR  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
& SOCIAL RESEARCH



# Community Engagement Around Campus & the Community

## NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Professor Leanne Zalewski helped organize the second Night at the Museum event on March 21st. Participants discussed what the museum has to offer and the multiple displays they have!



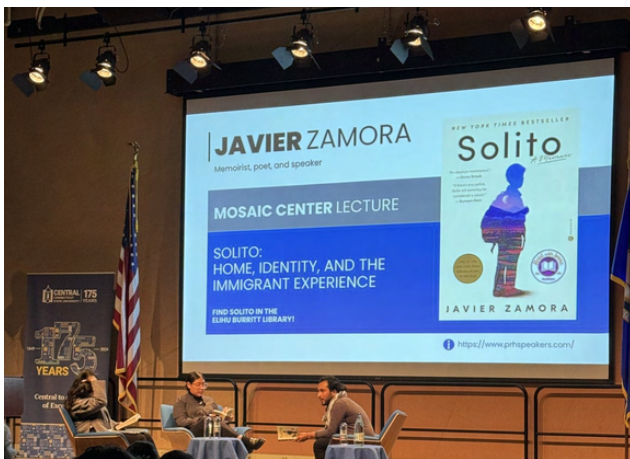
## WOMEN IN LAW ENFORCEMENT SUMMIT

Female officers from local, state, and federal agencies united to share their inspiring stories, insights, and experiences. They led engaging discussions about the challenges, triumphs, and future opportunities in the field of law enforcement, and became part of a movement shaping a more inclusive and dynamic future in policing.



## NBHS VISIT TO BRIDGES EXHIBITION

Professor Craig Frederick helped organize the Opening Reception and Awards Ceremony for the Bridges exhibition on March 7th. One of the student's conceptual pieces has sold to a well-known CT artist!



## JAVIER ZAMORA VISIT TO CENTRAL

Poet, Javier Zamora, visited Central on March 27th to discuss his book titled *Solito*. He dove into conversations of the immigrant experience, trauma and resilience, and the realities of being an undocumented individual.



# Community Engagement Around Campus & the Community

## THE DECLARING FREEDOM YOUTH CONFERENCE

This conference empowered students to exercise their voice and engage with the historical context and lasting legacy of America's founding documents.

The Declaring Freedom Youth Conference event featured evocative speakers and youth-centered action-based sessions, providing a unique opportunity for students to interact with 250 peers from across the state of Connecticut.

Fourteen Connecticut high schools were selected and each school selected 18 students in grades 10 through 12 to attend.



## COLLEGE TO CAREER SUMMIT

The event was held on March 26th and 27th aligned with the Career Development Office annual Business School Career Fair. The event was planned and sponsored by the Summit Organizing Committee made up of industry leaders from Travelers, The Hartford, Northwest Mutual and CohnResnick. The Summit kicked off with Travelers CFO, Carolyn Strelau. Several panel discussions included topics related to employment in various insurance sectors. Dr. Kellie-Marie Vallieres from the CT Office of Workforce Strategy discussed the importance of "durable skills" that can be transferable to any work environment. Veronica Rondinelli, CCSU Student stated, "I felt it was a great opportunity to connect and learn more about what real-world employers are looking for".

## 30TH ANNUAL AFRICANA STUDIES CONFERENCE



This year's conference theme was "The Power is in the Word: From Griot to Pulpit to Hip Hop."

The conference examined the oral narratives that have illuminated the lives of African peoples of the Continent and the Diaspora from past to present. Oral storytelling has long been a mechanism for African people to contextualize their environments and the epistemologies that shape them.

Proverbs, folktales, sermons, poetry, and rapping reveal the images and rhythms of daily lives.

# Upcoming Events

Stanley Quarter Clean-Up  
with Central's  
Sustainability Club  
Saturday, April 20, 2024

CCSU'S SUSTAINABILITY CLUB PRESENTS

# Stanley Quarter Cleanup

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & SOCIAL RESEARCH



APR 20

MORE INFO: +860-832-2971

**1pm** LETS WORK TO KEEP OUR ENVIRONMENT CLEAN! **3pm**

WE'LL BE MEETING AT THE PARK'S ENTRANCE ON EDDY GLOVER DR.



JOIN US FOR THE

## Asian American & Pacific Islander Festival

A celebration of

### AAPI HERITAGE MONTH

with presentations, performances, refreshments, and more!


**WHEN:**  
April 23, 2024

**WHERE:**  
Student Center Circle  
or Alternate/Rain Location -  
Constitution Room in  
Memorial Hall

**TIME:**  
12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

**SPONSORED BY:**

- ▶ Asian American, Asian, and Pacific Islander Center Development Committee
- ▶ Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies
- ▶ East Asian Studies
- ▶ International Studies

 **CENTRAL**  
CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY | **175**  
YEARS

1615 Stanley Street  
New Britain, CT 06050

AAPI Festival  
12PM - 4PM  
Tuesday, April 23, 2024

# Upcoming Events

SAVE THE DATE:  
Empty Bowls 2024  
Thursday, May 2, 2024

Ceramics faculty and students, Management and Organization students, and Smalley Elementary present

## EMPTY BOWLS 2024

- ▶ Pick out your own beautiful bowl made by Central and Smalley students and enjoy a simple meal.
- ▶ All proceeds go to supporting families through the Friendship Service Center, Inc. in New Britain.
- ▶ Open to all!

**SAVE THE DATE**

**Thursday, May 2nd**  
**5:30PM to 7:30pm**  
**Smalley Elementary**  
175 West St. New Britain (5 min. drive from CCSU)

Ticket Prices:  
CCSU Students: \$10  
Others: \$15  
Family: \$30

For further inquiry / information, email Professor Sarah Stookey, Management Department at [stookeysab@ccsu.edu](mailto:stookeysab@ccsu.edu)



## Connecticut Foodshare Walk Against Hunger

Saturday May 4<sup>th</sup> at Dunkin Park  
Check in: 8am Walk Start: 10 am  
Support your New Britain Programs

<https://donate.ctfoodshare.org/event/walk-against-hunger/e553428>



The New Britain Housing Authority

Klingberg Family Centers Family Pantry

Friendship Service Center, Inc.



Connecticut  
Foodshare Walk  
Against Hunger  
Saturday, May 4, 2024

# Community Engagement Around Campus & the Community

## HIGHLIGHTS

The Central Connecticut State University **Community Health Education Clinic** opened for business on Jan. 24!

The clinic offers free health screenings to Greater New Britain residents and members of the campus community **every Wednesday from 9 a.m. to noon** on a walk-in basis. Students and faculty from Central's Nursing program will conduct the screenings.



## COME VISIT US!

CCESR has found its new home in **Davidson 115**.

Feel free to stop by and chat for a bit!

We will be hosting an Open House on **April 23rd from 3pm to 5pm!** Come check out our new space and enjoy some snacks and fun activities!

Open House



## COMMUNITY ENGAGED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STIPEND

CCESR is currently in the works of offering stipends to faculty and staff to participate in community engaged professional development. This stipend has a maximum of \$3,000 per academic year that can be used towards attending an academic conference, workshop, training, or webinar.

### Primary goals of the stipend:

- Promote community engaged practices/opportunities in the classroom and in research projects.
- Allow faculty and staff to expand their professional portfolio as it relates to community engagement.
- Open the opportunity to teach community engaged courses at the university.



Stay tuned for more information!

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING STIPEND (CEELS)

CCESR's Community Engagement Experiential Learning Stipend (CEELS) provides stipends for unpaid internships or research roles without standard wages. We offer financial support for experiential learning opportunities that might otherwise be unpaid.

### Student Internship Information

Eligible students would receive \$18/hour with a maximum of \$3,000 (this averages to 20hrs/week for an 8-week program). Applications open and close in the following months. More details of deadline will be given near the end of current semester:

- Summer application: March 22, 2024 - May 24, 2024
- Fall application: July 26, 2024 - September 9, 2024
- Spring application: December 6, 2024 - February 7, 2024

Click [HERE](#) to apply!



# Community Engagement Around Campus

## SCHOOL OF EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL STUDIES



The community baby shower is aimed at improving the maternal health of our community. The Nursing department collaborated with Dr. Lucinda Canty from University of Massachusetts who runs Lucinda's House, a nonprofit organization that is working to improve the health and wellbeing of women of color. Her organization has held several Community Baby Showers throughout Connecticut.



Last year, the Nursing department held their first annual Community Baby Shower at Wheeler Clinic. This year, they hosted the second annual Community Baby Shower at Central.

The nursing department collected over 6,000 diapers to donate at the Community Baby Shower and improve diaper insecurity in our community.

## CAROL A. AMMON COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

Dr. Matthew Chudnow from the World Languages department accompanied 7 students to Japan during Spring Break through the Kakehashi Project funded by the Japanese International Cooperation Center (JICE), an NGO affiliated with the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Students were immersed in the teachings and understanding of Japanese culture by spending time with Japanese host families, visiting Buddhist temples, and shrines.

Students will present at this year's Asian American and Pacific Islander Festival to talk about their experience engaging with the Japanese community and the importance of study away programs!



# Community Engagement Around Campus

## SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

On March 22nd, nearly 60 students representing several high schools from Connecticut participated in Junior Achievement's Innovation Challenge. There was an impressive lineup of professors/staff who volunteered for the event such as Mike Nicastro, Dr. Chris Lee, Dr. Beth Merenstein, Dr. Cheryl Crespi, Mr. Mike Taylor, Dr. Decorti Rodgers-Tonge, Dr. Sarah Stookey, Dr. Sinead Ruane, Professor Mike Nicastro, and Dr. Richard Zhang.

Students met in teams with professors and Central student mentors which resulted in a rich learning environment, fostering theoretical understanding as well as practical application.

The theme of the innovation challenge was "Innovating for a Sustainable Future: Embracing Environmental Responsibility," and we were blown away by the business ideas and presentations of the high school students.



## SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING, SCIENCE, & TECHNOLOGY



Biology professor Paul Hapeman has been working as the principal investigator in a collaborative study of fishers by Central Connecticut State University and the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP).

Central students have had the opportunity to work on this project, which tracks Fishers to get a better understanding of the animals' movements, reproduction rate, and mortality, among other factors. To read more about the project [click here!](#)

# Community Engagement Around Campus

## ATHLETICS

On March 7th, Central's Women's Basketball and Volleyball teams volunteered with United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut for **Read Across America Day 2024**. Nearly 5,000 students from 40 schools in East Hartford, Hartford and New Britain were positively impacted. These efforts help close literacy gaps and work to ensure that every student in our region is reading at grade-level by the start of the fourth grade, a key indicator of future success.

Special thanks to Hartford Public Schools, Hartford Public Library, East Hartford Public Schools, and The Consolidated School District of New Britain for their partnership in planning and hosting the event.



## COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

The United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut brings together people and resources committed to the well-being of children and families in our community. Their programs work towards fostering youth success, increasing access to health, and supporting families financial security.

The United Way is a frequent collaborator with Central. In addition to Read Across America Day on March 7th, they have joined us for **Central's MLK Day of Service** to make literacy kits two years in a row and participated in CCESR's service-learning activities for **First-Year Orientation** in 2023 and will join us again in 2024! We would like to give a special thank you to **Philip Blonski**, Director of Major Accounts and Engagement, for his consistent support for Central and for connecting CCESR to the Mile High United Way in Denver, Colorado, who will be supporting CCESR's roundtable presentation at **Campus Compact's Compact24 National Conference** in April!





## CCESR'S INTERACTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MAP

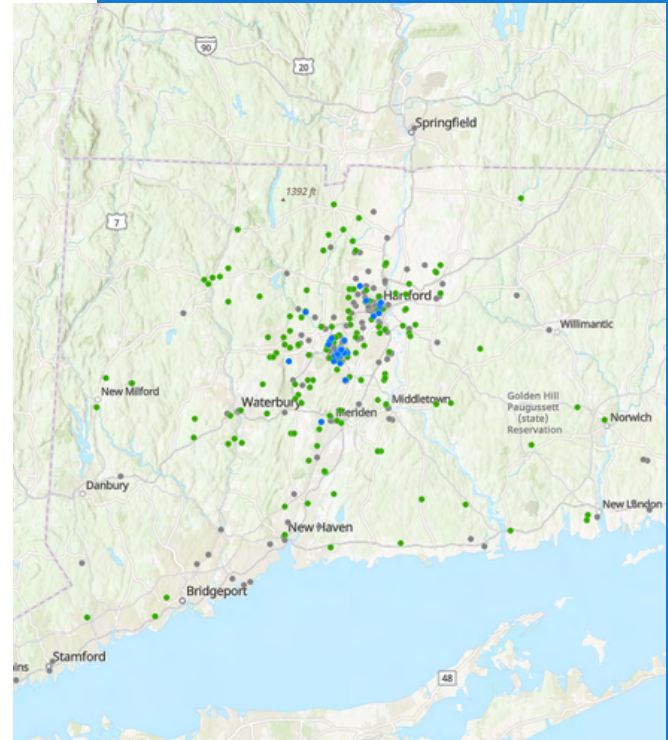
CCESR has created an interactive map as a way to visualize the impact Central has had on the community and provide ideas for future projects.

On the map, you can view community partners Central has worked with, where students have completed internships/field placements, and the locations/descriptions of past community engagement or public service events.

If you have been involved in a CE event/project, fill out this [Microsoft Form](#) to have it added to the map and Collaboratory!

Click [HERE](#) to view the map!

For further questions on Collaboratory, please contact Diana Velasco at [d.velasco@ccsu.edu](mailto:d.velasco@ccsu.edu).



## CONTACT OUR TEAM

For more information on working with CCESR, do not hesitate to contact us or visit our [website](#)!

- Executive Director, Beth Merenstein, [merensteinb@ccsu.edu](mailto:merensteinb@ccsu.edu)
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