

JULY 30, 2020

AM Meeting: Thursdays at 7 AM — Muddy Waters, New London
Lunch Meeting: Thursdays at 12:15 PM — La Luna/Holiday Inn, New London

TODAY'S PROGRAM

Ilana Fischer

CEO, Whisps Cheese Crisps

Weekly Zoom Meeting

Please join us today at noon for our weekly Rotary meeting via Zoom. It's very convenient and all you need is a decent shirt/top/blouse/sweater (pants optional).

Go to [ZOOM.COM](https://zoom.us) and click "JOIN A MEETING" and enter the info below.

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Neilan

"Carry out a random act of kindness, with no expectation of reward, safe in the knowledge that one day someone might do the same for you."

— Princess Diana

Report for July 23, 2020

by Bruce MacDonald



Everyone deserves an opportunity to have a second chance in life.

If I had to sum up the presentation at last week's meeting from the **Rev. Cathy Zall**, executive director of the New London Homeless & Hospitality Center, that would be it.

"Every person should have a place to sleep at night and have food," she added. "No one should go hungry, and no one should have to sleep in a car or an abandoned building."

She said a lot more, explaining the various routes people have taken to reach the complex between State Pier Road and Huntington Street.

Once they arrive, approximately 700 in a year, the center strives to provide them with a variety of services to get them back on their feet. "A basic safety net," is how she described it. A variety of circumstances can lead to homelessness, including a marital breakup, job loss, serious health issues and such things as mental illness and/or substance abuse.

She said if people show up at the front door who are from elsewhere, center professionals will determine whether they have family members elsewhere and provide transportation to get them back home.

Some arrive straight from prison. She described a process the state uses for those being released from custody. Under this system the former prisoners are considered New London residents for purposes of resettlement since the court where they were sentenced is located here.

The center, which Rev. Zall has headed for 14 years, is more than a place to get a meal and a place to sleep, as important as those things are.

"These are people with no money or family to support them," she said. "We're trying to piece together enough things to give people that second chance."

There is a help center, complete with computers, to assist people perform essential tasks, including navigating work sites employers use to start the hiring process these days. Applying for benefits and keeping a tele-health appointments are among the other reason for the computer operation. Shelter guests, and that term of respect is how people there are described, can avail themselves with health care, thanks to the Visiting Nurses of Southeastern Connecticut. Food is brought over from the New London Community Meal Center and there are places where people can relax and take a break.

But getting people into permanent housing, not always an easy thing for a variety of reasons, is a major focus there.




"We do a lot of work to get people into housing, helping them with security deposit and first-month's rent, often an obstacle for people," she said.

There are special program offered for veterans and a range of basic services beyond those already mentioned.

In the question and answer session that followed, Rev. Zall was asked how people can help. In addition to volunteering there, the center, a non-profit corporation, graciously accepts financial donations.

Whatever circumstances bring them to the center, the guests range in age from 18-to-80, from all ethnic backgrounds. Aside from their homeless situation, they share the common need of assistance, and they find a place that extends the hand of friendship in a time of dire need.

After all, said Rev. Zall, they are all human beings, and they all need that opportunity for a second chance.

The
ROTARY


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