



always
reaching for
independence

ARI of Connecticut, Inc. Annual Report 2009

ari president/ceo



We began our year preparing for our accreditation process with the Commission on the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities. C.A.R.F. provides an international set of standards that are recognized as best practices in the industry of rehabilitation. Besides our outstanding programs, we were cited for our exemplary process in the creation and implementation of our strategic plan. We were granted a three-year accreditation, an accomplishment of which we are very proud.

We are very fortunate to have an extremely dedicated and caring staff that maintains a level of professional care and knowledge of the clients whom we serve. Through their actions, they prove that service to our clients isn't a hobby or an occupation, but a way of life. Without them, we'd just be another agency providing services to people with disabilities.

While our year has been successful, there is much, much more to be done. Our annual increase from the Department of Developmental Services will continue to be "zero" for the foreseeable future. We must continue to seek ways of doing more with less. Exploring alternate funding sources and seeking ways of being more efficient and effective within our limited scope of resources are crucial to our success. As we transition to a "fee for service" model from "grant-based funding" we must take advantage of every opportunity that presents itself to ensure financial viability.

We are looking at developing additional support for other disability groups, offering progressive and alternate forms of rehabilitation, and creating deeper partnerships with our sister agencies as well as our regional and statewide officials. With your support we will be ready, willing, and able to embrace these challenges and hurdles ahead.

On behalf of our staff, board, volunteers, and our community, I thank you for your continued support. Together we are achieving our mission and beyond.

—Matthew Reyher

board of directors

Over the last few years, we have seen significant cultural changes at ARI of CT. Both staff and clients are exhibiting a renewed sense of pride and the camaraderie between them is heartfelt. The respect between line staff and management underscores that the messages and goals of the agency are more than words, they're a mantra.

In this past year, ARI has seen an increase in public relations and community recognition. Our events continue to attract a greater number of supporters and our name and mission are becoming much more recognized. Last year, ARI took fund raising to a new level. In a year when many nonprofits have seen a significant decline in contributions, each of ARI's events has significantly exceeded past results. We have even added a fall event to our fundraising calendar.

Perhaps our greatest accomplishment is the establishment of the ARI Endowment Fund. As the endowment is funded, over the next few years, we will have taken a major step to ensure the financial stability of ARI. Included within the endowment program is the vehicle for implementing a planned-giving program. As alternative planned-giving options are incorporated into the overall program, the opportunity for achieving a major increase in donations is extremely promising.

Lastly, we have begun the renovation of the Richmond Hill building. Scheduled to begin this fall, the renovation will take place in several phases.

Despite a worsening economy, the coming year promises to deliver even more success. None of these accomplishments would have happened without a dedicated board, a committed staff and a strong management team. I want to thank everyone for their time and effort. It is truly appreciated. I look forward to working with each of you next year.

—Allan Sussman

ARI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**deceased*

Matthew P. Reyher

PRESIDENT AND CEO

human resources

The results of the most recent Employee Feedback Survey indicated that agency morale and satisfaction is on the rise. When asked if “morale at ARI is high,” 91.50% of participants responded positively. Out of 36 questions, 30 received a positive response rate. The final question in the survey sums up the results adequately—97.90% of participants positively indicated that they are proud to work at ARI.

This is certainly reflected in the awards that are bestowed upon our stellar staff. ARI would like to congratulate the following special employees on their accomplishments.

longevity awards

30 YEARS: Beatrice Grabell

15 YEARS: Darlene Caviness and Tammy DeLeo

10 YEARS: Cynthia Lowe, Octavia Pollard, and Paulette Wilson

5 YEARS: Lisa Anderson, Carline Archer, Renee Atkins, Deborah Cameron, Veola Flemming, Laura Floyd, Karen McIntosh, Marjorie Mair-Riley, Maxine Mereigh, Pauline Rafalko, Carla Wright, and Matt Whyte

staff awards

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR AWARD: Ebony Grant, *Residential Manager Lotstein House*

ALWAYS REACHING FOR INDEPENDENCE AWARD: Tysha Smith, *Group Leader Tally Ho House*

THE HEART OF THE AGENCY AWARD: Carlette Brisseaux, *Residential Manager Palermo House*

THE TEAM AWARD: Robin White Dimmock and Cynthia Bruce Lowe, *Day Direct Service Workers Basic Skills*

in memoriam

This past year the ARI family lost four great friends.

In September of 2008, artist MARGARET FIORE passed away. Maggie was a member of the ARI Artist Initiative for 7 years. Along with being a wonderful painter, Maggie was a bocce player, bowler, and a great friend to us all.

In November of 2008, STEPHEN GROVE passed away. Stephen was best known for being a founder of and a drummer in the ARI Heart and Soul Band. Stephen was a long time employee of Goodwill Industries in Stamford and lived

in his own apartment for the last several years. Stephen was a good friend and will be missed by ARI as well as the Stamford High Football Team, of which he was a manager.

In May of 2009, ERIK HENDERSON passed away. Erik was a member of the day program community experience group at ARI. Erik loved playing cards, listening to music and playing the harmonica.

In December of 2008, we lost Dr. CHARLES HERTZ, board member, father of Mark Combrinck-Hertz, a client of ARI, and husband of board member Lee Combrinck-Graham. Dr. Hertz served on the board of directors at ARI, most recently as Vice President.

All will be missed by the ARI community.

quality services

A new initiative, the Quality Management and Compliance Department, has been developed and managed by Dr. Robert J. DiDomenico. A Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Plan has been designed and implemented, of which the four key components are planning, measurement, assessment and improvement.

Information from various sources is reviewed through a Utilization Review system. Case records are reviewed and health and safety, management, risk management, individual planning for the persons served, input and satisfaction surveys are used. The department changed the parent advisory group to a family advisory group to involve non-parental family members to be more inclusive. Rights, accessibility planning, strategic planning, marketing, and public relations planning are included in the CQI Plan.

Dr. DiDomenico uses DDS (Department of Development Services) licensing and QSR (Quality Service Review) forms, along with the CARF – The Rehabilitation Commission – international standards. ARI received a 3-year accreditation by CARF in 2008. – the highest award given to organizations world-wide. Dr. DiDomenico assisted the health and safety committee, the human resource/staff development committee and the policy and procedure committee in the process.

The Quality Management and Compliance Department is an important, integral part of ARI. It ensures that our mission and values are embedded into our daily routines and lives. It assures quality services are being delivered and it advocates for the rights of all persons served. It strives to make sure that the best, meaningful services are delivered to our clients so that they are ALWAYS REACHING for INDEPENDENCE.

day and residential services

It's simple: Jobs, Homes, Life Skills. This describes the services provided by ARI. The meaningful work done to support those areas of service, however, is much more exciting and complex.

jobs

After meeting someone new and after your initial introduction, your first question is typically, "What do you do?"

Employment gives us an identity and suggests our role in society. Employment provides people with opportunities for self sufficiency, valuable social interactions, the opportunity to establish lasting friendships, and self-esteem.

Employment gives us a sense of belonging, gives purpose, structure, and meaning to the day.

There is no difference whether we are talking about ourselves, the people we meet, or the people we serve.

The job front has been tough for everyone this year, including the clients at ARI. However, we continue to work with them to better market themselves and find new and exciting jobs. Job placement continues to work with clients on resume building and job searching. This past year ARI has begun working with BESB (Board of Education and Services for the Blind) and currently is providing job services for two clients through this program.

Through the help of Production Providers, the in-house production department has seen more contracts which has allowed clients the opportunity to earn money as well as learn some important skills.

ARI also seeks outside contracts for its in-house Landscaping and Housekeeping Crews. ARI markets these crews to the public and relies on both business and private contracts. This past year ARI has posted these services on the internet in order to add to its growing schedule.

homes

The next question might be, "Where do you live?"

A home is one's center—a place to belong, a place for your things and a place to foster relationships. Our group homes provide this and more. They provide a sense of



family, a place to make friends, a place to have fun, and a place to learn and grow.

ARI always accommodates the residential needs of each client, no matter how challenging. A new bed was added at Truglia House so that a client

would be able to receive much needed, added support. This has brought much more joy to her life; she has new roommates and has flourished in her role at the home.

At Lotstein House, a respite bed was opened and filled by an emergency placement allowing a young woman to move in and join the family of residents. The staff and residents of the home accommodated this young woman and welcomed her with open arms.

Staff continues to work with residential clients in all of our homes on skills that afford them the highest level of independence. There is always something fun and exciting happening at the homes. From playing the Nintendo Wii to listening to music, clients continue to maintain an active and busy lifestyle.

The Individualized Home Supports program (formerly Supported Living) continues to grow and change. Staff continues to work with clients on goals and programs that allow for individualized independent living. Living in your own apartment is expensive, so, once again, ARI received a grant from the First County Bank Foundation to help with emergency expenses that are incurred by clients.

life skills

ARI embraces all opportunities that lead to independence and self-reliance. These skills include getting along with others, taking care of yourself, managing money, understanding safety, speaking up for what you want and like, and anything that leads to a healthy, happy life.



The Day Services provides activities that promote self-esteem and independence. From bake sales and flower sales to trips to the zoo and the state capital, it has been a busy year. The Self-advocacy Group, which meets on a regular basis, helps clients speak up and make positive changes in their community. The group initiated a trip to the Capital in order to learn more about the way their government works. They followed the national elections and initiated a poll and a mock election for ARI clients and staff.

The day program expanded its computer lab. Through a grant, ARI received 10 new computers to help clients learn life and job skills that will help them succeed in their community. These computers will allow more clients to browse the web and search for current events and news.

development

ARI has been very fortunate this past year. Despite the economic downturn we have seen an increase in community support! We are spreading the word and marketing ARI's fantastic services and volunteer opportunities by attending more and more business and nonprofit functions in the community.

Last October, ARI received ten new computers from IBM, through a Technology Partnership with the United Way of Western Connecticut. These computers were placed in the Richmond Hill computer lab and will be used by clients to learn new skills, browse their favorite websites, and look for jobs.

The ARI Artists' Initiative produced its second annual calendar right in time for the holidays. This year's calendar was sold at several Miller Hallmark stores in Fairfield County. Our goal for 2010 is to find at least twelve sponsors, one a month. All profits go towards purchasing supplies for the classes.

Our Annual Appeal, held each December, surpassed previous numbers in both donors and amount raised.

In April, volunteers from the Stamford Kiwanis Club, through Rebuilding Together Fairfield County, brought over thirty volunteers to Palermo to paint each bedroom. Clients were able to choose their own colors. In May, the Synapse Group of Stamford, through AmeriCares HomeFront, brought over seventy volunteers to Lotstein House. They painted the interior and planted a new garden outside. Sunrise Cottage was also treated to some TLC by the Ridgefield Bank. All projects were fully funded by the respective volunteer groups.

The Third Annual Walk for Independence, held each May, had more walkers and donations. Over fifty clients participated with almost two hundred community volunteers/walkers. Despite the rainy weather, the Walk surpassed expectations and *everyone* enjoyed the festivities.

For the 14th consecutive year the Lotstein/Martin Golf Tournament took place in June. Over 100 golfers played at Sterling Farms Golf Course and stayed there for the Awards luncheon. Once again, the event surpassed expectations.

ARI continues to seek community support and gives back to the community as well. ARI is in the process of developing an endowment program and a public relations calendar to expand the name and quality services throughout the community. Without the community ARI cannot provide the quality services our clients deserve.

We would like to thank everyone for supporting our mission and our agency throughout the year.

recreation and volunteers



ARI saw over 75% of its clients participating in recreation events throughout the year.

We took a 4-day trip to Portland, Maine in August, and a 5-day trip

to 1000 Acres Dude Ranch Resort (Stony Creek, NY) in September. These trips gave participants the opportunity to relax and unwind with friends.

We attended a number of sporting events including a New York Mets game, Bridgeport Bluefish baseball games, Bridgeport Sound Tigers hockey games, a Harlem Globetrotters game, and a WWE wrestling event!

Of course, the clients at ARI enjoy *participating* in sports as well! The ARI recreation calendar offers golf with Challenged People in Motion at Sterling Farms Golf Course, Special Olympics bocce and walking club at Scalzi Park, basketball at the Yerwood Center, aqua-aerobics at the Darien YMCA, and bowling at Rip Van Winkle Lanes in Norwalk. In addition to the weekly Saturday bowling, we also started a Special Olympics bowling team last fall. Five ARI bowlers competed in the Special Olympics Holiday Sports Classic in November of last year.

The ARI Artists' Initiative displayed their work in a month-long show at the New Haven Free Public Library's Art Gallery. The show was entitled "Caring and Sharing: Imaginative Art by People with Disabilities." The artists' reception was held at the library on Saturday, April 25th, at which the artists had a chance to respond to questions and receive praise for their hard work!

We wouldn't be able to offer so many programs without the support of our dedicated volunteer team! On average, volunteers donated over 100 hours per month working with clients. In addition to the many individuals who volunteer their time with ARI, we also have been fortunate to have a number of volunteer groups, including: BuildOn, Community Volunteers in Action (CVIA), ARI Youth Corps, Rye High School Lacrosse Team, Synapse Group, and the Kiwanis Club of Stamford.

Thomson Reuters, once again, sponsored three bowling parties and provided lunch at the annual client holiday party. Presents and cake were also donated by the Stamford Police Union.

ARI thanks our volunteers who enable the recreation department to provide programs for all of our clients.

finance

The Finance department consists of five dedicated staff that provide service in the following areas: Accounts Payable, Elizabeth King; Payroll and Benefits Administration, Gloria Clark; Internal Audits and Consumer Entitlements, Maxine Mereigh; Billing, Accounts Receivable and Finance Manager, Beatrice Grabell; Financial Budgeting and Reporting, and Cash Management and Investments, John Gorcynski; and our dedicated Information Technology department, Sheldon Morrison.

We implemented internal audits on the monthly billings submitted by our Day Service and Residential programs; successfully cross-trained the billing, payroll, accounts payable and consumer subsidiary areas; completed the waiver monthly billing, payroll processing and accounts payable by their deadlines; and completed the 2009–2010 agency and 5-year capital budgets.

For the second year in a row, we have hired a summer intern from the Stamford Academy of Finance, Tahjna Scott, to work closely with our accounting staff to learn the different aspects of accounting.

We also hired an Information Technology Systems Administrator, Sheldon Morrison, to help manage the wide array of communications within our agency (telephone, computers, networks, payroll time clocks, software, security systems, etc.). He received his Bachelors degree from Lee University in the field of telecommunications and has been with the agency almost four years. We are happy to have Sheldon as part of the Accounting/IT department team.

This year we had the distinct privilege of honoring Beatrice Grabell as she marked her 30th year of employment at ARI. She has been a dedicated and loyal staff member since 1979. She is a hard worker and “loves” the work that she does. Congratulations, Bea!

ARI Of Connecticut, Inc. UNAUDITED FINANCIAL REPORT 2008–2009

REVENUE	
Fees	\$6,213,682
Contracts	\$151,436
Grants	\$29,446
Contributions	\$101,442
Investment Income	\$12,009
TOTAL REVENUE	\$6,508,105

EXPENSES	
Administration	\$985,144
Day Programs	\$1,754,610
Residential Programs	\$3,809,780
Other	\$211,265
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$6,760,799

NET PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE OVER EXPENSES AFTER DEPRECIATION	(\$252,694)
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The financial report presented is an unaudited report. The audit for the fiscal year 2009 will be completed by October 15, 2009.

professional staff

Arleana Adams
Wendy Aldershof
Christine Alexander
Judith Alphonse
Magdelah Alphonse
Lisa Anderson
Carline Archer
Renee Atkins
Armando Azana
Yvette Banks
Clifford Beauleau
Jeannette Bedini
Dekanya Bell
Toneichia Bolden
Beverly Bonfoey
Holly Bosley
Kislene Bosse
Carlette Brisseaux
Max Brisseaux
Carolyn Brown
Theresa Brown
Cynthia Bruce-Lowe
Judith Bruen
Deborah Cameron
Darlene Caviness
Gloria Clark
John Conrad
Mary Cook
Thaddeus Cuffee
Andy Dayes
Tammy DeLeo
Simone Desvarenes
Jheanell Dhamalie
Robert DiDomenico
Robin W. Dimmock
Ahisha Douglas
Felicia Drungo
Sharil Dumas
Marnie Dupree-Nelson
Julia Edwards
Valerie Ennis
Veola Flemming-Kelly
Laura Floyd
Virginia Foldoe
Micheline Gabriel
Christina Gallegos
Regina Garcia
Gerard Gasparino
Debra Gay
John Gorcynski
Beatrice Grabell
Ebony Grant
Vincent Grant
Maxine Greenwood
Guirlanda Guery
Joy Henry
Regina Holley
Renita Holley
Tracey Hudson-Harrison
Taria Hunter
Lavinia Hurd

Gloria Jackson
Tionaya Jackson
Solange Jacques
Carey Jaffee
Elaine James
Sharon Jennings
Rosie Jones
Jolene Kalinowski
Tshimanga Kapitaine
Elizabeth King
Kouassi Kouakou
Debbie Krasner
Carl Lewis
Marvin Lewis
Caston Lowe
Carmen Madera
Marjorie Mair-Riley
Vickie Manual
Carlton Martin
Asiah Matthew
Karen McIntosh
Louise Medoit
Maxine Mereigh
Tanika Miller
Yolanda Morales
Sheldon Morrison
Sherri Norwood
Jacinth Nugent
Audrey Owens
Emily Piatak
Nanotte Pierre
Richarde Pierre
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Pauline Rafalko
Wayne Reid
Matthew Reyher
Elsa Richardson
Jacques Richeme
James Roan
Bryant Roberts
Roberto Sanchez
Marie Sistrunk
Nicole Smart-Young
Tammy Smith
Tysha Smith
Sherland St. John
Melody Thompson
Hector Torres
Tammy Upchurch
Myia Walters
Joann Weatherford
Matt Whyte
Dana Williams
Paulette Wilson
Carla Wright

donations

july 1, 2008 through june 16, 2009

- Rocco and Carol Acierno
In Memory of Kenneth V. Arestia
- Marc and Lori Adelsberg
Steven and Martha Aigner
Jennifer A. Akpapuna
In Memory of Kenneth V. Arestia
- Ms. Wendy Aldershof
Mr. Nick Aldershof
Mr. Sam Aldershof
Ms. Elizabeth Alexander
Jane and Stephen Alpert
In Memory of Stephen Grove
- Ms. Shelly Altman
Arline and Anthony Alves
In Memory of Antoinette Viggiano
- American Auto Auction Inc.
American Express Charitable Fund
Vincent and Lurana Andrisani
Anquillare, Roucco, Traester
Barbara O. Anton
Kathleen and Michael Apruzzese
Barbara J. Apy
In Memory of Kenneth V. Arestia
- Jean Mills Aranha, Esq.
In Memory of Stephen Grove
- Rosalyn A. Arena
In Memory of Nicholas & Jennifer Rose Arena
- Jane K. and The Late Kenneth V. Arestia
Rosario and Carmell Arestia
In Memory of Kenneth V. Arestia
- Aristo Data Systems, LLC
Ms. Barbara Aronica and Mr. Peter Buck
In Memory of Charles G. Hertz, M.D.
- In Memory of Stephen Grove*
- Mr. Herbert J. Ashe
Mr. Samuel O. Akiwumi-Assani
Atria, Inc.
Axel Johnson Inc.
Mr. Donald Axleroad
Ms. Irene Ayoub
Mr. Henry Bаетto
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In Memory of Kenneth V. Arestia
- Kamalesh and Bharati Banerjee
Chandan and Sara Banerjee
Sunil and Susan Banerjee
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Ms. Janna H. J. Bellwin
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Ms. Helen Biordi
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- Jo Ann and Henry Brenner
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- In Memory of Stephen Grove*
- In Memory of Dr. Melvin Grove*
- Mary Brenner
In Honor of Jo Ann & Henry Brenner
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- Ms. Judy Bruen
In Memory of Pauline & Eugene Bruen
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- In Memory of Charles G. Hertz, M.D.*
- In Memory of Stephen Grove*
- Ms. Cyndi Burres
Cacace Tusch Santagata
Mrs. Marie Cahill
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John and Karen Campbell
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Stephen and Felicia Carriero
Ms. Preciosa Carneiro
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- Elaine Carroll
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- Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Carriero
In Memory of Antoinette Viggiano
- Kenneth and Cindy Carson
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In Memory of Charles G. Hertz, M.D.
- Jane Combrinck-Graham on behalf of Mark Combrinck-Hertz
In Memory of Charles G. Hertz, M.D.
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Mr. and Mrs. Michael Considine
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Walter and Carole Ann Cortese
John and Martina Costello
Kyle Cox
In Memory of Kenneth V. Arestia
- Creative Pension and Administration
Helen and Darrel Croot
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Ms. Lynn Cuddy
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- Mr. John Curley
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In Memory of Richard F. Daly
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Karen and Joseph DeBartolo
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- D'Agostino Brothers Foreign Car Service, Inc.
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- Mr. and Mrs. Terence J. Degnan
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- Jack DeGrado-Stamford Dental Group
Tammy DeLeo
Nick and Dores Del Guida
In Memory of Kenneth V. Arestia
- Joseph and Diane Del Priore
Mrs. Marie A. Deragon
In Memory of Harry Deragon
- In Memory of Antoinette Viggiano*
- Mrs. Marie DeRubis
In Memory of Nunzie DePreta
- In Memory of Lewis DeRubis*
- Morli S. Desai
In Memory of Kenneth V. Arestia
- Michel Di Capua
In Memory of Kenneth V. Arestia
- Ms. Amy DiCarlo
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In Memory of Ralph Dolan
- Judith Dollenmayer and Barbara Page
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- Mrs. Angela M. D'Onofrio
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Julia Edwards
Ms. Danielle Edwardson
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Ms. Ivy Eisenberg
Mr. Izzy Eisenberg
Richard English
Ms. Norma Eselgroth
Ms. Jeany Espinoza
Mr. James Euchner
Jill H. Evans
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- Ms. Aisling Fagan
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth F. Fahan
Mrs. Mary Fahey
Fairfield County Community Foundation: *Sternbach Fund*
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Maurice and Carol Feinberg Family Foundation, Inc.
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- Joyce and William Filip
In Memory of Kenneth V. Arestia
- Ms. Maria G. Fiori
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First County Bank Foundation, Inc.
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In Memory of Kenneth V. Arestia
- Ms. Lynne Fite
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- William Foster
Tanya and Christopher Foxall
Ms. Virginia Fraser
Mr. John Frattaroli
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Mr. Daniel Friedman
In Honor of Allan Sussman
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- In Memory of Robert Gallagher III*
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- Robert and Geraldine Gasparino
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Mr. and Mrs. Edward Gentile
Andrew and Amy George
Stephen and Antonia Gerard
Ms. Joy L. Getzenberg
In Memory of Charles G. Hertz, M.D.
- Cynthia and Jack Gilchrist
In Memory of John D. Bruce
- Mrs. Janice Ginotti
Dr. Marissa Girolamo and Staff at Stamford Podiatry
In Memory of Stephen Grove
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