

Positive Change

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A publication of
Wheeler Clinic
91 Northwest Drive
Plainville, CT 06062

860.793.3500
888.793.3500 toll free
860.793.3520 fax
www.wheelerclinic.org
www.ctclearinghouse.org
www.wheelereap.org

Helpline:

24-hour crisis intervention,
support, referral
860.747.3434 Central CT
860.524.1182 Hartford Area

Wheeler provides comprehensive solutions that address complex health issues, providing individuals, families and communities with accessible, innovative care that encourages recovery, health and growth at all stages of life. Our integrated approach to primary and behavioral health, education and recovery creates measurable results, positive outcomes and hopeful tomorrows for more than 30,000 individuals across Connecticut each year.



Family Health & Wellness Center Opens at 43 Woodland Street, Hartford

Individuals and families in Hartford and area communities now have greater access to integrated primary care and behavioral health services with the opening of Wheeler's new Family Health & Wellness Center at 43 Woodland Street, Hartford.

On January 8, more than 125 community leaders, supporters and staff celebrated Wheeler's flagship Hartford location and home to its federally qualified health center, formerly located at 999 Asylum Avenue.

Wheeler President and Chief Executive Officer, Susan Walkama, LCSW, and Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin, delivered remarks that underscored the significance of the center and the programs and services available, including primary care, family dental, women's health, behavioral health and addiction treatment, complementary medicine, and prevention and outreach services.

"Recognizing the need to enhance health equity for low-income and other vulnerable populations, we refined our strategic direction to build a more systemic approach to whole-person health," said Walkama. "Wheeler's Family Health and Wellness Centers were developed in collaboration with key strategic partners who share our vision. It represents a critical step in the transformation of our health system.

"Our team-based approach to care is grounded in the belief that physical and mental health are interconnected," said Ms. Walkama. "To achieve the best outcomes, we will ensure the whole person is cared for within Wheeler's full continuum and in coordination with other services, organizations and businesses within the greater Hartford region."



In her remarks, Walkama also highlighted new service areas, including pediatric services for families formerly served by the St. Francis/Gengras pediatric clinic; the launch of women's health services through a partnership with St. Francis; and the opening of a complementary pain management center, supported by the Mary Fran and Peter Libassi Innovation Fund at Wheeler, as an additional strategy to address chronic pain and the opioid crisis.

Walkama also dedicated the new Corsini Kitchen (*see story, page 4*), named after former Wheeler Trustee Raymond Corsini, who passed away in November 2017. Housed on the same campus at 49 Woodland Street, the kitchen is supported by a major gift from the Corsini Family that supports comprehensive wellness and nutrition programming, including a toddler nutrition program, general nutrition education, supplies, fresh vegetables and kitchen equipment.

Continued on Page 2.



Family Health
& Wellness Center

To schedule an appointment or learn more, call:

888.793.3500

or visit WheelerClinic.org/access

a message of change

from the president

WheelerClinic.org



Wheeler enters 2018 (and our 50th year) on a celebratory note with the grand opening of our Family Health & Wellness Center and Hartford flagship location at 43 Woodland Street. This is a significant milestone in our transformation to a provider of truly integrated primary and

behavioral health care delivery, rooted in a deep commitment to provide accessible, whole-person health to underserved individuals and families.

You will see that commitment through the stories in this issue of *Positive Change* that highlight both our full continuum of innovative services and our visionary donors and funders, whose support and commitment are instrumental in supporting our shared vision.

This special year is an opportunity to reflect on how we began, the progress we've made, and the hard work of so many people and organizations that have supported our evolution and expansion. We've made considerable strides, but we are always reminded and mindful of the persistent challenges we face and the need to preserve the safety net that is so essential to our most vulnerable citizens.

Thank you for your continued interest and support. You make health, recovery and growth possible every day. Please join us in celebrating Wheeler's 50th anniversary through your engagement, participation and commitment to the 30,000 individuals, families and communities we serve every year.

Susan
Susan Walkama, LCSW
President and Chief Executive Officer

Thanks to All of Our Family Health & Wellness Center Philanthropic and Grant Funders (cont.)

Funding for the Family Health & Wellness Center is provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). Improvements to the Family Health & Wellness Center are made possible through the support of a number of philanthropic and grant funders.

- **Governor Malloy's Nonprofit Grant Program** supported parking lot expansion and exterior renovations
- **Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority** funded a dental operatory, equipment and a panoramic x-ray machine
- **Delta Dental of New Jersey Foundation** supported start-up costs for oral health services, as well as community education and outreach
- **Maximilian E. & Marion O. Hoffman Foundation, Inc.** and the **Ensworth Charitable Foundation** supported the purchase of dental equipment
- **Mott Corporation** funded Wheeler's Community Health Worker Program
- **Mary Fran and Peter Libassi Innovation Fund** supported the launch of Wheeler's complementary pain management program
- **Connecticut Health Foundation** supported data analytics to assess health disparities in access to behavioral needs
- **Holcomb Farm Fresh Access Program** will provide fresh vegetables for Wheeler's nutrition program



Medicaid, Medicare and commercial health insurance are welcome. No patient will be denied health care services due to an individual's inability to pay for services. A sliding fee scale is available based on family size and income. Wheeler is a Health Center Program grantee under 42 U.S.C. 254b and a deemed Public Health Service employee under 42 U.S.C. 233(g)-(n).

Health Care for the Whole Family

Reasons to Smile

Funders Support Critical Dental Care at Family Health & Wellness Center



From left: Betty Sugerman Weintraub, CHEFA grant program manager, Dr. Dorota Gasiior, Wheeler dental director, hygienist Sofiya German, RDH, and Windy Rodriguez, dental assistant.

Family dental services at the Wheeler Family Health & Wellness Center in Hartford are up and running, thanks to the support of our generous funders. Grants from the Maximilian E. and Marion O. Hoffman Foundation and the Ensworth Charitable Foundation helped Wheeler equip a full dental program that includes on-site preventive and family dental care provided by a dentist and hygienist. The Connecticut Health and Education Facilities Authority (CHEFA) provided outfitting for one of four dental operator rooms, and a grant from the Delta Dental of New Jersey Foundation supported start-up costs for oral health services, as well as community education and outreach. We are extremely grateful to our funders for their support of our mission and for helping us reduce disparities in oral health care for underserved communities.



The Family Health & Wellness Center offers on-site dental services for all ages, including cleanings, screenings, sealants, fluoride treatments, X-rays and more. Referrals and coordinated linkages to other dental providers and specialty services also are offered. Dr. Dorota Gasiior, dental director, (pictured) oversees all aspects of dental care.

Care for Hartford's Youngest Patients at 43 Woodland Street

The pediatric suite of Wheeler's Family Health & Wellness Center is a reassuring destination for young patients and their families. Rooms are dressed in soothing colors and offer a bright backdrop for services.

Wheeler launched pediatric services at 43 Woodland on January 9, absorbing patients from the St. Francis Gengras Pediatric Primary Care practice in Hartford, which closed in early January.

"Wheeler is steadfastly committed to meeting the whole-health needs of children and families for the entire Hartford community," said Susan Walkama, LCSW, president and chief executive officer, Wheeler. "We're able to provide comprehensive care in one location, which improves access to critical services and convenience for parents and, ultimately, produces better health outcomes."

The integrated Wheeler Family Health & Wellness pediatric team includes Dr. Mary Atubra, pediatric medical director; Andrea Buglione-Corbett, a family nurse practitioner; a pediatric nurse specialist; a pediatric care management team, and behavioral health consultants. On-site services include well-child care and immunizations; sick child visits; physical exams, on-site dental care and referrals to specialty services; behavioral health services; and care coordination and management services.



A Legacy of Service: Ray Corsini

Wheeler Leader Memorialized Through Teaching Kitchen and Nutrition Program

A Plainville man's legacy of health, gardening and community service is now memorialized through a teaching kitchen that will assist thousands of families to maintain wellness through better nutrition.

Raymond Corsini served as a member of Wheeler's Board of Trustees for 27 years. He passed away in November at the age of 85. Wheeler has memorialized his legacy by naming a teaching kitchen for him at the new Family Health & Wellness Center at 43 Woodland Street in Hartford. The Corsini Kitchen serves as the hub for nutrition programming and services at the federally qualified health center and is supported by a philanthropic gift from the family. Corsini's widow, Lorraine, and daughters Lori (Brantner) and Mary (McDonald) were on hand for the commemoration. Lori Brantner herself also served as a trustee of Wheeler.



From left, members of the Corsini family, daughter, Lori Brantner, who also served as a Wheeler trustee; Mr. Corsini's widow, Lorraine; and daughter, Mary McDonald.

“Our family is thrilled that the legacy of our father is honored by an organization he believed in and a cause he cared so deeply about.”

- Lori Corsini Brantner



“Ray’s life was devoted to growing: friendships, organizations, communities, and—dear to his heart—nourishment from the soil beneath our feet,” said Susan Walkama, LCSW, Wheeler’s president and CEO, in her remarks at the dedication. “The Corsini Kitchen carries on Ray’s legacy for compassion, health, hard work, and community.”

A Korean War veteran, Ray Corsini grew up in the Bronx in a large extended family. The Corsini family often did not have enough to eat; Ray’s first exposure to gardening was planting vegetables in nearby vacant lots, which sustained the family in the summer and provided canned food for the winter.

He was an avid gardener. He became a Master Gardener through the UCONN Extension, and freely shared his knowledge, volunteering to teach gardening at Wheeler’s Northwest Village School, initiating community gardens, spearheading a parish potato-growing project to raise funds for housing in Central America, assisting neighbors and friends in their gardens, and giving away his own harvest to others in the community.

Ray devoted himself to providing for the Plainville community in many other ways. He served on and led boards of numerous organizations, seeking to expand human services and social justice for the homeless, the poor and those without access to health care. During his time as a trustee for Wheeler, he oversaw tremendous institutional growth through additions and renovations in Plainville, New Britain and many other locations across the state.

“Ray leaves a legacy of service to the community that is profound and meaningful.”

**- Susan Walkama, LCSW,
Wheeler President & CEO**

“His hard work and dedication lives on in the hundreds of thousands of individuals and families we served while he guided Wheeler. Ray’s humble nature left an impression on everyone he met; we do not get to meet many people like him in our lives.”

Serving Local Students

Lessons for Life: Javier's Story



Junior high school can be a difficult period under the best of circumstances. For Javier Santos, 7th grade was plagued with family issues, bouts of anxiety and challenges that come with transitioning from one school to another. "I was nervous and defiant, and I wasn't in a good place," said Javier, who initially attended a public middle school in Bristol. "I needed to be in a different environment."

Javier's family considered alternatives before enrolling him in Wheeler's Northwest Village School (NVS). "I was afraid at first," said Javier. "But when I got to know the teachers and staff, I quickly realized that this place was helping me out. My perspectives began to change. This school became a second home for me."

Northwest Village School serves special education students (K-12+) with complex mental health, social, emotional, and behavioral challenges. Academic instruction is provided in a supportive, state-of-the-art learning environment that is staffed with highly trained special education teachers, clinicians and paraprofessionals. Our relationally-based and trauma-informed approach fosters interpersonal growth, and provides opportunities for individualized skill development. Wheeler's teachers bring an array of subjects to life in a sensory-sensitive environment that includes engaging classrooms, innovative tools for learning, cutting-edge technology, pre-vocational programming, and opportunities to engage in recreational and creative activities in the school's gym and performance space. Comprehensive behavioral health and other

clinical services are provided by a team of psychologists, social workers, family therapists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, speech and language pathologists, nurses, and psychiatrists.

Javier remained at NVS through 12th grade, and he graduated in 2017. He characterizes his experience as one of the best in his life. While in school, he enjoyed history, explored culinary arts and received therapy to address challenges, while benefitting from some very practical lessons, too. "Our teachers showed us how to navigate the transportation system, how to prepare for our driver's test, and how to interview for a job—all great lessons for life."

Today, Javier attends the American Institute in West Hartford, where he studies customer relations and computer networking technology. "The teachers and staff at NVS gave us many experiences and opportunities to make a difference in the world," he said. "My biggest takeaway is that despite your challenges, you still can succeed, and best of all, there are really kind, patient people who will help you get there."

School-Based Health Centers Expand in Bristol and Plainville



More students in Bristol and Plainville can access behavioral health and other services through Wheeler's school-based health centers. New centers have opened at

the Middle School of Plainville and Bristol Eastern High School as a result of a partnership between Wheeler and Bristol and Plainville Public Schools.

Wheeler's school-based health centers offer a national cognitive behavioral intervention model to help students address trauma-related issues, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and behavioral health issues. Other evidence-based interventions are offered to address anxiety, depression, academic and peer challenges, and more. Linkage to other community services, including connections with primary and dental care at Wheeler's Family Health & Wellness Centers, afterschool programming, and a broad continuum of outpatient and community-based levels of care also are provided.

For more information, visit WheelerClinic.org/school-health.

Services for At-Risk Students in Windham

High school students in Windham who have either been expelled or are at risk of expulsion can access additional educational and intensive clinical services to address behavioral health and other needs, thanks to a partnership forged between Wheeler and the Windham School District.

"Every student deserves the opportunity to succeed," said Mike Russo, Psy.D., vice president, education services, Wheeler. "Our partnership with Windham is designed to help students learn new skills, put their lives back on track and experience success when they return from expulsion."

This initiative promotes a proactive trauma-informed framework and a transdisciplinary team approach in a structured, self-contained and therapeutic classroom environment. In addition to academic instruction provided by the school district, the team embeds a highly skilled bilingual clinician to provide students with immediate access to mental health services throughout the school day, as well as support to their families.

Outreach and Support

Outreach and Engagement for Older Adults

Older adults are especially prone to isolation, as well as anxiety, depression and addiction. Wheeler provides support for this population in 38 cities and towns across Connecticut through a new Senior Outreach and Engagement Program (SOEP). The program, funded by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), provides outreach, education, assessment, case management, and referral services for adults aged 55+, especially those who are isolated and have mental health and/or substance use concerns.

A full-time case manager, Bianca Carrero, helps individuals identify their strengths and needs, and provides linkage to available supports and treatment services. The goal is to help safely maintain individuals in their homes and communities. For information or to make an appointment, contact [Katharine Willis](mailto:Katharine.Willis@wheeler.org) at 860.929.7720.

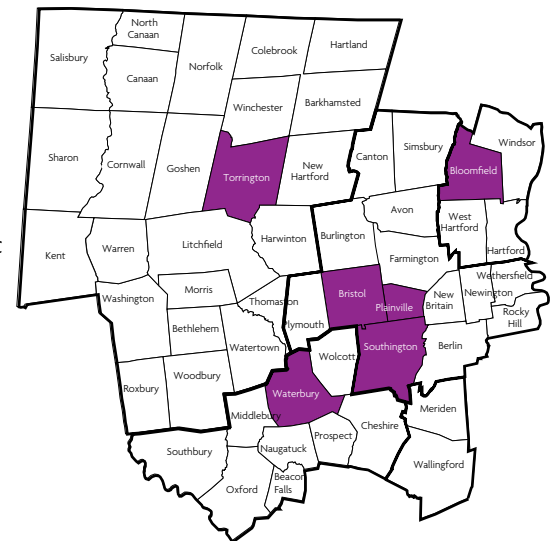


Bianca Carrero, case manager, Wheeler Senior Outreach and Engagement Program.

Providing a More Appropriate Level of Care: Wheeler's Nursing Home Diversion Program

Individuals who are at risk for placement in a nursing home or who are presently residing in nursing homes but are appropriate for community placements, will benefit from a new Wheeler nursing home diversion and transition program. Supported by DMHAS, these services focus on reducing inappropriate admissions to inpatient hospitals or nursing homes to individuals 18 or older who have serious mental illness or co-occurring psychiatric and substance use disorders.

"This program helps to facilitate an individual's transition to more appropriate settings by providing behavioral health, primary care, social, educational, vocational, housing, and other recovery support services essential to improving quality of life and sustaining recovery in the community," said Heidi Joseph, RN, MSN, vice president of Health Center Operations, Wheeler. "We offer linkages to Wheeler's Family Health & Wellness Centers and other community services, as well as comprehensive assessment within local hospitals to facilitate access to appropriate services." The program serves individuals in Waterbury, Torrington, Southington, Bristol, Plainville, Bloomfield and surrounding communities.



Our Hero for All Seasons



A great big thank you to the Mott Corporation Health Ambassador volunteers for collecting and wrapping more than 200 toys and gifts for children in Wheeler's foster care and other programs this past holiday season. Mott also was recently recognized as a Hartford Business Journal "Health Care Hero" for their innovative partnership with Wheeler. Mott is our champion and partner for all seasons!

Spreading Holiday Joy the Virtual Way



Many thanks to AXA US for hosting a virtual giving tree recently to benefit families served by Wheeler's Care Coordination program, an in-home program that provides behavioral health supports and services to safely maintain children and adolescents in the community.

One Special Year, Two Special Events

Wheeler 33rd Annual Golf Classic, June 11



Wheeler's 33rd Annual Golf Classic takes place June 11, 2018 at the Country Club of Farmington to support children and families in our care. Sign up to play or choose from an array of sponsorships, and you'll be part of a great day of fun that includes golf, lunch and dinner, prizes, recognition for your business, and more! There are plenty of opportunities to participate for non-golfers as well.

Register today at WheelerClinic.org/Golf

Celebrating 50 Years of Care: Wheeler's Farm to Table Gathering

Join us on Saturday, September 29, 2018 at Rosedale Farms and Vineyards in Simsbury as we celebrate Wheeler's 50th anniversary with a Max Restaurant Group Chef to Farm Dinner! We'll honor five decades of innovation, care and growth. Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman is our honorary chair for this historic dinner in a classic New England fall setting.

For more information about either Wheeler's 33rd Annual Golf Classic or Wheeler's Farm to Table Gathering, contact [Sue O'Connell](mailto:Sue.O'Connell@wheelerclinic.org) at 860.793.4214.



There's still time to give



We need your support now more than ever to ensure the delivery of critical programs and services to children and families in our communities. Contributions can be made online at give.wheelerclinic.org, or by returning the adjacent pledge card.

2017-2018 Annual Fund

Please accept this contribution to help Wheeler Clinic continue to encourage health, recovery and growth at all stages of life in the years ahead.

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**Celebrating 50 Years of
Health, Recovery and Growth!**

ONE SPECIAL YEAR, TWO SPECIAL EVENTS



33rd Annual Golf Classic
Country Club of Farmington
Monday, June 11

Farm to Table Gathering
Rosedale Farms and Vineyards, Simsbury
Saturday, September 29



Have a story to share? • Why does Wheeler matter to you? • Tell Us!
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Visit WheelerClinic.org/50