Unfunded Federal and State Mandates

Alan D. Barry, Ph.D., Commissioner of Human Services

“With reduced funding support for older, disabled and vulnerable residents, it’s more important than ever to maintain the support for local residents that is part of the Greenwich tradition.”

The 2016 Annual Report focused on the opioid crisis and its growing impact on Greenwich. A recent report on Greenwich opioid use, abuse and addiction completed by the Department of Human Services and Liberation Programs, Inc. warned of an escalating problem in Greenwich if residents remain complacent and deny that opioids are a problem.

The opioid crisis has been labeled a national epidemic. A Federal Commission recommended a declaration of a national emergency that would make available billions of dollars to states and local municipalities for prevention and treatment programs. Unfortunately, President Trump’s decision to only declare it a public health emergency restricts the amount of funding targeted for opioid programs.

In a similar action, the Connecticut legislature’s response after the Sandy Hook tragedy five years ago was to pass the Child Mental Health Services Act. The goal was to create an improved mental health system for children and families, however, there was no funding attached to it.

A pattern has been established at the federal and state levels concerning behavioral health issues, with declarations of emergencies and formations of task forces but with no actual increase in funding for programs; unfunded mandates.

Where does that leave us in Greenwich?

As a recent initiative, the Greenwich Prevention Council was revamped in 2017 to develop grant-funded alcohol, tobacco and drug prevention initiatives, including opioids. The goal is to increase public awareness and stimulate the development and implementation of local prevention activities. An important component of data gathering is a student and parent survey to assess community attitudes and beliefs about behavioral health issues. The Prevention Council seeks to establish a sustainable infrastructure for implementing strategic initiatives to reduce substance abuse with a focus on opioid abuse/addiction.

In response to the Sandy Hook tragedy, the Town has provided funding to support three Kids in Crisis TeenTalk counselors in the three Greenwich Middle Schools. In FY 2017, 147 students received 1,356 individual counseling sessions in the three middle schools. The Town also provides funding to support the Youth Services Bureau’s Juvenile Review Board (JRB) and InterAgency team (IAT). The JRB and IAT are designed to identify youth who are at-risk and provide counseling and support services to the youth and their families. These programs are supported and monitored through the Town’s Department of Human Services.

Greenwich is fortunate to have a network of high quality human service organizations. These agencies and the clients they serve are dependent on the continuing support of Greenwich residents. With the recently passed state budget and proposed federal budget reducing funding for older, disabled and vulnerable residents, it’s more important than ever to maintain the support for local residents that is part of the Greenwich tradition.

We are turning lives around.
New Name, Same Mission

We’ve changed our name to Department of Human Services but our mission remains the same. To enhance the quality of life of Greenwich residents through support in meeting basic human needs and promoting services that foster self-sufficiency.

The Greenwich Department of Human Services (GDHS) serves as a bridge connecting residents to the essential resources of the community. GDHS clients are assisted in critical areas such as: housing, food, clothing, personal safety and health care. Key areas for client success are education and employment.

GDHS is overseen by a seven member board and services are provided by a dedicated professional staff and a network of community providers.

We serve as a bridge.
Case Summaries

**Education Assistance – Case Manager, Sarah Muccio**
MS is married, mother of two children. She has been a GDHS client for several years. MS has obtained Energy Assistance and food cards and assistance with applying and maintaining HUSKY and SNAP benefits. MS enrolled in community college and received her Associate’s Degree. Both she and her husband have secured employment and obtained their own apartment. MS is very motivated and was recently accepted to college for a Bachelor’s degree. The case manager will continue in helping her search for scholarships and in purchasing school supplies. MS is very determined to complete the degree and is proud of her accomplishments.

**Employment Assistance – Case Manager, Scott Harvey; RITE Employment Counselor, Darian Jones**
CR was referred by the GDHS case manager to the RITE Employment Counselor to receive employment and career exploration assistance. The client did not have a long-standing employment history and had just finished his first semester at community college. Counselor worked with client to create his resume, provided coaching on how to conduct himself in an interview and how to research employment opportunities. Counselor prepared client by organizing a mock interview and giving client feedback. Counselor continued to work with client on his job search while assisting in organizing his growing network contacts. Client obtained a security guard position and continues his education at community college.

**Mental Health and Employment – Case Manager, Patsy Schumacher**
Client experiencing exacerbation of his mental health issues was terminated from his employment. Case Manager referred client for mental health treatment. GDHS provided limited financial assistance to cover costs for re-training and job certification costs. Client participated in Family Center’s RITE program provided on-site at GDHS. With re-training, certification and RITE training, client scheduled several interviews and was offered a new position with benefits. Client was able to move to a new apartment and no longer requires the assistance of the GDHS.

**Health Issues – Case Manager, Tina Corlett**
A 60 year old client residing in public housing and has been on kidney dialysis after first kidney transplant failed. Client’s goal was to find employment. Case Manager referred client to Family Centers RITE program for employment counseling. Family Centers also provided health and mental health treatment. Client was recently hired at Stop and Shop on a part-time basis. Case Manager is working with client to ensure that he maintains his health while working. Case Manager is also making sure that information on his income is being sent to Social Security and Housing Authority so that client’s Social Security and housing are not jeopardized.
GDHS works closely with and provides funding assistance to 17 local partner agencies, as well as maintaining department operated programs (next page).

Community Partners
• Abilis – Personal Safety Training
• Boys and Girls Club – After School Program
• Child Guidance Center – Child and Family Mental Health
• Community Centers Inc. – Hamilton Avenue School Homework Club
• Family Centers – Behavioral Health Program
• Family Centers – RITE Employment Program
• Family Centers – School to Work Program
• Inspirica – Women’s/Family Emergency Shelter
• Jewish Family Services – Supermarketing for Seniors
• Kids In Crisis – TeenTalk Program
• Laurel House – Supported Education and Employment Program
• Liberation Program – Substance Abuse Prevention and Early Intervention Program
• Neighbor to Neighbor – Food distribution
• Pathways – Fellowship Program
• River House – Transportation for low-income seniors
• Shelter for the Homeless – Emergency Men’s Shelter
• Southwest Regional Mental Health Board – Mental Health First Aid Training
• Youth Coordinator – Youth Services Bureau
• YWCA – Domestic Abuse Services
• YWCA – BANC Social and Emotional Learning Program
• YMCA – Pre-school

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Partnerships and Programs

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Programs administered by GDHS

- **Byram Archibald Neighborhood Center After School Program** – Byram Archibald Neighborhood Center (BANC) After School Program – a licensed after school program serving New Lebanon School K-3rd grade students. In 2017, 85 children participated in programs, received homework help and enjoyed social and recreational enrichment activities. Activities included: Reading Champions, chess instruction, yoga classes and Second Step social and emotional learning program. Weekly swim lessons are provided by the YMCA.

- **Greenwich Youth Conservation Program (GYCP)** – 112 youth ages 14-15 participated in the program, planting trees, clearing brush and creating walking paths in local parks. A partnership formed with the Greenwich Land Trust and the Resource Foundation created an advanced conservation program for youth 15-16 years of age. Two groups of 7 GYCP graduates each worked for 4 weeks on various conservation projects, including a vegetable garden with the produce being donated to Neighbor to Neighbor.

- **Back to School Supplies** – In 2017, GDHS received generous donations from the Resource Foundation, Greenwich United Way, Byram Archibald Neighborhood Trust, and Vineyard Vines to purchase school supplies and gift cards to distribute to 235 school age children.

- **Boots and Shoes** – The Salvation Army generously provided shoe vouchers to 276 children for the new school year. 125 received Payless cards and the remaining were for Shoes and More.

- **Campership** – Scholarships were provided to 228 children to attend day and sleep away camps. The funding was made available through generous donations from individuals, foundations, local churches, businesses and the Salvation Army.

- **Holiday Aid** – Using donated funds and gifts from individuals, churches and civic organizations, eligible Greenwich families and individuals are helped with food, gift cards, clothing and toys. 404 individuals and families were served over Thanksgiving, and for the Christmas Holiday, 422 individuals and families served.

- **ESL** – 25 clients participated in the daytime Board of Education ESL class at Town Hall and 35 clients participated in an evening ESL class offered at BANC through Family Center’s Literacy Volunteers.