

# HRA

of New Britain, Inc.



## 2019 Annual Report



**Serving 6 communities: New Britain, Bristol,  
Burlington, Farmington, Plainville & Plymouth CT**



@HRANBCT



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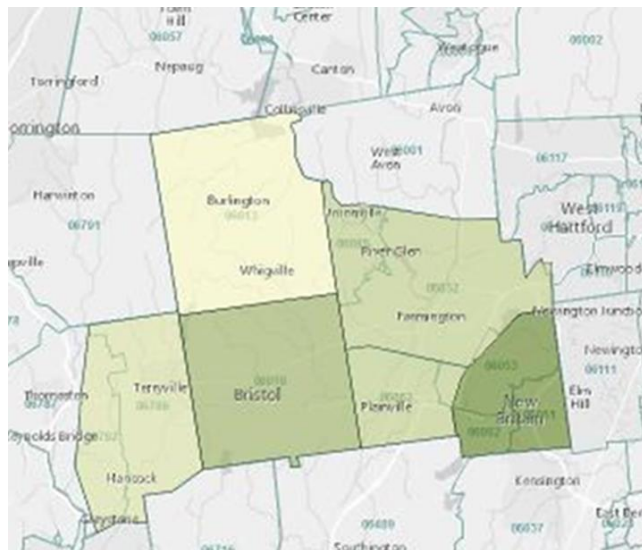
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“The mission of the Human Resources Agency of New Britain, Inc. (HRA) is to *improve* the quality of life by *helping* people achieve their economic and social *potential*; responding to the causes and conditions of *poverty*; and *building* stronger individuals, families and the communities we serve.”



[www.hranbct.org](http://www.hranbct.org)



***“We invite you to read first-hand accounts of how HRA continues to make a difference in the lives of our communities’ most vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals, children and families.”***

## **From Rocco & Cathy**

*The world of community action has become increasingly complex and competitive, challenging us to remain a viable, vibrant organization that stays true to its mission. This calls for us to be even more creative and resourceful. Our enthusiastic team continues to rise to this task, resulting in an exciting year at HRA.*

*To respond to the public health system’s increasing dependency upon Community Health Workers our network designed a new role for our case managers to help reduce health disparities. HRA’s case managers completed the specialized training, positioning us to take the lead in pursuing new funding from the CT Health Foundation. Along with our partners, the Community Health Center and the Community Mental Health Affiliates, this project would create systemic health improvements for the entire New Britain community.*

*Another health challenge for our clients is how to eat nutritious food on a very limited budget. Our team developed a new approach to teach individuals and families how to accomplish this. “Money and Menus”, funded by the United Way of Central and Northeastern CT, incorporates our healthier food promotion initiative at the pantry with our budget coaching services.*

*We are equally concerned about fostering the health and wellness of our employees by introducing new ways to do this each year. This past year we held our first “Lunch and Learn” on nutrition and our first annual Health Fair.*

*Though reports go largely undetected, the growing number of assault, neglect, financial exploitation and economic fraud cases tell us that elder abuse is on the rise. To respond to this trend, HRA developed an approach that integrates case management expertise from our Polish Victim Advocacy, Elderly Services and Financial Services teams. Funded by both the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Victims of Crimes and the North Central Area Agency on Aging, this new service will help our most vulnerable seniors maintain their independence and self-sufficiency.*

*We’re also excited about our ongoing growth in the greater Bristol area. The NAACP moved into our Bristol office bringing synergy to our mutually shared populations and we increased our presence by serving as Chair of the Mayor’s Task Force on AIDS. Additionally, we added a multigenerational family financial literacy program with funding from the United Way of West Central CT.*

*This coming year we look to design new ways to integrate our Early Childhood Education and Youth Career Center services to broaden the scope of employment and training. We intend to create new synergies between these areas now that the center has relocated to HRA’s house next door. With the proximity of employment and training assistance, it will be easier for parents to go to school while their children are in school.*

*We’ve strengthened our resolve to explore new revenue streams and strategic alliances. The guidance of our dedicated Board of Directors together with the support of our State, National, local and community partners, volunteers and our employees ensure our direction for the future.*

Rocco R. Tricarico, JD  
Executive Director

Dr. Catherine R. Baratta  
Board President



# HURRICANE MARIA

## HELPING HAND

“Lena” (fictitious name) just lost her job and came to HRA for help with Department of Social Services (DSS) SNAP and medical benefits applications for herself and her child. Without her job she was in arrears on her rent and needed food. Lena made it clear she just wanted a temporary helping hand until she got another job.

This single mother decided to leave Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria because she wanted a more stable and better life for her family. But she didn't leave the island until she had a job in New Britain. Unfortunately, this was the job she just lost but she was determined to find another good one quickly.



HRA's Case Manager helped her complete both applications and offered Lena assistance in paying her overdue rent to avoid eviction and homelessness. Lena was relieved she wouldn't have to live in a motel; car; shelter or on the streets and gratefully accepted the help from the DSS Hurricane Maria Victim funds. The landlord agreed to a mediation and to stop her eviction because of this funding. Our Case Manager also referred her to “For Goodness Sake” to get help furnishing her apartment.

Lena got a new job and stabilized her life with HRA's assistance and DSS Hurricane Maria Victim funds. Her rent is in good standing, she will receive energy assistance and SNAP benefits. She also scheduled an appointment with HRA's Assets Management Coordinator to learn how to better manage her money.

# EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

## RESULTS

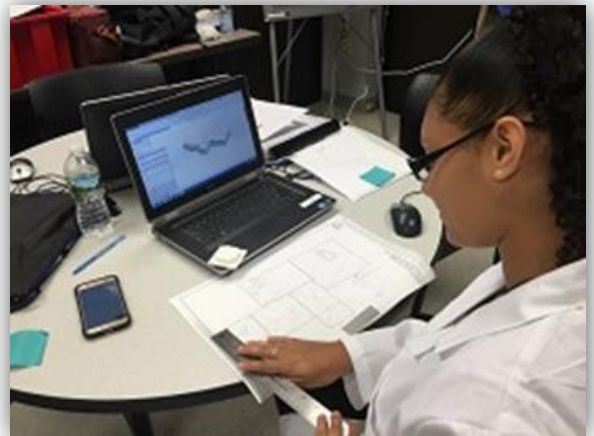
Youth Employment Services  
Summer Youth Employment Services



With HRA's Employment & Training assistance:

- **274** youth participants obtained a job.
- **179** individuals gained work experience while on-the-job, in apprenticeships or with internships.
- **440** individuals earned high school diplomas / equivalencies and/or vocational certificates, credentials or degrees.

***Erika knew what she wanted to do but she didn't know how to get there. She wanted to become a Personal Care Technician but was unemployed and couldn't afford the training. A friend heard about HRA's Youth Employment Services and suggested she come here for help.***



Working only part-time jobs since graduating from Plainville High School in 2010, Erika was shy, confused and needed some direction. HRA's Employment Services professionals conducted career assessments and confirmed that her goal to become a Personal Care Technician would be a good fit for her so they helped her develop a career plan. Next they arranged for Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) funding to pay for her training at Tunxis Community College.

Becoming a Personal Care Technician requires successful completion of three courses - Phlebotomy, EKG and Oximetry and the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) course. It took Erika about 1 ½ years but she never missed a class and excelled in all three courses. She became a Certified Phlebotomist and completed an internship at the UCONN Medical Center. In September 2018 she received two job offers, accepting the Hospital of Central CT Nursing Technician position because it offers the most opportunity for growth.

# EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

## RESULTS

Community Service Case Managers - Osgood Avenue Food Pantry

Polish and Elderly Victim Advocacy Program

Social Services Block Grant Case Managers - SNAP Outreach Services

With HRA's assistance for emergency situations:

- **1,707** individuals/households alleviated hunger by receiving food.
- **78** families avoided eviction or secured safe/affordable housing.\*
- **49** individuals received clothing.
- **209** individuals received protection from abuse, violence or crime.

***United Way "Money & Menus" program to promote healthy, affordable food.***

\*also fits under energy & housing outcomes.



The United Way of Central & Northeastern CT awarded funding to HRA to show families how to eat healthy and stay within their budget. Based at the Osgood Avenue Pantry, but open to any low-moderate income family, this program teaches families about the connection between nutrition and health and then shows how to manage a budget that includes healthier foods. Foodshare supports this initiative with the new display refrigerator it funded to promote consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables.

# ENERGY & HOUSING

## RESULTS

Energy Assistance  
Operation Fuel

With HRA's Energy & Housing assistance:

- **6,230** individuals/households stayed warmer last winter.
- **55** households improved energy efficiency.
- **78** households obtained safe and affordable housing or avoided eviction\*.

\*also fits under emergency assistance.

***Maria's (fictitious name) former husband left her with 3 children under the age of 5, no income and a skyrocketing electric bill. The electric bill was so high that the utility company was on the verge of disconnecting her power. When the notice arrived, Maria came to HRA for help.***



One of our intake specialists helped her get enrolled and approved for energy assistance. The intake specialist then mediated a payment plan with the utility company and got Maria enrolled in the Matching Payment program which made an affordable monthly budget plan for Maria.

Eventually, her former husband sent a limited amount of child support money and Maria got a part-time job. The intake specialist connected Maria to one of our Community Services Case Managers who referred her to our food pantry and Early Childhood Education Program. Her children enrolled in and are thriving in the program. The case manager is now helping Maria with her plan to further her education and reboot her career.

# ELDERLY SERVICES

## RESULTS

Homemaker & Companion Services  
Transportation Services  
No cost healthy food packages – distributed monthly



With HRA's elderly services assistance:

- **1,589** seniors, aged 65+ continued to live independently.

### **Elder Abuse Assistance – NEW**



Elder abuse goes largely undetected because the victims are often afraid to report their abuse. But the growing numbers of assault, neglect, financial exploitation and economic fraud tell us that elder abuse is on the rise.

HRA's Victim Advocates, Elderly, Financial and Community Case Management professionals have teamed up to help older victims navigate legal and financial systems and provide case management referrals so they can maintain their independence and self-sufficiency.



# FINANCIAL SERVICES

## RESULTS

Foundations for Financial Independence Program  
Budgeting Workshops – Financial Coaching  
Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

With HRA's financial services assistance:

- **431** youth and adults learned how to manage their money.
- **197** individuals increased their savings or improved their credit scores.
- **6** individuals purchased a home.
- **6,579** individuals and families received over \$10.3 million in Federal refunds with VITA tax preparation service.

### ***15 YEAR VITA CELEBRATION***



In 2004, 8 volunteers became certified by the IRS and prepared 482 tax returns for New Britain residents from the basement of HRA's 35 Oak Street office. Those 482 residents received nearly \$614,000 in Federal refunds. So began HRA's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program. Its 15 years later and the VITA program has grown to reach thousands of residents from 14 tax preparation sites in 8 towns. We just completed tax year 2018 with 199 IRS Certified volunteers preparing 6,579 returns. These tax filers received over \$10.3 million in Federal refunds.

HRA's VITA Program has mushroomed from zero funding to a growing operation with primary funding from the American Savings Foundation, the Internal Revenue Service and United Way of Central and Northeastern CT. Many of the volunteers have been with the program from the beginning.

*Thanks to the support of Achieve Financial Credit Union and New Britain High School we were able to celebrate this proud milestone in style at the Crystal Ballroom on April 25, 2019.*

# HEALTH & WELLNESS

## RESULTS

Wellness Resource Center - Treatment Adherence Services  
Ryan White Case Management - Supportive Housing

With HRA's Health & Wellness assistance:

- **249** individuals improved their nutrition, physical health or mental and behavioral health.
- **145** individuals learned how to stay healthy.
- **1,012** children or adults were screened for dental, vision, developmental delay or STI/HIV.

### *Wellness Resource Center clients learn to live with HIV/AIDS*



HRA is pleased to welcome our new Director of Health and Wellness services. Lynette Gibson comes to us with over 25 years of experience in the field of social services with a specialty in public health. A seasoned professional, Lynette is passionate about motivating both clients and employees to develop their weaknesses into strengths. Also a seasoned leader, she has worked with government and non-profit organizations to provide community based services to marginalized populations impacted by health disparities and social justice.

Lynette jumped right in on the Division of Health & Wellness' 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual HIV Soiree fundraiser in honor of all long term survivors of HIV/AIDS. HRA ran another successful fundraiser with Hydea Broadbent, National HIV/AIDS Activist, as the keynote speaker and entertainment by Ace Livingston. Sun Ray Award of Excellence Honorees included Danielle Warren-Dias, Dr. Marwan Haddad, Joyce Boone, Melanie Alvarez, Laura Minor, Reverend Nancy Kingwood and Tom Butcher. The event was held on June 7, 2019 from 6:00pm-9:00pm at the Casa Mia at the Hawthorne.

# EARLY CHILDHOOD

## RESULTS

Head Start - School Readiness  
Toddler/Preschool Program - Fatherhood Program



With HRA's Early Childhood services:

- **836** enrolled in early childhood education programs
- **836** children, aged 0-5, demonstrated improved literacy and readiness to enter kindergarten or 1<sup>st</sup> grade.
- **245** families improved their parenting skills.



***HRA's Early Childhood Services marked National Child Abuse Prevention Month in April by raising awareness in the classroom and on our front lawn.***

National Child Abuse Prevention Month recognizes the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse and neglect by promoting social and emotional well-being.

In the classroom children learned that their bodies belong to them by reading and discussing "Your Body Belongs to You" by Cornelia Spelman. The children then went on to raise awareness by planting blue pinwheels, the symbol of child abuse prevention, on HRA's front lawn for the community to see.

We're also pleased to welcome our new Assistant Director, Denise Dionizio, and Nutrition Consultant, Patricia Shoemaker, R.D. Denise brings a wealth of experience in early childhood development having held various leadership roles in infant, toddler, pre-school and school age children programs. Patricia brings over 30 years of experience in the field with the most recent 15 years in school nutrition.

We're also sad to see our Health and Safety Manager, Joan Pina, retire after 47 years with our program. Joan's tireless efforts and passion throughout the years have been invaluable to our Early Childhood Education Program and to our community. We will miss her but we are thrilled to see her begin the next chapter in her life.

**The Alton Brooks Community Service Award** is presented to an individual whose work has been a catalyst for change and has made an impact on issues of concern to the community.



**Joan Pina of  
HRA Head Start in New Britain**

HRA would like to thank Joan Pina for her work in the community as well as for offering direct support to tens of thousands of families over her years at HRA.

HRA is pleased to present **The Alton Brooks Community Service Award** to **Joan Pina** in recognition of her many years of support to the community on various health initiatives. Joan has been at the forefront of childhood health concerns in the New Britain community as both leader and advocate for families. She has helped improve the quality of health services delivered to children ages 0-5 in New Britain, training countless staff and partnering with many medical professionals throughout her entire career. Joan has also impacted the entire community through local leadership efforts as part of the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities for the City and the American Red Cross.

**The Community Partnership Award** is presented to an organization/partner with visionary leadership that collaborates with HRA to provide services to the community.

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, better known as the WIC Program, provides supplemental foods, health care referrals, nutrition education, and breastfeeding promotion and support to low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk. WIC is an integral partner delivering on-site services and assisting hundreds of HRA Early Childhood families to obtain food and remain healthy each year.

After many years of partnership with HRA, we are proud to present this award to the New Britain WIC Program.



**New Britain WIC Program**

**The Volunteerism Award** is presented to an individual or group whose volunteer efforts have impacted programs, provided leadership and shown commitment to the community.



**Amy Goldstein  
VITA Volunteer**

Amy Goldstein has been volunteering at HRA's VITA Program for nearly 15 years. After long days at work for Cigna, Amy shows up at the tax site ready to offer help! She has faithfully volunteered at HRA's North Oak Community Center, the largest VITA site in CT, as part of an excellent group of volunteers responsible for delivering free tax preparation services to thousands of people each year. Amy has also mentored new volunteers and is particularly helpful with completing the most difficult tax returns. We are very proud to present Amy with this year's award in appreciation of her tireless efforts to serve the community through HRA's Financial Services programs.

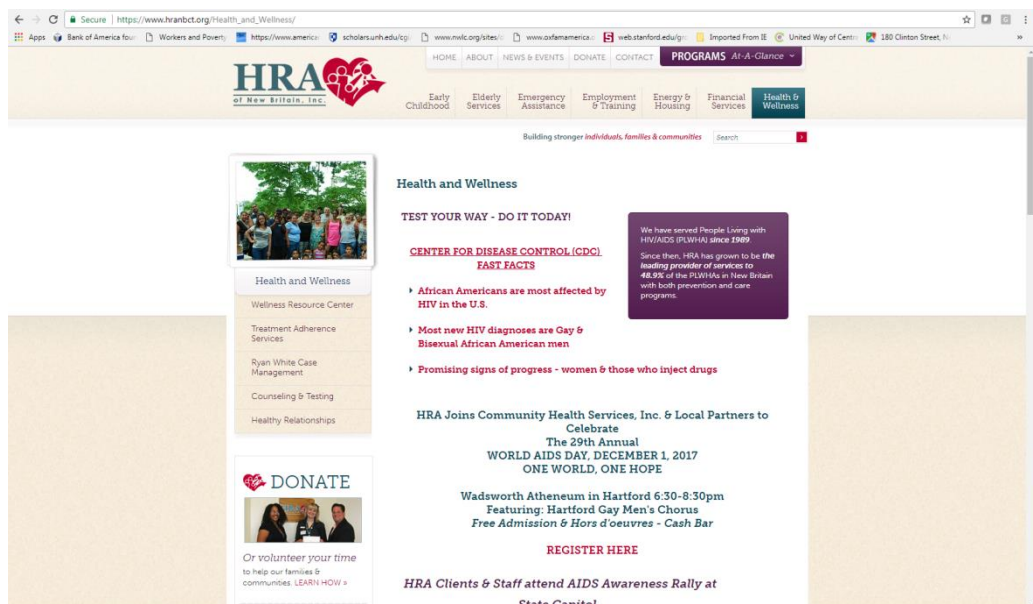
# ***Give a gift that goes directly back to your community.***

Help us achieve our mission to strengthen individuals and families in greater New Britain & Bristol - make a difference with your donation. HRA is a 501 c (3), non-profit agency recognized by the IRS and the State of Connecticut. All charitable gifts made to HRA are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

## **3 ways to support HRA's work in the greater New Britain & Bristol communities:**

1. **[Donate Time](#)**  
Volunteer with various HRA programs.
2. **[Donate Money](#)**  
Make a donation to HRA or its programs.
3. **[Donate Goods](#)**  
Support customers in HRA programs.

Learn how you can help at our website [www.hranbct.org](http://www.hranbct.org)



The screenshot shows the HRA website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the HRA logo and menu items: HOME, ABOUT, NEWS & EVENTS, DONATE, CONTACT, and PROGRAMS. Below the navigation bar, there are several service categories: Early Childhood, Elderly Services, Emergency Assistance, Employment & Training, Energy & Housing, Financial Services, and Health & Wellness. The main content area features a 'Health and Wellness' section with a photo of a group of people. Below the photo, there is a 'DONATE' button with the text 'Or volunteer your time to help our families & communities. LEARN HOW >'. To the right of the photo, there is a 'TEST YOUR WAY - DO IT TODAY!' section with a 'CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL (CDC) FAST FACTS' box. The box contains three bullet points: 'African Americans are most affected by HIV in the U.S.', 'Most new HIV diagnoses are Gay & Bisexual African American men', and 'Promising signs of progress - women & those who inject drugs'. Below the box, there is a section for 'HRA Joins Community Health Services, Inc. & Local Partners to Celebrate The 29th Annual WORLD AIDS DAY, DECEMBER 1, 2017 ONE WORLD, ONE HOPE'. The event details are: 'Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford 6:30-8:30pm', 'Featuring: Hartford Gay Men's Chorus', 'Free Admission & Hors d'oeuvres - Cash Bar'. There is a 'REGISTER HERE' link. At the bottom, there is a note: 'HRA Clients & Staff attend AIDS Awareness Rally at State Capitol'.

# HRA

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**We would like to thank our customers, volunteers, partners, funders and our dedicated staff for another successful year.**

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