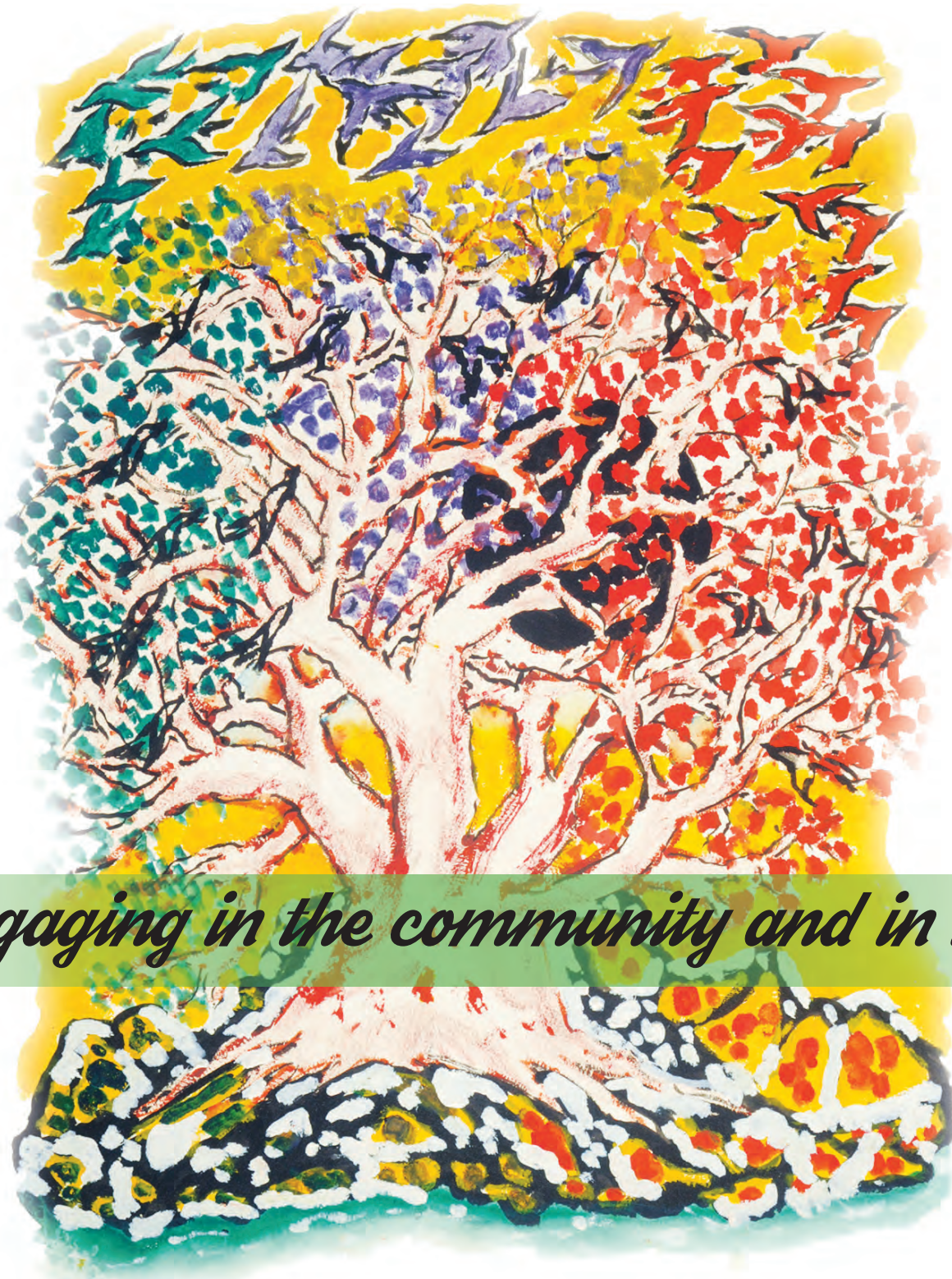


laurel  house
resources to recover



engaging in the community and in life

Laurel House, Inc. FY 2016 Annual Report

MISSION

Laurel House provides resources and opportunities for people living with mental illness to lead fulfilling and productive lives in their communities throughout Fairfield County.



200 people were captivated by the message of Kevin Breel, our guest speaker on October 5, 2015 at UCONN Stamford's General Re Auditorium. Kevin's open discussion of his personal struggle with depression resonated with Stamford Public School students from the Mayor's Youth Leadership Council, pictured above.

CORE PURPOSE

Early Intervention and Remediation,
Social Inclusion and Recovery

Cover Art by Laurel House Artist Robert Gillroy



A Message from our CEO and our Chairman

Dear Laurel House families, friends and supporters,

We appreciate the confidence you've shown in our services and the investment you made in our growth.

You helped make possible our most successful year in nearly 33 years of operation. Thanks to your support, we've enjoyed a year in which we have:

- **served a greater number of program participants and families - 793 and 209 respectively;**
- **increased successful outcomes in our evidence-based programs, as measured in jobs, education and housing;**
- **improved the financial health of our organization by building an operating reserve to help minimize the impact of realized and projected cuts in our State funded programs.**

We are proud of our stewardship of the investments you have made in our skilled clinical staff and the operations of our programs and services. With your support we've sustained and grown the capacity in our existing programs that result in participants getting competitive jobs, returning to and succeeding in post-secondary education, and achieving greater self-sufficiency.

With your generosity we have also addressed a void in treatment and services in southwestern Connecticut with two entirely privately funded initiatives - Thinking Well (cognitive remediation) and RtoR.org, a gateway website for families in search of answers for their loved ones along the path of mental health recovery.

Thinking Well focuses on direct improvement of skills which have an effect on the ability to hold a job, succeed in school, perform a series of tasks, engage in dialogue and have increased confidence. The cognitive areas assessed for improvement are: processing speed; attention; working memory; visual and verbal learning; problem solving/reasoning. Throughout the 30 session program there has been functional skills improvement in nearly all Thinking Well participants and statistically significant improvement in one or more of the six cognitive skills areas.

The second privately funded initiative, www.rtor.org (short for Resources to Recover), provides guidance, support and best practice resources for recovery-oriented mental health care to families affected by mental illness. The goal of the site is to shorten the cycle of discovery of expert mental health care options and to promote early intervention - critical since half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14 and 75% by age 24. Over 111,000 unique visitors have benefited from the site last year.

Thank you again, on behalf of all the program participants we serve, for your part in their renewed hope and confidence and for helping them engage in the community and in life!



Linda M. Autore
President and CEO



Kenneth A. DellaRocco, Esq.
Chairman, Board of Directors



thinking ^{well}

problem solving skills
for an independent life

The goal of Thinking Well is to improve quality of life, increase self-confidence and to help people living with mental illness become more participative members in their local communities. The program was developed by Neuroscience and Psychiatric Rehabilitation thought leaders to address the long-term cognitive impairment that interferes with the daily functioning of people living with serious

mental illness. Although of average or higher intelligence, people with psychotic disorders typically score below 85% of the general population on a wide range of cognitive tests. This level of profound cognitive impairment places the person with serious mental illness at a significant disadvantage in the workplace, school and in the community.

Thinking Well focuses on direct improvement of: attention; working memory; verbal learning; visual learning; reasoning and problem solving; and processing speed. The program uses instructor-led computer based drills and exercises followed by “bridging” discussion groups to practice and improve thinking skills and to make real-world application of the exercises. It helps remove barriers to employment, education and greater independence in living. The success of the program is measured in the participant’s improved thinking skills and confidence but also in functional outcomes such as getting a job, enrolling/succeeding in post-secondary education or a vocational certificate program, moving into independent or supported housing, and engagement in the local community.

Based on the functional outcomes and statistical improvements of our Thinking Well program participants, Laurel House was invited to present a workshop and lead a panel discussion at the National Conference for Cognitive Remediation at Columbia University in June. The presentation focused on the use of the therapeutic model in a community setting, integrated with other programs such as employment and education to make practical use of the improved skills.



Clockwise from upper right: Camilo Duque, Jr., Assistant Vice President (left) and Gene Schreiner, III, Vice President of First County Bank present check to Linda Autore, CEO.

The Laurel House Development team, Barbara Rossi and Megan Pavia, helped kick off Fairfield County’s Community Foundation Giving Day. FCCF has supported Thinking Well for two consecutive grant periods.

(L-R) Gregg Pauletti, M.S., Thinking Well Program Manager, Katie Griffin, M.S., MHC, Supported Education Coordinator & Cognitive Remediation Specialist, Jay Boll, LMSW, Laurel House VP and Editor-in-Chief of www.rtor.org, presented at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons Cognitive Remediation in Psychiatry Conference.



Thank you donors whose support has sustained Thinking Well, a privately funded program, and allowed us to dedicate skilled resource for this critical evidence-based therapy: **The Dammann Fund; Fairfield County’s Community Foundation; First County Bank Foundation; Near & Far Aid; New Canaan Community Foundation; Rotary Club of New Canaan; St. Francis Episcopal Church.**

SUPPORTED EDUCATION

An evidence-based program, Supported Education provides the skill building and coping skills for individuals living with mental illness so they can reach their full potential and reintegrate into the community with renewed confidence. Laurel House intervenes as early as possible so the most debilitating effects of mental illness can be reduced. The program assists participants in choosing a post-secondary school or certification program, applying for admission and financial aid, selecting and enrolling in classes, and accessing on campus disability support services such as tutoring, writing centers and counseling services. Laurel House also makes arrangements for specialized tutors when needed.

Laurel House “follows the student” to the area school of his/her choice and has provided on campus support to students in 20 different colleges and post-secondary certification programs. Laurel House also has an onsite office at Norwalk Community College (NCC) where many Supported Education students choose to enroll because of the breadth of vocational programs, the lower cost of tuition and the significant level of scholarship assistance provided.

The Laurel House Supported Education Program achieved the highest rating category, Exemplary, for the second consecutive two-year review period. The Fidelity Review was conducted by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.



(L-R) Yazmin Ramos, Laurel House Supported Education Award recipient, and Katie Griffin, Supported Education Coordinator, attended the Annual Recognition Luncheon hosted by DMHAS, Laurel House and collaborating agencies. Yazmin studied General Studies at NCC and is now pursuing Psychology at Southern Connecticut State University.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

The Supported Employment program is also evidence-based and assists individuals living with serious mental illness in getting and retaining competitive jobs of their choosing (i.e., at competitive pay and not jobs set aside for those with disabilities). The successful model was developed and is assessed and monitored by the Dartmouth Psychiatric Research Center and the CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS). Laurel House has consistently achieved high rankings in quarterly measurements of percentage of jobs achieved, retention on the job and competitive pay.

Juenara Washington, HR Manager for Sodexo, with onsite services at Stamford Hospital, was a Keynote speaker at the annual Supported Employment and Education Recognition Luncheon hosted by DMHAS, Laurel House and collaborating agencies in southwestern CT. The event honors program participants who work hard to achieve their goals of competitive employment and post-secondary education and vocational certification. Juenara shared her perspective as an employer and encouraged the audience of program participants to remain resilient in the process of competitive employment.



(L-R) Supported Employment Counselor, Elizabeth Fouracre, LCSW, with Juenara D. Washington, HR Manager, Sodexo at Stamford Hospital.

Thank you Greenwich Department of Social Services for designating Laurel House as a Community Partner and providing sustained support to expand Supported Education in Greenwich and **The Community Fund of Darien** for Supported Employment salary support, allowing increased resource and minimizing a wait list for participants.



RESOURCES TO RECOVER

www.rtor.org (short for Resources to Recover) is a gateway website that provides guidance, support and best practice resources for recovery-oriented mental health care to families affected by mental illness. Resources to Recover promotes positive lifetime outcomes for people living with mental illness by building on the natural strengths and expertise of families.

The ultimate goal of the site and the quick access to expert resources contained therein is to shorten the cycle of discovery of expert mental health care alternatives, promoting successful early intervention.

Despite the availability of effective treatments, there are often long delays between the first onset of mental illness and the beginning of seeking and receiving treatment. With the proper care and treatment 70 - 90% of those dealing with mental illness experience a significant reduction in symptoms and an improved quality of life.



FY2016 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Unique users of the site: 111,038
- Users who are 18 - 35: 38%
- Users who are female: 81.1%
- Social media impressions: 692,836
- Total requested outreach and cases served: 417

In 2015, rtor.org qualified for an in-kind grant from Google for \$120,000 a year in free “pay per click” advertising. In March 2016 www.rtor.org met Google’s milestones to qualify for its Grantspro program. An application to secure the increased advertising was approved by Google in May, increasing the free advertising budget fourfold to \$480,000 a year. This free advertising is a major achievement for rtor.org, which should result in 3 - 4 times the traffic to the site in the coming year.

Family-Endorsed Providers

www.rtor.org is a **free** resource that can be accessed in the privacy of one’s home, available 24/7, helping remove barriers to treatment. It provides informative blogs and an online Directory of 43 (and growing) Family-Endorsed Providers and Programs. A full-time clinical Resource Specialist answers calls and emails as requested by visitors to the site, helping families understand the sometimes daunting mental health care system to locate the best treatments and providers for their loved ones.



Associate Editor Veronique Hoebeke (L) and Resource Specialist Denise Vestuti, LCSW, present rtor.org capabilities at the Family Seminar Series.

Thank you Max J. and Winnie S. Rosenshein Foundation and Round Hill Community Church for funding a portion of the Resource Specialist’s salary; **Oak Foundation** for its significant 2 year grant, allowing dedication of resource and improvements of site capability.

VOLUNTEERS

Power of One Award Winner, **Nancy Fahey** Food Service, Tutor and Development

The Power of One Award was presented to outstanding volunteer, Nancy Fahey at a recognition dinner in June. Nancy has tutored students in the Supported Education program, helped conduct 4 annual fundraising events, and can be found each week assisting in lunch preparation and food service in the Resource Center Café.

Laurel House created this annual award and tribute to publicly recognize a volunteer who has given selflessly to support Laurel House and its program participants.

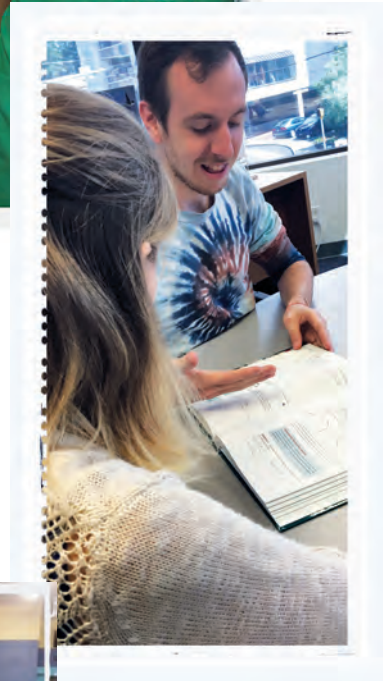
“Laurel House is an exceptional organization and I am proud to be a part of it. I’ve developed close relationships with so many of the program participants and look forward to the time I spend with them each week.” – Nancy Fahey



Tutoring, Supported Education program

“I enjoy being able to teach the Laurel House Education participants because I love being able to see the lightbulb go off in their heads when they truly grasp a problem that they didn’t previously understand. Also, I enjoy when the Laurel House Education participants point out a different way of solving the same problem. This not only lets me know they understand it, but shows me a new, different way to teach it to the next person.”

– Volunteer, Geoffrey Saunders



Treasure Hunters thrift store

“I want to help out in this community. I am an International student at UCONN and I feel a responsibility to help others. The program participants here at the store become familiar... like a family. It’s a feeling of home here at Laurel House.”

– Volunteer, Sam Zang



Thank you St. John’s Community Foundation for funding food service operating costs, making nutritious fare and free dining for special events possible.



HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

A Letter of Gratitude from a Laurel House Resident

Thank You for Our Home. It went downhill so fast - losing my father, our home, then an apartment, and finally becoming homeless. Together Tucker, my golden retriever, and I helped my father through his final years living with Alzheimer's. Upon my father's death, my ongoing depression turned to despondence. I sold the house and the business in Greenwich that I shared with my father for years but then unknowingly invested the proceeds with a dishonest investor.



Together we weathered the financial storm of losing the little money I had left. I was able to forestall eviction from my apartment by representing myself in court with information learned in the Stamford Law Library. Meanwhile I applied for benefits and food stamps with the help of Greenwich Social Services.

But then the inevitable, Tucker and I became homeless and the odyssey began of living in my truck and depending on my resourcefulness and the kindness of others. I became expert at filing applications for housing everywhere I could. Since Tucker was sensitive to the heat in the summer months, I even crafted a contract for Tucker (who is registered as an Emotional Support Animal) with a foster home that gave me free access to him and fully restored my ownership when I found a suitable place for us to live.

During the many months in the process, I learned patience and humility, among other traits that would be beneficial to me in the future. I spent part of my day volunteering at my church's thrift store, made regular use of public libraries and kept appointments with social workers who were trying to improve my situation. Laurel House offered me the services of their Resource Center including support to find employment, a welcoming environment to have a meal and Treasure Hunters, a thrift store, until the residential counselors were able to provide appropriate housing.

One lucky day in late October, I got the call that would allow Tucker and me to live together again. Mutual Housing Authority and Laurel House provided the apartment and the support services for a new one bedroom apartment, with rent based on just one third of my disability income. The Stamford Campus of the Stanwich Congregational Church of Greenwich and Laurel House furnished my apartment and even included pots, pans and utensils.

When I was given the keys by the landlord I couldn't believe it. Tucker ran up the stairs, explored, then chose a place to rest - perfectly content. As for myself, I simply knelt down on the new carpet and offered a prayer of thanks. Since then I have been in the able hands of Laurel House counselors for residential and for employment support. I am making good use of all the tools available to me at the Laurel House Resource Center, with a goal to not only find the right job for me but to one day eliminate the need for foodstamps and disability payments.

With enormous gratitude to all who made my new life and renewed dignity possible, Daniel S. and Tucker the Dog



Members of the Stanwich Congregational Church South End campus collected and helped move donated furniture into Laurel House program participants' apartments.



Thank you Connecticut State Non-Profit Grant Program for the renovation of 12 residential bathrooms; **First Congregational Church of Greenwich** and **New Canaan Artisans** for client financial assistance in Housing, Employment, Education; **Gordon Family Foundation** for funding weekend outings for Laurel House housing residents.



Congressman Jim Himes visited a Mental Health First Aid Training class hosted by Laurel House in November.

ENGAGING IN THE COMMUNITY

The Laurel House team spends significant time in the eight communities we serve, meeting program participants where they live, go to school, work and socialize. We facilitate access to mental health services and stimulate conversations with local organizations, Houses of Worship and collaborative agencies, giving visibility to available services and advocating for the cause of mental health recovery.

Jon Eisner, Laurel House Artist, at the Loft Artists holiday event.



Laurel House Artists' work on display at The Inn at Waveny in New Canaan.



The Grace Notes of Greenwich performed in our Resource Center Café in May.

Thank you to the organizations and Houses of Worship who have taken the time to learn about Laurel House services by inviting our team to their locations or who have visited and toured Laurel House: **Darien:** First Congregational Church of Darien, Darien Clergy Association, St. John's Roman Catholic Church; **Greenwich:** Round Hill Community Church, St. Barnabas Episcopal Church; **Norwalk:** Grace Baptist Church, St. Paul's on the Green Episcopal Church; **Westport:** Green's Farms Church, Temple Israel; **Stamford:** Church of the Archangels, Jewish Family Services, St. Francis Episcopal Church, St. John's Episcopal Church, Stamford Clergy Group, Stanwich Congregational, Temple Beth El, Union Memorial Church, Unitarian-Universalist Church.

On April 2nd, Laurel House held its annual Dinner Dance. Sigurd H. Ackerman, M.D., President and Medical Director of Silver Hill Hospital was honored as the Laurel House 2016 Champion for Recovery. The event was held at the Stamford Yacht Club, where over 200 guests enjoyed cocktails, dinner, dancing and a silent auction.

Thank you to all of our friends and donors for supporting our work in mental health recovery and making the evening a success.



2016 Laurel House Town Champions (L to R):
 Greenwich, William W. Galvin III;
 Darien, Susan Marks;
 New Canaan, Judy Bentley;
 Stamford/Westport, Ross Burkhardt;
 Norwalk, David Levinson, Ph.D.



Champion for Recovery Honoree,
 Sigurd H. Ackerman, M.D.
 and his wife
 Cecelia McCarton, M.D.



FAMILY SEMINAR SERIES

On October 5th, Laurel House hosted Kevin Breel, a 21-year old mental health activist, at a public service event in the General Re Auditorium at UCONN Stamford. 200 young adults, family members and friends benefited from Kevin's open discussion of his personal struggle with depression. The presentation supported Laurel House's core purpose of early intervention and remediation, social inclusion and recovery.



Laurel House also held three free seminars in the month of October which were open to family members and clinicians interested in the subject matter. These sessions provided a forum for families to meet and engage with other family members and to learn about topics relevant to their loved ones' mental health recovery. Subject matter experts engaged with the audience in the three sessions.



Dialectical Behavior Therapy
Denise Kearns, RN
Silver Hill Hospital



Disability Estate Planning & Conservatorship
Attorney Patrick Poeschl
Nemchek & Poeschl



Co-Occurring Disorders
Jeremy Barowsky, MD
Greenwich Psychiatrist

NO LETTING GO - DARIEN

On May 3rd, Laurel House partnered with The Community Fund of Darien and Darien Library to offer a free screening of No Letting Go, a film following one family's journey as they discover that their child suffers from a mental health disorder. Randi Silverman, the film's writer and producer, led a Question and Answer session following the screening for the 100 guests in the audience.

Thank you to our co-sponsors



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 Laurel House employee of 16 years and dedicated
 social worker for nearly 30 years

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TANGO - The Alliance for Non-Profit
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Union Baptist Church
Union Memorial Church
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IN-KIND DONORS

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Agora Spa
Linda Autore
The Avon Theater
Back 40 Mercantile
Bare Burger
Beardsley Zoo
Beldotti Bakery
Jay and Tina Boll
Bravo TV
Dom and Dawn Bria
Brooks Brothers
Callari Auto Group
Captain Carl
Chelsea Piers Connecticut
Clay Health Club and Spa
Coalhouse Pizza

Conair Corporation
Connecticut Business Systems
Connecticut Cigar Company
Curtain Call
Darien Butcher Shop
Darien Sport Shop
Design within Reach
Dolce Norwalk
Empy's Day Spa
Enzo Riccobene Salon
Kelly Evans
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Fleet Feet Stamford
Frank Pepe's Pizza
Godiva
Green and Tonic
Half Full Brewery
Congressman Jim Himes

Horseneck Liquors and Wines
Hotel Zero - Stamford
Interplast, Inc.
Jack Rogers, USA
JetBlue
The Joyce Theater
Joyride Cycling Studios
Juliska
Kramer Portraits
Long Ridge Tavern
Magellan Jets
The Mark Twain House & Museum
Stamford Marriott Hotel
Landfall Navigation
Captain Henry E. Marx
Jo-Ann and Bill McCann
Mike's Organic Delivery
Mish Mosh

Mystic Seaport
New England Air Museum
Liz Parker
Peter Suchy Jewelers
Philips Lighting
Pinot's Palette Stamford
Posh Nail and Spa
Pure Barre Darien
Pure Barre Greenwich
The Rachael Ray Show
Stephanie Raia and
Peter Appleby
Chitra Ramcharandas
Richards of Greenwich
Salon Mimoza
Shades Shutter Photography
Splash Car Wash

Stamford Downtown Special
Services District
Stamford Florists
Patricia Swasey
Teddy's Transportation System
Terra Ristorante
Tissot Swiss Watches
Threads and Treads
Tip Top Nail
Total Wine & More
Two Roads Brewery
Venture Photography
Vermont Good Wood
Vineyard Vines
Webster Bank
Wüsthof-Trident of America, Inc.
Yale Peabody Museum

PROGRAM AND OPERATING EXPENSE GRANTS

The Community Fund of Darien
Supported Employment
The Dammann Fund, Inc.
Thinking Well - program costs
Fairfield County's Community Foundation
Thinking Well - program costs
First Congregational Church of Greenwich
Client Financial Assistance – Housing, Employment, Education
First Stamford Bank Foundation
Thinking Well - program costs

Google Ads
www.rtor.org
Greenwich DSS
Supported Education
Near & Far Aid
Thinking Well - program costs
New Canaan Artisans
Client Financial Assistance – Housing, Employment, Education
New Canaan Community Foundation
Thinking Well - program costs

Oak Foundation
www.rtor.org
Max J. and Winnie S. Rosenshein Foundation
www.rtor.org
Rotary Club of New Canaan
Thinking Well - software costs
Round Hill Community Church
www.rtor.org
St. Francis Episcopal Church
Thinking Well - software costs
St. John's Community Foundation
Food Service

Laurel House, Inc. & Friends of Laurel House, Inc.
Summary Income & Expense For Years Ended June 30, 2014, 2015, 2016

	FY 2016	FY 2015	FY 2014
Revenues:			
Public Funding	\$1,723,981	\$1,690,662	\$1,703,537
Private & Other Revenue Sources:			
Rent, Thrift Shop, Services, Cafeteria	314,979	342,916	371,534
Private Funding	772,667	597,828	492,768
Total Revenue	2,811,627	2,631,406	2,567,839
Expenses:			
Salaries and Benefits	1,799,828	1,648,354	1,642,021
Operating Expenses	562,872	607,671	641,270
Development & Marketing	93,361	117,080	128,637
Interest	38,840	39,714	44,913
Total Expenses	2,494,901	2,412,819	2,456,841
Change in Net Assets	\$316,726	\$218,587	\$110,998
	% of Revenues	% of Revenues	% of Revenues
Public Funding	61.3%	64.2%	66.3%
Private & Other Revenue Sources:	38.7%	35.8%	33.7%

Sources of Private Funding
Individuals 58%
Corporations 8%
Foundations 34%

FY 2016 Direct Services
 Laurel House provided direct services to **793 individuals and 209 families**

Psychosocial Services
 484 individuals received services in: recovery planning, skill building, advocacy, peer support; participated in workshops; enjoyed meals and nutritious snacks in the Cafe, as well as at picnics, outings, dances and other Laurel House social programs

Thinking Well (Cognitive Remediation)
 90 participants; 97% had positive functional outcomes (e.g., job, school); 88% who completed sessions and took post-assessment achieved statistically significant improvement in at least one cognitive domain; 67% in two or more domains

Supported Employment
 121 participants; 65% competitively employed; 75% retained jobs after 6 months

Supported Education
 68 participants; 44 enrolled in college (2 Master's, 8 Bachelor's, 30 Associate's) and vocational certification

Housing and Residential Services
 88 individuals received housing and support services

CONNECTICUT COMMUNITIES SERVED

Darien
Greenwich
New Canaan
Norwalk
Stamford
Weston
Westport
Wilton



Art by Laurel House Artist Jon Eisner

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