



# Fall / Winter Newsletter 2021



30 Harrison Avenue, Branford, CT 06405 - [www.communitydiningroom.org](http://www.communitydiningroom.org) - 203.488.9750

# Community Dining Room

## A Letter from the Executive Director

Fall and Winter are upon us, and I sit here and write this letter to all of you with great gratitude and hope. Thanks to the incredible support of all our community partners, volunteers, and donors we continue to get through some difficult times.

Thus far, we are so thankful that food insecurity has not yet risen to the extreme levels projected with additional benefits having been provided for those greatly impacted by the pandemic, but by no means do we not still have hunger issues on the shoreline. Things may begin to take the turn we foresaw some time ago. Rising food and gas prices will begin to cause an additional strain on folks who are already struggling to afford basics like rent and needed prescriptions. Certain benefits and moratoriums being lifted may also have a strong influence on economic challenges for many as well.

The Community Dining Room has been taking a hard look on what we think will come and are preparing to expand our services and resources to aide our neighbors in need as these struggles become a reality for many through initiatives in our new strategic plan. We hope to continue to build solutions that will truly allow us to be the change in our community, and further decrease food-insecurity rates.

Help us get there! Volunteer, donate, get involved. We can accomplish this together.

Judith Barron

Executive Director

CDR is participating in Giving Tuesday on November 30th , 2021.

Please visit:

[www.communitydiningroom.org](http://www.communitydiningroom.org) to donate.

Come see us for Happy Hour, make a donation, & play some

trivia at Stoney Creek Brewery from 5 - 8 PM.



*"Do your little bit of good where  
you are;*

*It's those little bits of good put together  
that overwhelm*

*the world."*

*~ Desmond Tutu*



## Ways to reach us:

### Follow us on Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/CommunityDiningRoom06405](https://www.facebook.com/CommunityDiningRoom06405)

### Contact us via email or phone: 203.488.9750

- ◆ Judith Barron (Executive Director) Ext. 4  
[jbarron@communitydiningroom.org](mailto:jbarron@communitydiningroom.org)
- ◆ Diana Vaicunas (Administrative Support) Ext. 3  
[info@communitydiningroom.org](mailto:info@communitydiningroom.org)
- ◆ Andrea Savino (Volunteer/Program Coordinator) Ext. 2  
[volunteercoordinator@communitydiningroom.org](mailto:volunteercoordinator@communitydiningroom.org)
- ◆ Mary Johnston (Kitchen Coordinator) :  
[kitchencoordinator@communitydiningroom.org](mailto:kitchencoordinator@communitydiningroom.org)



## Words from our staff:

Happy Fall,

Since beginning Community Dining Room in May 2021, I have had the pleasure of meeting and working with some of the most amazing volunteers. Although COVID put us in a place of uncertainty, we were still able to accomplish many goals and plan to continue them throughout the remainder of the year.

This year we improvised and used our parking lot for our Tuesday Family Dinner Night where we were able to hold many events this summer including a 4<sup>th</sup> of July party, Kids paint night with Fired Up, and Curious Creatures. In addition, we completed a very successful Healthy Snack Pack initiative and Backpack Program distributing over 140 backpacks to Branford students, public schools, and the Branford Counseling Center. A special thank you goes to Read to Grow for their continuous support in providing free books during family night. CDR also collaborated with Unite CT and ESDHD to provide additional resources for the shoreline community. We are continuing with our additional programs to end 2021 on a high note. Our annual CDR Holiday Gift Program begins in October followed by a special gift program for our Homebound participants.

Thank you so much for the tremendous valuable work you have done for CDR! Your dedication is essential to the work that we do, and we cannot do it without you. We would not want to do it without you. You bring endless generosity, ideas, and positive energy to the organization.

We are always looking for new volunteers to join our team so tell a friend and we welcome back any returning volunteers. Our volunteer trainings are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month going forward. If you would like to attend one of our trainings, please contact me from 8:30 am to 2:30 pm Monday through Friday at (203) 488-9750, Ext. 2 or [volunteercoordinator@communitydiningroom.org](mailto:volunteercoordinator@communitydiningroom.org).

We look forward to another prosperous year in 2022!

Andrea Savino, Volunteer and Program Coordinator

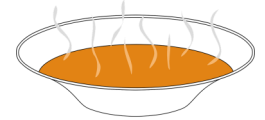
## Recipe from Mary the Kitchen Coordinator:

### Coconut-Based Butternut Squash Soup

**Yield:** 4 servings

**Ingredients:**

- 4 cups of peeled can cubed butternut squash
- 1(13.5oz) canned coconut milk
- 2 tsp diced raw ginger (or ¼ tsp ground ginger)
- ½ tsp Himalayan salt
- ¼ tsp ground black pepper
- ¼ tsp garlic powder



**Unique kitchen supplies needed:**

Large blender or immersion blender

**Directions:**

1. Fill a medium-large sauce pot 2/3 of the way with water. Bring to boil.
2. Peel and chop butternut squash (remove seeds).
3. Carefully add chopped squash and boil until tender (around 10-15 minutes). You can check if squash is ready by piercing with a fork, if it's soft it's ready.
4. Clear your sink, take out the plug and place colander/strainer in sink.
5. Carefully strain the squash away from you, by pouring into the strainer.
6. Add the cooked squash into the blender.
7. Add 13.5 oz can of coconut milk (start with less and add more to your desired consistency).
8. Season with ginger, salt, pepper, and garlic.
9. Blend until smooth.
10. Taste, adjust, then serve.

Lauren Mitchell-Dailey / Fillyourcup.org

## Our Services:

### Weekly Meal Schedule

Sunday-Friday: 12:00 - 1:00 PM

Saturday: 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

### Tuesday Family Dinner Night

5:30 - 6:30 PM

### Wednesday & Friday Night Take-Out

(pre-registration required) / Pick up from 1 - 3 PM

Call 203.488.9750 Ext. 2

All meals provided are to-go only at this time

### HOME DELIVERY MEAL SCHEDULE

Monday / Wednesday / Friday (Branford)

Wednesday (North Branford)

Information on Home Delivery 203.488.9750 Ext. 2

## Thank you to our 2021 Grant Funders

Act II Thrift Shop

Nancy & Thomas Patton

Harry H. Johnson Fund

Mary E. Davis Fund

Bruce & Terri Alpert

Home Instead

Barabro Family Charitable Fund

Stop & Shop

Maura Whelan

Harvard Pilgrim Health

Community Foundation of GNH

Connecticut Food Bank

Town Fair Tire

Evans-Cockerline Foundation

Eversource

The Swedish Aid Society

The Guilford Foundation

Branford Community Foundation

Carol Bailey and Laurie Desmet

Homemaker Thrift Shop

United Way of GNH

Eva & Michael Brown Charitable

Seedlings Foundation

Timothy & Melissa Geelan

Reid Walker Giving Fund

Archdiocese of Hartford

CarMax Foundation

St. Georges Men's Group

**Thank you to all those who individually donate throughout the year, monetarily or food donations!**