



Artist Danny Killion
with his sculpture
The Metal Man.

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Breaking Barriers,
Building Communities

Waterbury Alternative in the Community – A Job Well Done

THANK YOU SO MUCH

TO THE STAFF OF THE WATERBURY A.I.C.
THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU HAVE DONE FOR ME
YOU GIVE US A PLACE TO CALL HOME
SO THE STREETS WE DON'T HAVE TO ROAM
SOMETIMES WE EVEN GET A SWEET TREAT
BUT ARE GRATEFUL TO KNOW WE HAVE SOMETHING TO EAT
IF NOT FOR YOU I WOULD HAVE BEEN HOMELESS
BUT THANKS TO YOU THE FUTURE IS NOT HOPELESS
A PLACE WHERE OUR CLOTHES CAN GET CLEAN
WHERE WE ARE NOT INVISIBLE BUT CAN BE SEEN
SOMEWHERE TO GET OUR LIVES BACK ON TRACK
90 DAYS WHERE BILLS ARE OFF OUR BACK
IN OUR LIVES YOU HAVE A HUGE SHARE
BECAUSE IN YOUR HEART YOU TRULY CARE
PEOPLE WITH SUCH KIND HEARTS AND A OPEN MIND
YOU ARE TRULY ONE OF A KIND
WORDS CANNOT PROPERLY EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION
FOR THE ENTIRE WATERBURY AIC ORGANIZATION
I THANK GOD FOR PEOPLE LIKE YOU
FOR ALL THE KIND THINGS THAT YOU DO

Francis Wong

FOR ALL YOUR KINDNESS



Breaking Barriers, Building Communities

Dear Friends,

It is truly an honor to share Community Partners in Action's 2023 Annual Report with you! In less than two years, this incredible agency will celebrate its 150th anniversary, and plans are already underway.

CPA is one of the oldest organizations of its kind in the country, founded to champion criminal justice reform and advocate for preserving the dignity of those in and out of prison. During this past year, we focused on housing advocacy for our participants. One of the biggest struggles facing people returning to their communities after incarceration is safe and affordable housing.

Thanks to an Opioid Settlement grant from the City of Hartford, in June 2023, CPA opened a Hartford-based nine-bedroom transitional home for men. The home is named after Gordon S. Bates, CPA's Executive Director from 1980 – 1997. Gordon's Place provides temporary housing to men experiencing homelessness who are or have been justice-involved, with a history of addiction or mental illness. Each resident is required to participate in substance abuse/mental health programming, maintain employment and pay monthly rent. A CPA Housing Specialist serves as the point of contact for the men and works with each to develop a long-term housing plan so they can eventually live independently.

Another area of advocacy this past year included protecting the gains achieved from Clean Slate by holding state lawmakers accountable for the agreements made. Clean Slate is a CT state law that requires automatic erasure of certain state criminal convictions from one's record after a specific amount of time has passed. The erasure includes most misdemeanor convictions and most Class D, Class E, and unclassified felony convictions. The goal of Clean Slate is to make our communities safer, create new economic opportunities and growth, and help redress the long and enduring legacy of racial injustice in our criminal justice system.

The law became effective on January 1, 2023, but implementation was delayed due to technological challenges. I am pleased to report that the automatic erasure of eligible convictions began in January 2024. Many of our participants will benefit from the enactment of this legislation by no longer having to inform an employer or landlord about a previous conviction. This is a great start, but there is still much to do to remove obstacles that stand in the way of one's successful reentry.

In closing, I wish to thank the dedicated staff of CPA because, without their passion and commitment, our work would be impossible. Thank you to our Board of Directors for their guidance and to our funders and donors for believing people deserve a second chance and trusting CPA to carry out its mission.

May 2024 be a blessed year for all. 148 years and counting ...

Sincerely,



Beth Hines
Executive Director

ON THE COVER: Danny Killion,
Weathered Wood gallery owner and
Prison Arts alumni artist, with
his sculpture *The Metal Man*
commissioned by Old New-Gate
Prison and Copper Mine.



Raising Voices for System Reform

CPA staff at the CT Non-Profit Alliance rally at the CT State Capitol.

Citizens demanding change at the community and state level is essential for people who are justice-involved and facing barriers to improving their lives. This year, Community Partners in Action worked closely with our advocacy partners who passionately advanced legislative goals, securing milestones such as State ID accessibility for individuals leaving incarceration (H.B. 6875) and juvenile justice reform (SB 952).

Beyond legislative triumphs, CPA actively participated in impactful community events. Executive Director Beth Hines spoke at a gathering at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception Church in Waterbury, led by Jason Rinaldi, the Western Connecticut Manager for the Housing Collective. This event convened landlords, investors, and community leaders to address the housing challenges faced by justice-involved individuals due to criminal record-related rejections.

At the 54th New England School of Addiction and Prevention Studies Conference, CPA further emphasized compassion for justice-involved individuals with substance use disorders. Our

leadership shared how our collaborative reentry model prioritizes dignity, second chances, and humanizing language.

In a demonstration of collective advocacy, CPA played a pivotal role in the 2nd Annual State of Reentry Report, produced by Career Resources. Presented at the Legislative Office Building, the report utilized data from the Department of Correction (DOC) to raise awareness about the challenges faced by individuals transitioning from incarceration. The Report brought to light the importance of enhancing localized services and addressing gaps that promote successful reintegration and reduce recidivism.

CPA's commitment to amplifying community voices extended to Voter Education and Registration Workshops held at our programs. Presented by Full Citizens Coalition, the workshops resulted in 35 individuals registering to vote. Our Manchester Alternative in the Community Program (AIC) also organized an open house that targeted program referral sources, including probation and parole officers, and showcased the benefits of referring participants.

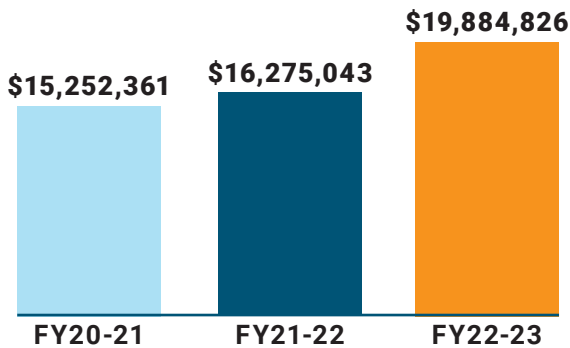
Financials

AUDITED FY 22-23, ENDING JUNE 30, 2023

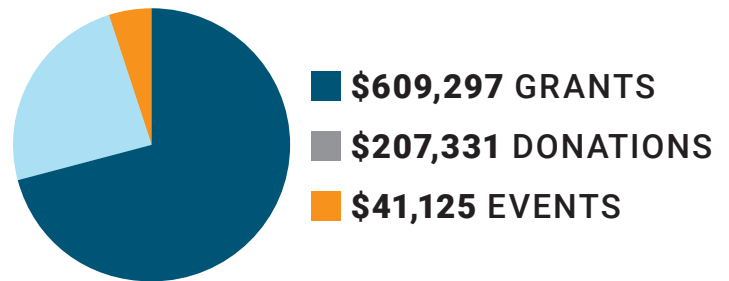
Community Partners in Action's partnerships with State agencies fund 91% of our services.

- ▶ Total Revenue: \$19,884,826
- ▶ Total Expenses: \$19,309,563
- ▶ 89% of our revenue supports direct services for participants.

REVENUE GROWTH



FUNDRAISING SOURCES*



*Excludes CT State contracts and multi-year grants

IMPACT OF YOUR SUPPORT

4,046 adults and youth participated in our **20** programs



6,352 people in our programs and the community were helped with housing & basic needs



22,400 people viewed art by 304 artists in the **PRISON ARTS PROGRAM**

7,332 community service hours completed in Greater Hartford

469 people helped with employment preparation, school, and finding a job

Committed to Building Stronger Communities



Ralph Monti, Main East Associates and CPA Supporter

Ralph Monti is a shining example of a person who understands the impact of non-profits. He owns Main East Associates, a commercial real estate investment firm, and is a partner with Diamond Roofing Specialists. A native of Waterbury, CT, Ralph owns many commercial properties throughout the city, and he makes it his priority to carve out affordable program space for several Waterbury-area non-profits.

But he is more than a real estate investor. For over 40 years, Ralph has been actively involved with several coalitions and organizations working on solutions to housing insecurity and barriers to successful reentry after prison. Those Waterbury-Area organizations include homeless shelters, food pantries, soup kitchens, housing and employment programs, and CPA's Alternative in the Community and Transitional Housing Programs. "I have a pretty good network with non-profit organizations that can assist people who are homeless," he said.

So, what drives his passion? "We all come from somewhere. We all come from humble beginnings," Ralph said. "You get what you give, and I have enough, so I do what I can, especially with the homeless populations." He also praises his wife, Susan, who supports his commitment to these causes.

Ralph said, "She always asks, 'How much do we need in our life?'"

Ralph is also a major donor to CPA, something he is happy to do. "When guys get out of prison, they still need help. I can see the progress with CPA programs, so my donations are money well spent," he said. "When I went to the first Celebrate! CPA Prison Arts fundraiser, it was fascinating meeting the artists, the ones no longer in prison. I consider their work to be just as important as reentry services, seeing them continue their art and showing what they are capable of doing."

Ralph truly believes partnerships between non-profits and local government are the key to building stronger communities. He is encouraged by the commitment of the Waterbury Mayor's Office to helping people who are homeless and those returning home after prison. Ralph said, "When a city is really committed, they say they are coming anyway, so we might as well make sure we have the right stuff in order to help them."



Leroy Moore
Ravi
Watercolor, shoestrings, and paper

Above inset: A mixed media piece from “CHOW: Prison Food Fantasies (& Realities)” exhibition for Celebrate! CPA Prison Arts 2023 event. Right: The 43rd Prison Arts Program Annual Show at Eastern Connecticut State University.



Fostering Understanding and Compassion through Art

In 2023, the CPA Prison Arts Program continued to be a testament to the transformative power of art, breaking down the walls of the prison and constructing bridges toward a more connected and empathetic future. Under the guidance of Program Manager Jeffrey Greene, the artists in the program used their creations to go beyond surviving inside prison walls – it became a way to connect to life beyond the bars.

The 43rd Prison Arts Program Annual Show, hosted at Eastern Connecticut State University, delved deep into the lives of participants and offered a platform for family, friends, and attendees alike to appreciate their work. The exhibition showcased 350 works of art crafted from various mediums that were exclusively accessible within the constraints of the prison environment. Each piece told a story of resilience, redemption, and self-discovery. These artists stepped out of the box, showing that creativity knows no bounds.

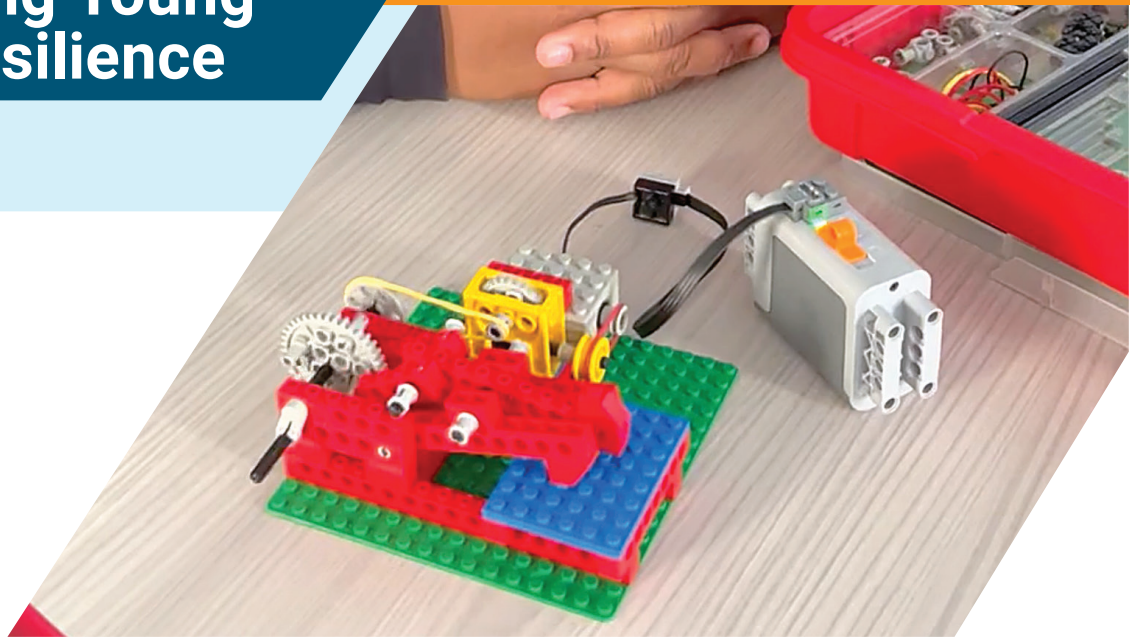
A defining moment for the Prison Arts Program unfolded at Central Michigan University during an exhibition titled “The Artist as Witness.” This event played a pivotal role in expanding the reach of the

artists, offering them a platform to share their work without any label other than being human. The artworks defied conventional expectations, each narrating a unique story of resilience, redemption, and self-discovery.

A highlight of the year was the “Celebrate! CPA Prison Arts 2023” event at TheaterWorks-Hartford. This fundraiser featured the reentry and food-themed play “Clyde’s” alongside the Prison Arts Program exhibition “Chow. Prison Food Fantasies (& Realities).” Crafted by CPA Prison Arts workshop participants in the Brooklyn, Osborn, and York Correctional Institutions, these works drew inspiration from the food served in prison mess halls. The imagery reflected the poignant memories of the artists’ last meal before incarceration and their dreams of the first meal upon release.

Heartfelt gratitude goes to the sponsors, donors, and attendees at Celebrate! 2023, who raised nearly \$70,000 for the Prison Arts Program. Beyond its financial impact, the success of this event underscored the indispensable role art plays in fostering understanding and compassion within and beyond the confines of prison walls.

Building Strong Young Minds and Resilience



In LEGO Engineering, a student at Hartford REGIONS created a drumming machine using levers.

CPA is committed to preventing youth from entering the adult criminal system. Our REGIONS Residential Treatment Programs are doing just that for high-risk youth who are on Juvenile Probation. The programs integrate therapeutic concepts into culturally diverse services provided in a home-like setting.

The in-program school, operated by Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES), allows the youth to work towards high school graduation while in the program or after they return home. ACES REGIONS uses creative approaches with the youth to learn about topics such as engineering, science, civics, and the humanities. For example, Students at Hartford REGIONS used LEGO elements to build simple machines to solve problems, such as bridges, drumming machines, and roller conveyors. At Hamden REGIONS, the youth discussed the genetic principles in the movie

“Jurassic Park” and the ethics of genetic engineering.

Social-emotional learning is a core component of REGIONS. The youth in Hartford REGIONS learned from the empowering documentary “Happy” that while 50% of happiness is attributed to genetics and only 10% is attributed to circumstances, 40% of happiness is due to intentional choices a person makes. At Hamden REGIONS, the youth developed weekly “Glows, Grows, and Goals” that range from personal growth to a personal accomplishment as simple as growing a beard.

Hamden REGIONS is garnering statewide and international attention for its quality and impactful services for its 14-to 18-year-old residents. Several prominent individuals have toured the program’s state-of-the-art facility, including CT Governor Ned Lamont, CT State Representative Toni Walker, and Per S Vague, Director of the Norwegian Correctional Services, working with UConn on criminal justice policy reform.

Participant Samuel Gonzalez
at the Waterbury Reentry
Welcome Center.



Breaking Down Barriers to Successful Reentry

Our Hartford and Waterbury Reentry Welcome Centers saw a significant growth, with 532 new people enrolled in the two programs between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023. As the number of people needing help grows, we also continue to add more services to help break down barriers for people with a criminal history.

Employment and career training services continue to expand at CPA. In 2023, nearly 350 people were assisted with employment preparation, training or placement. We now provide these services onsite at most of our programs statewide. Because of our strong relationships with workforce development partners, participants can prepare themselves for long-term employment at the same place where they receive other critical services.

One example is a man who enrolled in the Waterbury Reentry Welcome Center after spending nearly 40 years in prison. The Center helped him obtain his identification so he could apply for jobs, gave him

hygiene products and food gift cards, and provided store vouchers for clothes. The participant took part in an on-the-job manufacturing training program offered by the Manufacturing Alliance Service Corporation (MASC). He also completed his OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) training and now works for a construction company.

To help address the housing shortage for people with a criminal record, we opened Gordon's Place, our first reentry home for men. Named after Gordon Bates, our former Executive Director in the 80s and 90s, the nine-bedroom home in Hartford provides safe and stable housing for men released from prison with a history of addiction, mental illness, or both. Our original reentry home, Mart's House, is a six-bedroom home for women we have operated for nearly 30 years.

CPA also partnered with the HomeWORKS Reentry Program in Waterbury, a Northwest Regional Workforce Development Board program.

Donor Acknowledgment

(FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2022 – JUNE 30, 2023)

Thank you for your generosity and believing in the potential for people to change their lives for the better.

FUNDERS

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Waterbury Reentry Welcome Center – City of Waterbury
WE RISE Together – Career Resources, Inc. and Capital Workforce Partners
Community Partners in Action (CPA) works with adults and youth in Connecticut, supporting their transition from life in the criminal justice system to life in the community and the workforce. We are committed to participants having the right to work, an adequate standard of living, and physical and mental health services.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS IN ACTION

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