



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

February 2023



"The people you love deserve to hear it."



Malanda Jean Claude

News and Information for Everyone

Connecticut is one of 10 states in the U.S. that are "bottle bill" states. Bottle bills, also known as container redemption programs, may have slightly different provisions in each state, but essentially, they work by charging a small deposit on a container at the time of purchase which is then returned to the consumer when the empty bottle is returned.



On August 2, 2022, Connecticut's Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) Commissioner Katherine Dykes released an order in light of the upcoming changes to the bottle bill statute, including the expansion to new types of covered beverages on January 1, 2023, and the increase in the deposit from \$0.05 to \$0.10 beginning January 1, 2024. The Order would allow for the use of the words "Redemption Value" or the abbreviation "CTRV" on labels to signify that they can be redeemed for \$0.05 prior to January 1, 2024, and \$0.10 beginning on January 1, 2024. The purpose of the Order is to minimize disruption to product distribution and avoid any potential supply chain disruptions that could harm small retailers and consumers.



Event Calendar

President's Day
Monday, 2/20/23
Office will be Closed

Board Meeting
Tuesday, 2/21/23
Quarry Heights
Community Room

Main Office (860) 342-1688

Carol Diaz, ext. #110
Administrative Housing
Assistant

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Susan Nellis, ext. #113
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Coordinator

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Holly Kobayashi, ext. #115
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Dan Rafaniello, ext. #112
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Jeffrey Costa, ext. #114
Maintenance Staff
jcosta@portlandha.org

For Maintenance Emergencies
Call: 860-519-3251

PART IV Recycling Tips for Glass, Metal, and Plastic

In case you didn't know, Connecticut has a universal list of what belongs in your recycling bin and what doesn't. All items must be empty, rinsed, clean, and open. Do not shred, box, bag, or bundle. To learn more, go to recyclect.com or contact Portland Public Works at (860) 342-6733.



What's In		What's Out
Glass	Beverage bottles/jars and food bottles/jars	Ceramic mugs and plates and drinking glasses
Metal	Aerosol containers (food grade only), aluminum foil, cans and bottles, foil containers, and metal lids from cans and bottles	Aerosol containers (deodorizers, cleaners, pesticides, etc.), foil tops from yogurt containers, paint cans, pots and pans, small pieces of scrap metal, and spiral wound containers
Plastic	Plastic bottles (with or without caps attached), plastic containers, tubs, and lids, plastic one-use cups (no lids, no straws)	Loose bottle caps, plastic bags and wrap, plastic plates, bowls, and utensils, prescription bottles, single-use coffee containers, Styrofoam cups, containers, packaging peanuts, and water filters

Recycling News, submitted by Virginia Walton in *Neighbors*, January/February 2023

In a recent Greenpeace USA report, there was disheartening coverage about the state of plastics recycling in the United States. They did, however, neglect to mention that refill and reuse infrastructure could eliminate single-use and single-serve plastics. Did you know that almost all single-use and single-serve plastics such as plastic utensils, rigid Styrofoam, and condiment packets are trash? They are used for a short period of time but persist in landfills or as ocean and land litter. Why are we then using long-lasting material for short-term use especially when it cannot be recycled back into the same item like glass, paper, and metal can be?



Most of us assume chemicals and materials used to make packaging are safe. But the reality is that most single-use and single-serve packaging contains untested chemicals that can cause health impacts at low levels. Some entrepreneurs in pockets of the country are starting to change their packaging; however, we as individuals can contribute by nixing plastic utensils, straws, and condiment packets when ordering take out. We can eliminate a lot of waste by bringing our own bags, containers, and cups, and use washable items more often.

Hours of Operation

Monday-Thursday
8:30-4:30 p.m.

Friday
8:30-1:30 p.m.

Please call before visiting

Resident Corner

As you may notice in many newsletters, we have been highlighting some great happenings at Housing. If you would like to share anything (especially with a photo), feel free to reach out to Holly, RSC.



Energy Assistance: [Home - Operation Fuel](#)

(Submitted by Peter Millman in *Neighbors*, January/February 2023)

A worldwide surge in prices for heating oil, natural gas, and other fuels is expected to drive up the costs of heating your home. Eversource has estimated that the average home has seen an approximate increase of \$80/month on electric bills as of 1/1/23.



If funding promised by Governor Ned Lamont and Eversource come through, Operation Fuel will double the maximum amount of its heating assistance grants and raise its income limits to help more people manage record high prices. Operation Fuel intends to offer grants up to \$1,000 to heating customers earning up to the state median income – \$66,270 for an individual, and \$127,443 for a household of four. Operation Fuel began accepting applications for its winter heating assistance program on December 19, 2022.



Lamont announced last week that Eversource had committed to giving \$10 million of shareholder money to Operation Fuel. United Illuminating parent company Avangrid also agreed to pay Operation Fuel \$3 million to settle claims by state regulators that its electric and gas subsidiaries illegally tried to garnish customers' wages during a COVID-related state-wide moratorium on utility shut offs. Operation Fuel Executive Director Brenda Watson said that she had not received official confirmation of the additional \$13 million, but if it comes through as promised, it will allow the nonprofit to increase its grants from \$500, and raise its income limits from 80 percent of the state median income. The funds are a major boost for Operation Fuel, which was already seeing a significant increase in requests for help during its summer to fall season, when demand for its heating assistance is typically much lower than its winter to spring season. Without the additional money, Operation Fuel would have only about \$2.5 million to help heating customers from December to June, she said.



An Eversource spokesman told CT Examiner that the company is working with the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and the Office of Consumer Counsel on the details of how the funds will be distributed. Avangrid and the Office of Consumer Counsel last week agreed to settle claims from PURA that the company's collections practices during the COVID moratorium of utility shutoffs violated state law, for which regulators ordered Avangrid to pay \$4.48 million to Operation Fuel in November. Avangrid had appealed that fine before agreeing to pay \$3 million to Operation Fuel to resolve those claims. Consumer Counsel Claire Coleman said the settlement was meant to ensure the money went to help customers deal with high supply price increases coming this January, knowing Avangrid intended to keep fighting PURA's findings in an appeal that could have gone on for years. "We feel it's important to ensure that those who haven't experienced energy insecurity before but might be experiencing it this winter due to the supply prices, were able to obtain assistance," Coleman said.

More Tips for Fighting Fatigue in the Dark Days of Winter, Posted by Layla, Inc. 2023



Daylight savings in winter can throw sleep off for many of us, making it harder to get the rest we need for energy. But try to use the earlier evenings to your advantage and get more sleep! Make it easier to get out of bed without the "snooze" button by going to bed earlier. You'll increase your chance of undisturbed sleep, which is so important for fighting winter fatigue and tiredness, and truly resting.



It's harder to get sunlight in the winter, so increase your chances of exposure even when you are inside: whenever you are home during the day, open curtains and blinds to let in natural daylight as much as possible. Go for walks during your lunch break or in the morning before work. Get outdoors, especially on the weekends when there's often more time for it. Also, try to get some form of physical activity every day (bonus points if it's something outside). Late afternoon may be best, as it can reduce evening fatigue and improve sleep. Exercise is especially hard when you're feeling fatigued, but it can help you feel more energized!



Shorter days can increase the pressure to get more done in a smaller window of time. The added stress can make you feel more tired, creating a vicious cycle. Give yourself space to adjust to the new changes, and look for ways to add stress-reducing activities into your life such as meditation, yoga, reading a book, journaling, laughing, enjoying time with loved ones, etc.



Boost your energy and immunity this year by eating plenty of produce in the winter months. Eating well will also help you maintain a healthy weight. Being under- or overweight can affect energy levels and sleep. Look for healthy winter dinners you can make. Winter soups are great for getting in more veggies.



You might not feel like making a cold smoothie in the winter months, so reach for a healthy and filling warm breakfast instead—like oatmeal or porridge! It'll give you a great starchy and fiber-rich boost first thing in the morning to power through your day.



The holidays usually involve an increase in sweets and comfort foods. Enjoy the season but be mindful of how too much sugar affects you. Sugary foods might give you energy initially, but soon you'll crash and burn, making the winter fatigue worse.



Chatham Court News

2022 Income Tax Assistance Workshop: HRA of New Britain will be at Chatham Court on February 22, 2023, from 9:30-1:00 p.m. to help residents file 2022 taxes free of charge for that **GREAT REFUND**. Please register with Holly: 860-342-1688, ext. 115 so you can guarantee a spot for help with your income tax.



Upcoming Scholarships: Call Holly, your RSC, if you are already in college or graduating high school June 2023, planning on applying to college, and would be interested in applying for scholarships to assist you in financing your college experience.

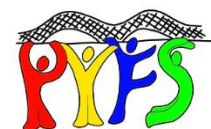
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Did you know all 12 Connecticut Community Colleges are merging to become CT State? Upon high school graduation, you will seamlessly become a CT State student effective Fall 2023 with the ability to use your financial aid, register for classes, and access services at any of the 12 campuses. PACT: Pledge to Advance CT funding covers the gap between federal and state grants you receive, and community college tuition and mandatory fees. To receive PACT funding, apply, register for classes (6+ credits), and fill out the FAFSA. Entry into the program will be accepted on a first-come first-served basis.

Fun in English/Spanish with Holly

If anyone would like to join in a coffee and gab session in both English and Spanish let Holly, your RSC, know. If there is a good sign-up, we can meet periodically to have fun in English and Spanish. Coffee and gab sessions will be entertaining with a new topic each meet.

Youth and Family Services (YFS)



YFS has an opening on their Advisory Board, and they are also looking for people for their Prevention & Wellness Council and Restorative Justice Teams. If interested, call Holly, RSC: (860) 342-1688, ext. 115 or Jessie of YFS directly: (860) 342-6758.

Portland Public Library

Drop-In Playdates

Thursdays at 10:30 a.m.
February 2, 9, 16, 23

Children ages 0-5 and their caregivers are invited to join us on Thursday mornings in February from 10:30-11:30 for an hour of socialization and open play with their story room toys.



Preschool Storytime

Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m.
February 7, 14, 21, and 28

Join the fun in the Wagner Room for stories, songs, and rhymes that encourage literacy and social skills and help get your preschooler prepared for kindergarten. They will offer a craft related to the weekly theme at the end of the program that can be done at the library or brought home. Registration is required and can be done through the website calendar: www.portlandlibraryct.org or by calling the library at 860-342-6770.

Happenings



A reminder for all, February school recess-no school
February 20, 2023-February 24, 2023.

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As of January 3, 2023, meals are no longer free for students. Parents who would like to see if their children qualify for reduced or free meals, check out the website:

[Free and Reduced Lunch Info | Portland Schools \(portlandctschoools.org\)](http://portlandctschoools.org)

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High School Graduation Requirement: To graduate high school in 2023, 2024, and 2025, students must fulfill a 32-hour community service requirement outside their home and family environment.

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Through community service work, PHS students develop real world skills while making an impact in their community. Giving their time voluntarily to an organization helps students develop leadership and problem-solving abilities and provides students opportunities to develop their time management and communication skills through collaboration with others. Through their work, students have the opportunity to help a specific cause, organization, or group in big and small ways. If your child needs to earn hours or has questions/concerns, reach out to the main office of Portland High School or Holly, RSC. For additional information, check out the website:



[Community Service 8-25-2021 \(1\).pdf - Google Drive](#)

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High School Résumé Preparation Importance:

If you plan to apply for jobs upon graduation or apply to college, you will need a résumé. Contact your guidance counselor for assistance or reach out to Holly, your RSC, who is also a professional résumé writer and can help you prepare a résumé that will “wow” college admissions departments or land you an interview for that dream job upon graduation.

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For Portland High School Parents and Students: You can access the full handbook online: [High School Student Handbook 2021-22 \(portlandctschoools.org\)](http://portlandctschoools.org)

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Through the link above, you can find out about school policies and student requirements, athletics, academic programs, extracurricular activities, grading, graduation requirements, services the school offers, and answers to any questions you may have.



Good News from Brian Curley, Portland’s First Selectman. The Town of Portland landed a grant of \$500,000 from the State of Connecticut to “fund repair on the defunct high school track.” Stay tuned.

Quarry Heights News

Medical Rides: The Senior Center provides rides to seniors and/or those with disabilities to doctor appointments. The fee for round-trip service is \$5.00 per person. Please try to give a 1 to 2 week notice for a ride but know that they will do their best to work with you. If you are unvaccinated, masks are required. (24-hour, advanced cancellation notice is greatly appreciated). If you cancel after the driver has left for your pick-up time, the \$5 fee must still be paid. For more information or to book a ride, call: (860) 342-6760.



Idea To Keep Busy

In the RiverEast News Bulletin, 12/23/2022, Lynn Tracey, Senior Center Director, mentioned another piece of the larger grant they received for renovations to the Senior Center. This \$19,000 will be used to revamp Senior Center's food service. As soon as renovations begin, they will be working with local restaurants to have them come up with menus for the Senior Center in the hope of serving between 15-18 grab-and-go restaurant-cooked meals. People will be able to sign up and get a fresh meal at least once/week. TBD



New Scam

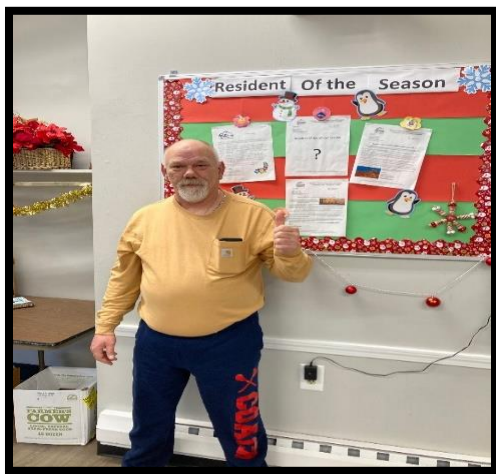
On behalf of the CT Department of Social Services: Staff and clients have begun reporting messages appearing to be from DSS regarding their EBT card and Renewal. These messages are scams, individuals should not call back the number listed on the text message. DSS has not yet started texting clients regarding renewals. If you receive a call or text, do not call or text the number back that asks for your card number and PIN as it is a scam and an attempt to steal your benefits.



Messages from DSS will only be sent from the BC (Benefits Center) Number, which is 1-855-626-6632 and will only direct individuals to www.mydss.ct.gov, and will contain their first name and the last 4 digits of the client id.



Quarry Heights Resident of the Season



Our winter award recipient, **Mark McKenzie**, was chosen for always looking out for others. When asked why he thought he was chosen to be our winter recipient, he stated he was very surprised! What we really know about Mark is that he helps whoever needs a hand especially those residents who are health or welfare at-risk. Mark loves when things go smoothly at Quarry Heights, but it really dismays him when he sees someone struggle. He has been assisting several residents with their garbage for a while now, helps another resident by filling her gas tank often, has lent a hand with more than 10 residents moving, donated furniture/purchased needed furniture for those in need, and moved furniture for others who have trouble lifting. These are just some of the worthy attributes Mark possesses. What other residents say about Mark is that he is kind, compassionate, and is always available to help others in need. Thank you, Mark, for caring so much about the residents of Quarry Heights.

Your friendship, concern, and care mean so much to all of us.

Quarry Heights Resident Corner



Maintenance has been cleaning unit hallways at Quarry Heights and they have noticed a tremendous amount of "stuff" in the hallways: boxes, bikes, tables, decorations, plants, etc. One of the resident obligations under the PHA lease is: to keep your dwelling (unit) in clean and safe condition. This includes **keeping front and rear entrances and walkways surrounding the unit free from hazards and trash**. Clogging up the hallways is not only a lease violation, but also, as per the Portland, CT Fire Marshall, a fire hazard. Please remove all items from hallways ASAP or they will be thrown out.

Quote of the Month

"Live each day as if your life had just begun."

Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

Happy Valentine's Day!