

Community Investment Report

August 2007

Community Impact

Here at the United Way of West Central Connecticut, all investments are about *improving lives*. Local people, like yourself, invest in our United Way and your investment stays local.

You can be assured that when you invest in the United Way of West Central Connecticut, your money is being used in the best possible way to benefit your community. Through United Way's community impact model, careful analysis at the community-level identifies needs that are specific to the communities we serve – Bristol, Burlington, Plainville and Plymouth.

Resources, both monetary and human, invested in United Way get leveraged with resources from other community partners to create collaborative, lasting changes that one organization could not achieve by itself.

We are a local organization, governed on the local level, supported by local investors, trying to bring about real and lasting change, right here where you live and work, because that's *what matters*.

community matters.™

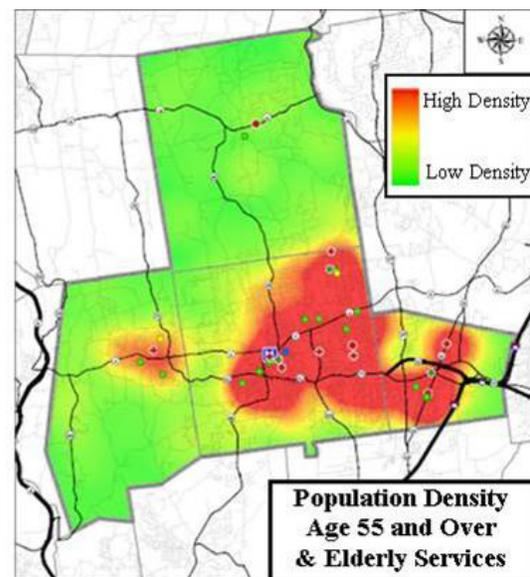
The United Way of West Central Connecticut's (UWWCC) second major initiative focuses on adults 55 years and older in Bristol, Burlington, Plainville and Plymouth.

UWWCC is focusing its efforts on accessing resources and outreach to homebound seniors - *"The United Way of West Central Connecticut is working with community partners to extend the time older adults can live safely in their homes by reducing isolation and increasing supportive services."*

Background

In order to properly address this important issue, the UWWCC gathered a group of local community leaders and senior service providers to form a Senior Advisory Committee. It was this group's charge to determine how to best use United Way and other community resources to impact the lives and health of older adults within its four communities.

From the 2000 Census data we know that nationally the fastest growing segment of the population is age 85 and older. Our research found that the same holds true here in Connecticut. Additionally, 21% of the population nationally is age 55 and older, and in Connecticut, that percentage is even larger at 22.7%. And in several UWWCC communities that percentage is higher than both the national and state averages.



**"Senior Needs Assessment:
Comprehensive Report, August 2006"**
can be downloaded on UWWCC's website
(www.uwestcentralct.org under Publications).

Turn over to find out more about the local
return on your investment



The Problems Are Clear:

Research was conducted in 2006 by the UWWCC Senior Advisory Committee and United Way of Connecticut's Community Results Center. This needs assessment included a survey mailed to a random sample of 5,000 residents ages 55 and older, focus groups with residents in each town, and interviews and focus groups with senior service providers. Findings of this research indicated that there are six major issues impacting seniors:

- **TRANSPORTATION** - While it varies among communities, many seniors are unable to access public transportation.
- **AFFORDABLE HOUSING** - There are limited options for seniors seeking one story homes, affordable apartments, assisted living & senior housing facilities.
- **HEALTH CARE** - Major needs in every community include the cost of health insurance & prescriptions, access to health care specialists & dental health information.
- **OUTREACH TO HOMEBOUND SENIORS** - Identifying & providing services to isolated seniors is a major concern to providers & seniors.
- **SOCIAL ISSUES** - Providing social & recreational activities is important to help maintain good health & well-being.
- **ACCESSING RESOURCES** - Seniors don't fully understand the resources available or how to find them, while providers want to help seniors use resources & advocate for themselves.

Three underlying problems are at the root of the issues mentioned above: 1) a lack of communication between agency service providers; 2) a need for a dedicated director of senior services in each community; and 3) a reluctance by seniors to ask for and take advantage of help available.

There is a Need for Quality Senior Services:

"Senior issues affect all of us. At some point in our lives we will care for an older relative or friend, and knowing where to go for information and support is critical." Shawn Cohen, Executive Director, Plainville Senior Center

"Isolation and depression are significant issues for seniors. For some, including many African-Americans, Latinos/as and Asian-Americans, care that respects cultural differences is hard to find, especially in residential settings. Part of the solution includes building supportive environments with culturally-appropriate services within a home setting, thus maximizing on-going family and community contact."

Laura Minor, Program Coordinator, SEHOP (Senior Emotional Health Outreach Program), Wheeler Clinic

We are Ensuring Success:

The United Way of West Central Connecticut is working with community partners to extend the time older adults can live safely in their homes by reducing isolation and increasing supportive services.

- In response to the need for providers of senior services to better communicate, the UWWCC has launched the Senior Provider Network. The Network convenes quarterly to talk and discuss issues of concern. After just two meetings, the Network agreed to work together to create a transportation resource guide for providers to help seniors.
- The UWWCC is convening a Senior Community Solutions Council that will identify and implement targeted local strategies to reduce isolation and increase services. Council representatives include Bristol Community Organization - Retired & Senior Volunteer Program * Bristol Hospital * Bristol Senior Center * City of Bristol - Bristol Community Services * Greater Bristol Visiting Nurse Association * Plainville Housing Authority * Plainville Senior Center * Town of Burlington * Town of Plymouth * United Way of Connecticut – 2-1-1 Infoline * Wheeler Clinic

BRISTOL ♦ BURLINGTON ♦ PLAINVILLE ♦ PLYMOUTH

Upcoming Events and Programs:

33rd Annual Golf Tournament
September 13, 2007
Chippabee Golf Club

Campaign Kick-Off
September 18, 2007

For more information:

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