



ISSUE 5 • DECEMBER 2024

WATERFORD COUNTRY SCHOOL

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

LOOKING BACK AT 2024

2024 has been a busy year! This year we've been able to serve over 382 families! We have 73 school students, have placed 55 foster children into homes, had 84 kids come to summer camp, and we've rescued over 200 animals.

This year we continue to update many of our school buildings to better serve our kids. We've put in a new playground, built an animal pen for the Quality Parenting Center, built a pizza oven, and continue to do much more to make improvements and modernize our facilities. As the needs of our families and community change, we are determined to grow to meet those needs.

Our 2024 fundraiser to house Paulie the Peacock and his family was a huge success. Our peacock residents are enjoying their new pen. We had a sell-out crowd at our annual golf tournament in September, and over 650 people came to enjoy Family Fun Day on the Farm in October! Our students grew a wonderful garden and used many of the vegetables in our kitchen. We also utilized our new pizza oven to use the tomatoes grown by our students to make sauce for some very yummy pizza!

We are eagerly planning for fun happenings for this coming year - keep an eye out for more exciting news to come!

THIS ISSUE

LOOKING BACK AT 2024
PAGE 01

HOLIDAY GIVING
PAGE 02

THANK YOU TO BETH CAMASSAR
PAGE 03

NEW DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE CHAIR
PAGE 03

GOLF TOURNAMENT
PAGE 04

STAFF HIGHLIGHT
PAGE 05

FAMILY FUN DAY
PAGE 06



Calendars ARE HERE!

\$20 donation

Contact Development
860.442.9454 x4106



Consider End of Year Giving

December 31st is the last day to donate for 2024 tax deductions; consider increasing your charitable giving to lower your taxes. You can make your money work harder for good with smart and simple financial strategies. In fact, you may find that you can increase your giving by 20 percent or more—without feeling it in your bank account. Try setting funds aside for giving so it is a part of your budget. You may also make use of smart giving strategies such as:

- Contributing appreciated assets, such as stock
- “Bunching” your charitable donations
- Going beyond traditional charitable giving and trying out impact investing
- Using a charitable giving vehicle like a donor-advised fund
- Qualified Charitable Distribution – if you are required to take a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) you may donate and make that RMD tax free

Take some time to research the options and speak to your tax advisor to see if you can make your giving dollars stretch further.



How To Maximize Your End-Of-Year Giving!

860-442-9454 x4107 

waterfordcountryschool.org/development 

FAMILY CARE WISH-LIST



FOR ONGOING SUPPORT OF OUR FAMILIES, CONSIDER A GIFT CARD DONATION

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Target | Dick’s Sporting Goods |
| Walmart | Game Stop |
| Amazon | Apple Store |
| Google Play | Moe’s |
| 5 Below | Subway |
| Stop & Shop | Wendy’s |
| Gas Cards | Burger King |
| Regal Theater | McDonald’s |
| Finish Line | Jersey Mike’s |
| Burlington Coat Factory | Dairy Queen |

PLEASE SEND GIFTS TO THE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT



Beth Camassar - a Heart of Gold

For more than 15 years, Beth Camassar, a board member and long-time supporter of Waterford Country School, has been the Development Committee Chair. She recently resigned from her position as Chair of the Development Committee. We are grateful that Beth will continue to contribute her wisdom and dedication to our Board of Directors. Beth's leadership as chair has brought in over \$750,000 for the organization thanks to individual donors, event sponsors, and friends and family at annual events. In addition, she has been the welcoming greeter at Family Fun Day each year, greeting guests to the farm, and has fulfilled multiple other roles during this time.

Although she's stepped down as committee chair, she'll remain involved in Development. As we continue to follow the path laid out by Beth on the Development Committee, we wish to say THANK YOU!



Marjorie Dedrick Takes the Reins as our Development Committee Chair



The Development Committee welcomes Marj Dedrick, a WCS Board member, as its new Chair. The Development committee supports special projects through fundraising and ensures the agency's financial health.

Marj's new position as Committee Chair leverages her years of experience in Development and management. As Chief Development Officer for the Connecticut Rivers Council and Boy Scouts of America, she demonstrates strong leadership. Marj's previous positions include Development Director of Safe Futures (2000-2008) and Director of Design at Lindsay Liebig Roche Architects, New London. She has a long history of involvement in Southeastern Connecticut. She served on the Board of Directors of the Eastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce, was a member of the Southeastern Connecticut Women's Network where she served on the Board of Directors and as President (1994) and was a member of the New London Rotary from 1996-2013, a Paul Harris Fellow, and a member of the Executive Board. She is a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) and the Center for Professional Development, Division of the Connecticut Association of NonProfits.

We are very grateful to have Marj on our Team!

BRING YOUR MOJO

“Bring Your Mojo” Golf Tournament

The 14th Annual “Bring Your Mojo” Golf Tournament was our best yet!

WCS holds an annual golf tournament to raise funds for the agency. From the beginning, dedicated supporter Scott Gladstone has been the Committee’s leading Chair member. This year’s 14th annual “Bring Your Mojo” Golf Tournament had a fantastic turnout of supporters and golfers.

On September 19th, the Great Neck Country Club in Waterford hosted 140 enthusiastic golfers for a day of fun. And a fun day is exactly what they had! Participants enjoyed a beautiful golf course setting, raffle prizes, and a delicious steak and lobster dinner.

Held each year in memory of Gary Saunders (a founding WCS family member who passed away January 27, 2011), this event always sells out. Gary dedicated his life to Waterford Country School’s mission, and this golf tournament honors his life and legacy. It has raised over \$1,000,000 since it’s inception.

This year’s golf proceeds supplied:

- free book fair for kids
- Founders Fair
- school field trips
- student jobs
- camp scholarships
- bowling and golf clubs
- holiday help for families
- recreational supplies for STAR
- future equine therapy needs



JOIN THE WCS MOJO CREW!



860-442-9454 x4106



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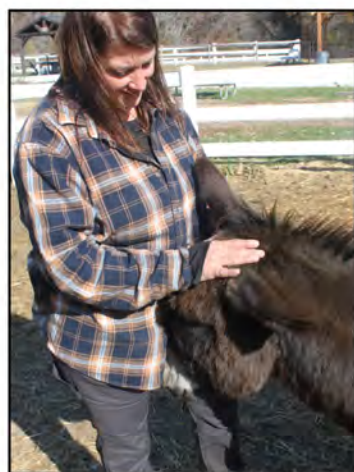


Staff Highlight: Tina Cote



Tina Cote has been here for 28 years, and we're so grateful to have her! She started as a volunteer in the Residential Summer Program while in college and never left! Tina was studying social work with an interest in working with children and youth when she found WCS.

Tina has always been a helper. As a young girl, she would regularly bring injured or sick animals home to nurse them. Despite her mother pleading with her to "leave nature outside", Tina kept on trying to save all of the wildlife she found. Upset when it didn't work out, as she didn't really know how to care for animals at that time, she still never gave up and kept trying and learning.



The work Tina does at WCS reflects the love she has for both children and animals, and the positive interactions that happen between the students and animals really bring her passions together.

When asked to pick a favorite of the WCS's animals, she's unable to contain her answer to just one. She loves them all, but does have a special place in her heart for Wilbur the pig and his silly personality, Lincoln the draft horse and his gentle nature, Finn the goat for his energy, and Elvis the lop eared rabbit, who is sweet and cuddly-soft.



Having had the opportunity to be mentored by quite a few of our dedicated staff members, Tina loves to learn and is always finding new ways grow as a staff member to help all of those around her. Among others, Bill Martin and Rick McPherson were the biggest influencers of her career at WCS. Tina says, "Both of them believed in me and made me feel very confident about working here. Bill starting in the early days of my career here in the shelter all the way through my current position. Bill was always supportive and had a way of making you feel special."

"Rick had such a great talent working with the animals and students and passed these skills on to Ben, who is very supportive and great to work with."

Be sure to say hello to Tina if you find yourself down on the farm!



FAMILY FUN DAY

on the farm

Family Fun Day was a huge success! This year, more than 650 people came to the farm for our annual Family Fun Day. They had a fun-filled day with hayrides, kids' crafts, temporary tattoos, face painting, and a delicious barbeque lunch. Our staff presented both our furry and non-furry friends, while raising awareness about our animal rescue efforts and therapeutic interventions for the children and families we serve.

There were a few standout events that attendees loved this year. One was a special prize – a plush crocheted chicken, crafted and donated by a friend of a staff member. Flanders Donuts generously donated an incredible selection of 25 dozen donuts, and believe me, they were all gone by the end of the day!

We are thankful for the dedication of our volunteers. Over 35 WCS staff and friends joined forces to make this day possible. Our fundraising efforts brought in over \$10,000 to help care for our rescued animals and exotic pets that are such an integral part of our school program.

TO SEE THE FAMILY FUN DAY PHOTO ALBUM & EVENT SPONSORS:

waterfordcountryschool.org/family-fun-day



Thank you FFD Donors & Sponsors for making this day possible!
Scan the Code to join the Friends of the Farm

