



DECEMBER 2025

WATERFORD COUNTRY SCHOOL

CIRCLE OF FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

LOOKING BACK AT 2025



It's been a busy year, filled with growth, connection, and moments that reminded us why this work matters. Across our programs, we continued to expand our reach and strengthen the support we provide to children, families, and our community.

This year, we served more than 400 families. Our school enrolled 73 students, 30 children were placed into foster homes, 135 families were served in our Quality Parenting Center,

84 children made memories at Camp Cuheca summer camp, and more than 200 animals were rescued and fostered. Each number represents lives touched and the collective effort of the WCS community committed to care, stability, and opportunity.

We continued to make improvements on campus and updated our buildings to get ready to open our new Intensive Therapeutic Treatment Center (ITTC) program. The first kids have arrived, and we are continuing to expand to full capacity moving into early next year.

This year also brought memorable moments of connection and support. Our first annual Brunch in the Barnyard event launched to an enthusiastic response, our golf tournament sold out, raising more than \$100,000 to fund critical needs on campus and support our children and families, and more than 650 people joined us for Family Fun Day this Fall—celebrating community, joy, and togetherness.

Looking ahead, we are excited about what's to come. With more events, programs, and opportunities on the horizon, we look forward to another year of meaningful progress—made possible by the continued support of our community.

THIS ISSUE

LOOKING BACK
AT 2025
PAGE 01

END OF THE YEAR GIVING
PAGE 02

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
EMILY SCHACHT
PAGE 03

FAMILY FUN DAY
PAGE 04

STAFF MEMBER
HIGHLIGHT
PAGE 05

UPCOMING EVENTS
PAGE 06

End the Year With Impact: Your Gift Will Make a Difference Today

December 31st is the last day to donate for 2025 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 x4105



waterfordcountryschool.org/development



Spreading Holiday Joy for Children and Families—Together

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our community, we were able to provide meals, gifts, and essential items to every child and family we serve who was in need this holiday season. We are deeply grateful for the many individuals who contributed through cash donations and donations of gift cards, toys, and clothing.

In addition, we extend our heartfelt thanks to the following organizations for their generous donations, toy drives, gift card collections, and ongoing support:



Brown & Brown Insurance
Camp Harkness & the Camp Harkness Foundation with Mike's Harley
Comfort Keepers
Connecticut MG Club
Electric Boat Management Association
Garde Arts Center
St. Joseph's Church
Wireless Zone / Round Room Gives





In Loving Memory of Emily Schacht (1926-2025)

In 1951, a simple newspaper advertisement changed the course of a life—and, ultimately, the future of an institution. Emily answered a call for a nursing position at Camp Waterford in rural Connecticut, unaware that this opportunity would become the foundation of a lifelong commitment to children, community, and care. It was at Camp Waterford that she met Herbert Schacht, director of what would become Waterford Country School. Their partnership, rooted in shared values and tireless dedication, blossomed into a marriage and a legacy that continues to shape Waterford Country School to this day.

Emily and Herb built their life on campus, raising seven children while devoting themselves wholeheartedly to the children, staff, land, and mission of Camp Waterford and Waterford Country School. Accustomed to working hard with limited resources,



Emily approached every challenge with resilience, compassion, and quiet strength. Together, the Schachts were deeply involved in local, state, and national organizations focused on improving education, mental health, children's services, healthcare, recreation, environmental responsibility, and social wellbeing. Their lives were a testament to service that extended far beyond their immediate roles.



Though her official employment as a registered nurse at Waterford Country School concluded in 1964, Emily's presence never truly left. As the elder of the founding family, she served on the Waterford Country School Board of Directors from 1969 through September 2025. Over her decades of service, Emily provided thoughtful guidance, historical perspective, and moral clarity, helping to steward the organization through generations of change while remaining grounded in its founding values.

Perhaps Emily's greatest gift to Waterford Country School was the sense of home and belonging she fostered. She was a touchstone for students and staff alike—someone who embodied care, continuity, and compassion. Many who passed through Waterford's doors remained in touch with Emily throughout her life, a reflection of the deep and lasting bonds she formed.

FAMILY FUN DAY

on the farm

This fall, our farm was buzzing with laughter, activity, and connection as Family Fun Day returned—and it was a day to remember. More than 650 community members joined us for a celebration that brought families together for fun, learning, and a shared love of the work happening at WCS.

Guests enjoyed a wide range of activities throughout the day, including horse and buggy and hayrides, hands-on kids' crafts, face painting, temporary tattoos, and a barbecue lunch that kept everyone fueled for the fun. Our Ag students made fabulous squash soup from their harvest that they shared with everyone. Our staff also introduced visitors to both our furry and non-furry residents, giving families a closer look at our animal rescue program and how animals play an important role in the therapeutic supports we provide to children and families. Another highlight came courtesy of Flanders Donuts, who generously donated 25 dozen donuts that disappeared almost as fast as they were set out. We are grateful for our many volunteers and sponsors.

Family Fun Day continues to be a joyful reminder of what happens when community, purpose, and a lot of farm fun come together.



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

FEATHERED FRIENDS:

Ken & Joanne Levy | Core Plus Credit Union

HAY RIDE SPONSORS:

Charter Oak Credit Union | Community Snacks | Kiwanis Club of New London |
Nutmeg Building & Remodeling LLC | Donald & Rose Werner

PATRON DONORS:

Garon & Beth Camassar | Righ DeLaCruz | Flanders Donuts | Michael & Susan
Gula | Fenty Lee | Christine McCurie | Gwen Mitchell | Robin's Ice Cream

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



STAFF HIGHLIGHT: Meet Tony Schell

For the past year, our cafeteria has been in great hands with our head cook, Tony Schell on the Team. With decades of commercial cooking experience, he knows his way around the kitchen.

Before joining our team, Tony spent 30 years serving in the U.S. Coast Guard, retiring as a Master Chief a few years ago. That career took him all over the world and gave him a lifetime of stories—and skills—that he now brings with him to Waterford Country School.

His favorite part of his job here is connecting with the kids each day. He especially enjoys mentoring the students who work in the cafeteria and helping them learn new skills along the way.

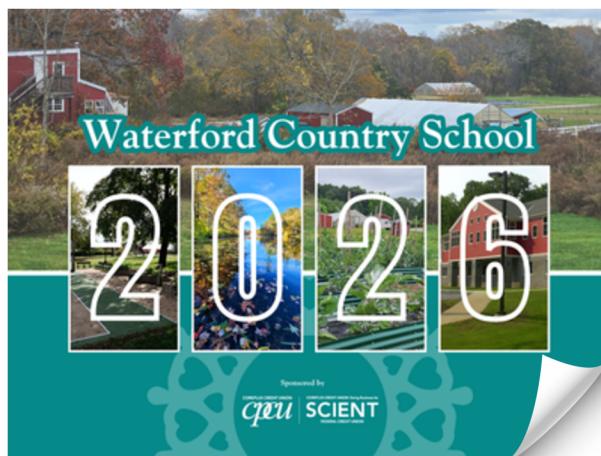
If you've ever noticed his accent and wondered where it comes from, it's straight from Alabama, where he was born and raised. Over the years, he's also lived in Tennessee, Alaska, Hawaii, and California before settling down here in Connecticut.

When he's not cooking in the WCS cafeteria, chances are you'll find him on the dance floor. He's an avid line and country pattern partner dancer and loves staying active. At home, he lives with his wife and one of their three adult daughters. The family has something special to look forward to as well —his daughter is getting married next year!



2026 CALENDARS ARE STILL AVAILABLE!

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Contact Development
860.442.9454 x4106
or visit any local Core Plus Credit Union or
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to get yours!



this event
will sell out!

SAVE THE DATE!

SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 2026



Brunch in the Barnyard

Brunch & networking | Exciting presentations | Animal demonstrations | ... and more!

Don't miss this fun
event to benefit WCS!



Sponsorship Opportunities will be available!

Want to learn more about WCS? Would you like to know how to help?



www.WaterfordCountrySchool.org

860.440.9454 x4106

development@waterfordcs.org

Join us for a tour!

