



# Horizons

Social Services ~ Youth & Family Services  
Family Support Center

SPRING ~ SUMMER 2013

## Counseling Services Offered Free of Charge to Groton Children

Groton Youth and Family Services (GYFS) provides short-term (three month) counseling, free-of-charge, to children and youth ranging in age from 5-18 years who live in the Town of Groton. Counseling is provided in comfortable, child-friendly private offices at the Human Services Building, 2 Fort Hill Road, Groton. Families are welcome to stop by the Human Services Building to meet the Counselors and tour the counseling offices and private waiting room.

Counseling sessions are generally scheduled in one hour time frames between the hours of 8:30-4:30, Monday through Friday. However, families may be offered earlier or later appointment times, if there are transportation, school or work conflicts with the regular appointment schedule. Counseling may also take place at a child's school if that location is a better fit for a child's and/or family's schedule.

Children and youth receiving counseling services at GYFS are sometimes dealing with bullying, coping with divorce and/or blended family issues, acting out at home or school, cutting, having anger issues or attention issues, coping with loss, missing a parent due to illness, death, incarceration, separation/divorce, etc., experiencing anxiety issues which manifest in physical health problems, or dealing with substance abuse in the family.

Groton Human Services has one full time and one part time Counselor in its GYFS division. Counseling requests are received from parents, grandparents or other caregivers, the Groton Public Schools, outside agencies and local police.

When a referral for counseling is received, a GYFS Counselor does an intake interview, either over the phone or in person, with the child's custodial parent/grandparent/guardian. During the intake, detailed information is collected regarding the child's presenting problem(s). The Counselor also takes a brief medical history, including any medications the child is taking. The Counselor inquires if the child has experienced any losses, including family members, extended family members, pets, etc. and what the child's reaction has been to the losses. The Counselor asks if the child has been or is currently in any counseling program and also asks for a description of the child's family/living arrangements.



The completed intake is reviewed by a clinical team in the department, which determines if the child/youth will benefit from GYFS' short term counseling model or, if longer duration counseling should be recommended. In most cases, a youth's presenting issues are appropriate for YFS' short term model and, at the conclusion of three months, the youth and his/her family are satisfied their needs have been met. (Evaluation forms are always completed by the youth and his/her parent/guardian.)

**For additional information or to make an appointment, please call Groton Youth and Family Services at 860-441-6760.**



### Social Security Provides On-line Services

The Social Security Administration recently announced new on-line services via the "my Social Security" account: People age 18 and older may sign up for the account at [www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount). After completing the secure verification process, people are able to create a "my Social Security" account with a unique user name and password and then instantly access their benefit verification letter, payment history and earnings record. Beneficiaries may also change their address and start or change direct deposit information.



### Farmers' Market Coupons Offered

In early July, Groton Human Services will receive a supply of Farmers' Market coupon books, each worth \$15, from the CT State Dept. of Agriculture (DOA). The coupons are redeemable at all Farmers' Markets in CT. One coupon book, per person, per season is available to individuals meeting DOA eligibility criteria: Recipients must be 60 years of age or older, and/or permanently disabled and living in subsidized, senior/disabled housing. Per DOA regulations, maximum household income cannot exceed 185% of the Fed. Poverty Guidelines. Note: Many CT Farmers' Markets now accept SNAP/EBT cards. **Info: 860-441-6760**

**Groton Human Services**  
 2 Fort Hill Road Groton, CT 06340  
 860-441-6760

Marge Fondulas Director of Human Services  
 mfondulas@groton-ct.gov

Heidi McSwain Human Services Financial Assistant  
 hmcswain@groton-ct.gov

Martie Pollard Human Services Office Assistant  
 mpollard@groton-ct.gov

**Groton Social Services**

Debbie Burke Social Worker  
 dburke@groton-ct.gov

Vicki Wydler Social Worker  
 vwydler@groton-ct.gov

Lisa Fredsbo Social Worker  
 lfredsbo@groton-ct.gov

**Groton Youth and Family Services**

Jennifer Sanford Counselor  
 jsanford@groton-ct.gov

Stephen Pulaski Counselor  
 spulaski@groton-ct.gov

**Groton Family Support Center**

Diane Schrage Counselor  
 dschrage@groton-ct.us

**DSS Rx-Xpress Bus Coming to Groton Human Services**

The DSS Rx-Xpress Bus makes regular visits to the Groton Human Services (GHS) Building, 2 Fort Hill Road. DSS staff conduct benefits checks, take food stamp applications, provide HUSKY outreach and discuss SAGA, TANF, Medicaid and Medicare program eligibility.



**PLEASE CALL 860-441-6760 FOR A BUS SCHEDULE AND TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT.**

**Appointments are strongly recommended.**  
**Walk-ins are seen only as time allows.**



**GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN SUPPORT GROUP**

**FIRST THURSDAY ~ EVERY MONTH**  
**6:30 to 8:00 PM**

**Groton Human Services Building**  
**2 Fort Hill Road, Groton**

**FREE Child care and refreshments provided!**  
**Call 860-441-6760 for more information**



**Did You Know??**



Eighty-five drugs are known or suspected to interact with grapefruit. More than half of them can cause serious effects, including irregular heart rhythm, kidney damage, muscle damage, respiratory depression and bleeding in the stomach or intestines. Problems can occur with grapefruit, grapefruit juice or even marmalade with grapefruit in it, because grapefruit inactivates an enzyme that metabolizes many drugs. When a prescription drug is filled, the label usually states if you should avoid any particular foods. If you aren't sure, ask your pharmacist or physician.

The Poison Post, Feb 2013 www.poison.org National Capital Poison Ctr.

## Child Abuse Prevention Month Poster Contest Award Ceremony



Please join us to honor the Groton Third Graders whose art will appear in our 2014 Calendar, "Drawing Wisdom From Kids."

Wednesday, April 3, 2013

6:00—7:30 PM

Groton Human Services  
2 Fort Hill Road, Groton  
Refreshments Provided

## Groton Provides Tax Relief Program for Elderly and Totally Disabled Renters



**Program Served 612 Groton Residents in 2012**  
Application Period Expanded: April 1 - October 1

Connecticut law provides direct, partial reimbursement of rent and utility bills (excluding telephone) paid by certain elderly and totally disabled renters whose qualifying incomes meet State eligibility requirements. The State's Office of Policy and Management oversees the program, which provided a grand total of over \$289,000 in rebates to Groton renters in the 2012 program year. Grants to individual renters averaged \$473. In previous years, the program operated from May 15 - Sept 15. This year, a longer application window has been provided, from April 1 through October 1. As in years past, Groton Human Services Social Workers will visit all senior/disabled complexes in the Town of Groton to take applications and will also schedule appointments at the department's office for persons residing in mobile homes and other rental units/rooms. A one-year residency requirement applies to all program applicants.

For additional information pertaining to this program, please call Groton Human Services at 860-441-6760.

### PLEASE NOTE:

**Applications are taken by appointment only.**



## Please Help Fill Groton's Food Locker

### Suggested donations include:

Canned fruits & vegetables, pasta, spaghetti sauce, peanut butter, jelly, canned chicken and tuna, macaroni and cheese, chunky soups, baked beans, rice and potato mixes.

**THE FOOD LOCKER IS UTILIZED YEAR-ROUND  
TO HELP GROTON HOUSEHOLDS IN NEED OF  
EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE.**

Please call 860-441-6760 for more information.

## SNAP

### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

(formerly known as Food Stamps)

**OUTREACH ADVOCATES  
ARE AVAILABLE AT  
GROTON  
HUMAN SERVICES**



Tommy McKissick, from End Hunger CT! is available to meet with SNAP applicants age 55+ and couples and Lilith McKee, from United Community and Family Services, is available to meet with SNAP applicants (couples and singles) of all ages. Both Tommy and Lilith are available **BY APPOINTMENT ONLY** at the Groton Human Services Building.

Tommy can be reached at:  
[tmckissick@endhungerct.org](mailto:tmckissick@endhungerct.org)  
or via phone at 860-449-2053.

Lilith can be reached at 860-822-4353

## It's a FACT...

Connecticut has the highest electrical rates in the continental U.S., according to Operation Fuel, Inc. As a result, one in five households cannot afford its energy bill, which has a profound effect on lower income households' ability to afford rent payments, food, medical care and other basic necessities.



Operation Fuel Newsletter, Winter 2013



## FREE

### PARENTING SUPPORT

Call 860-441-6760 — Ask for Diane, the Groton Family Support Center Counselor



## **JOB FOR VETERANS**

**Beginning Memorial Day 2013, Walmart will offer a job to any veteran who was honorably discharged within the past twelve months.**

Bill Simon, President and CEO of Walmart made this announcement on January 15, 2013 at a National Retail Federation Convention. According to Simon, most of the Walmart jobs will be in Walmart stores and clubs and some will be in distribution centers and Walmart's home office. The company projects it will hire more than 100,000 veterans during the next five years. Simon noted, "Hiring a veteran can be one of the best business decisions you make. Veterans have a record of performance under pressure. They're quick learners and team players. They are leaders with discipline, training and a passion for service. There is a seriousness and sense of purpose that the military instills, and we need it today more than ever."



Source: walmart.com/executive-viewpoints

## **SafeLink**

**FREE CELL PHONES with 250 FREE monthly minutes!**



**You may qualify if you participate in programs like SNAP (Food Stamps) or Medicaid**

**Contact:**

**Safelinkwireless.com or 1-800-723-3546. More info and applications also available at Groton Human Services**

## **TVCCA's VITA Program Offers FREE**

### **Tax Preparation Assistance**

The **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance** Program is available to help you, if your income does not exceed \$50,000. Tax preparation assistance from IRS trained and certified volunteer tax preparers is available from January 22-April 11, 2013. VITA sites are located in New London, Norwich and Pawcatuck.

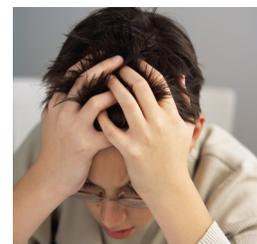
Call 860-425-6597 for more information.

## **Need Food????**

If you are out of food, have no means to buy more and have a food emergency, contact **Groton Human Services**  
Call 860-441-6760



## **Help is Available for Children and Adolescents in Crisis Dial 2-1-1**



When a child or adolescent experiences a behavioral or mental health crisis, help is only a phone call away.

Dial **2-1-1** to reach EMPS, Connecticut's Emergency Mobile Psychiatric Service. When you dial **2-1-1**, a trained call specialist will complete a brief assessment and then, if appropriate, will connect you with a mental health clinician. EMPS clinicians are immediately available, in person or by phone, **24/7**, to help resolve a crisis situation.

**REMEMBER: EMPS MAKES HOUSE CALLS.**



### **GROTON PET FOOD LOCKER**

Located at Groton Human Services, 2 Fort Hill Road, Groton  
Pet Food is available for puppies, dogs, cats and kittens. All pet food is donated...  
...Quantities may be limited...  
If you need food for your pets, please call 860-441-6760.



### **DID YOU KNOW??**

Your child can eat for **FREE** at school if you are receiving **SNAP (Food Stamps)** or **TFA (Temporary Assistance for Families)**  
For more information, contact **End Hunger CT!** at 860-560-2100





## Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Announces FREE Youth Fishing Passports

**PROGRAM OFFERS MANY INCENTIVES, REWARDS AND BENEFITS**

Contacts: [www.ct.gov/DEEP/sportsmenlicensing](http://www.ct.gov/DEEP/sportsmenlicensing) OR [Mike.beauchene@ct.gov](mailto:Mike.beauchene@ct.gov) OR 860-424-4185



DEEP has launched a free [Youth Fishing Passport](#) program that enables youth under 16 years of age to access fishing information and fishing related activities, connecting them to a lifetime of appreciation for Connecticut's beautiful natural resources. Youngsters interested in participating in this program (with parent/guardian permission) can [register online](#) for their free 2013 Youth Fishing Passport through the same electronic system used to obtain fishing and hunting licenses, permits, and tags.

A number of special fishing-related programs are being built around the Passport and various recreational fishing vendors will be offering free products and discounts to passport holders. By registering through DEEP's on-line sportsmen's licensing system and providing an email address, participants will receive email communications about special events, promotions, and fishing opportunities specifically designed for Passport holders. The Youth Fishing Passport is one of several DEEP initiatives, including the very popular [No Child Left Inside program](#), aimed at connecting young people with the outdoors.

**Connecticut's Youth Fishing Passport**

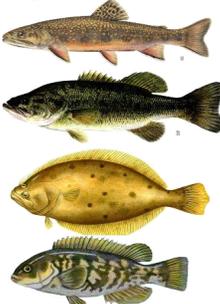


Assigned to: \_\_\_\_\_

My Conservation Identification Number: \_\_\_\_\_



[ct.gov/deep/fishing](http://ct.gov/deep/fishing) [facebook.com/ctfishandwildlife](https://facebook.com/ctfishandwildlife)



The Youth Fishing Passport is one of several DEEP initiatives, including the very popular [No Child Left Inside program](#), aimed at connecting young people with the outdoors.



## Mothers' Craft and Friendship Group

- ◆ Sponsored by the Town of Groton Family Support Center
- ◆ Group meets every TUESDAY of every month during the school year
- ◆ Located at Groton Human Services, 2 Fort Hill Road, Groton, CT
- ◆ Time: 9:30-11:00 A.M.
- ◆ Enjoy crafts, conversation and lots of good company
- ◆ Young children welcome, with their participating parents or caregivers. (Kids have their own play group!)
- ◆ Light refreshments are provided
- ◆ Please call [860-441-6760](tel:860-441-6760) for more information



## FREE CAR SEAT/BOOSTER SEAT INSPECTION CLINICS

Sponsored by **Safe Kids New London County Coalition**

Groton Car Seat Clinics will be held on the following dates:

**March 18, April 15, May 13 and June 10**  
at Poquonnock Bridge Fire Dept, Ft. Hill Road, Groton, 12:30-3:30PM

**APPOINTMENTS ARE REQUIRED**

**Please call 860-442-0733**

*4 out of 5 car seats are installed incorrectly—  
Could yours be one of them?*



## Meals-on-Wheels

Hot, nutritious meals are delivered to homebound persons, age 60 and over.

For more information, please contact Nancy Barley at the

**GROTON SENIOR CENTER, 860-441-6782**



**Problem Gambling Helpline**

**1 - 800 - 346 - 6238**



## Groton Human Services Offering FREE Active Parenting Program

### Parenting Children Ages 5 – 12

6-week Program:

April 11, 18, 25, May 1, 9, 16

(Thursdays, with the exception of May 1st, Wednesday)

6:00 – 8:30 P.M.

Groton Human Services

2 Fort Hill Road, Groton

Light dinner, child care provided free of charge

All participants MUST pre-register

by calling 860-441-6760



## Did You Know??

When you dial the toll free **Poison Help line (1-800-222-1222)** it automatically connects you with your local poison control center. Poison control centers are staffed by nurses, pharmacists, doctors and other specially trained poison experts. Calls are free and confidential. **Program the number into your cell phone for quick access.**

Source: [www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov)



## Groton Renters' Rebate

- \* Groton residents 65 and older or totally or permanently disabled residents as of 12/31/12
- \* Paid rent (partial or full year) in CT in 2012
- \* Income Limit \$33,500 (singles); \$40,900 (couples)
- \* Application dates: April 1– October 1, 2013
- \* Documents Needed: 2012 Income Tax, Copy of lease, rent receipts or 2012 check register; verification of all utility bills paid in 2012; copies of ALL 2012 income (wages, SSA-1099, Pensions, Interest, etc.)
- \* Call Groton Human Services (860-441-6760) for appointment
- \* See article on Page 3 of this publication for additional information

## Groton Sailing Program Gearing Up for Exciting Summer Program



Youth Ages 9-17 Will Benefit from  
Activities On and Off the Water

Groton Human Services staff are preparing to offer another summer sailing experience for youth enrolled in the department's Groton Sailing Program. Counselors Diane Schrage and Stephen Pulaski will mentor the young sailors, along with volunteer K. Michael Talbot, a retired Groton Middle School Principal and Bruno Giulini, retired Chief of the Groton City Police Department. The Groton program partners with a regional program, Sea-Legs, Inc., owned by Captain Richard Lathrop, PhD, who operates the sailing craft used by the Groton sailors. Beginning soon after school ends in June and running through mid-August, the Groton sailors, ages 9-17, will ply the waters of the Thames River and Fishers Island Sound. During their weekly day trips, they will learn basic skills including knot tying and sail setting and will also learn navigation skills, utilizing compasses and GPS devices. Additionally, they will learn teamwork skills and improved communication techniques as they interact as a unit on a sailboat. The Counselors are also hoping to coordinate some activities for the young sailors with Mystic Seaport and Project Oceanography. For more information about the Groton Sailing Program, please call 860-441-6760 and ask to speak with Stephen or Diane.



## Groton's Juvenile Review Board

**FREE** service for Groton families

- ⇒ Benefits youth age 18 and under charged with first-time, misdemeanor infractions or violations of local/municipal ordinances
- ⇒ Provides an alternative to the CT juvenile justice system
- ⇒ Referrals come from local police and school officials
- ⇒ **YOUTH MUST ACCEPT/ADMIT FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR ACTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE JUVENILE REVIEW BOARD**
- ⇒ Please call **860-441-6760** for more information

## Groton's Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group Honors Its Facilitator and Celebrates Its Longevity

Groton Family Support Center Counselor Diane Schrage recently received a special commendation from the participants in the department's Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group. The grandparents wrote: *"You have been a solid brick wall, our foundation if you will, as we attempt to rebuild our lives in totally new surroundings— raising our children's children long after most of us had put that job behind us. Although you have always been there as our Facilitator, bringing new ideas to the table and bringing in outside people to assist with our new-found ideas, it is your role as our Friend that has filled our hearts. You have laughed with us, you have cried with us. You have offered all your wisdom and contacts and humor and have opened your arms when sometimes the only thing we really need is a shoulder and a hug. You have loved our grandchildren and you take as much pride as we do when they do well and shoulder the worry and despair with us when they are having difficulties....You give up every first Thursday of the month out of your busy schedule to come and sit with us and join in our frustrations and laugh at our silly jokes and at times moderate our disagreements."* For over seven years, Diane has been meeting with the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Group. The group meets the first Thursday of each month from 6:30-8PM at the Groton Human Services Building and usually numbers about 15 adults and 6-8 children. In addition to the regular monthly meetings, the group enjoys an annual summer picnic and December holiday party.

### "GrandFacts"

AARP, The Brookdale Foundation Group, Casey Family Programs, the Child Welfare League of America, the Children's Defense Fund and Generations United have partnered to produce state and national "GrandFacts" fact sheets for grandparents and other relatives raising children. "GrandFacts" for Connecticut indicate that 61,408 children (7.5% of all children in CT) under the age of eighteen live in homes where the householders are grandparents or other relatives. (US Census 2010.) Over eighteen thousand of these children live in homes where grandparents are completely responsible for them. These grandparent and other relative caregivers and the children they are raising often feel isolated. They lack information about the range of support services, resources, programs, benefits, laws and policies available to help them successfully fulfill their caregiving role. Programs like Groton's Grandparents Raising Grandchildren support group fill a much-needed role in providing information and resources in a warm and welcoming setting. Grandparents share stories, offer encouragement to each other and provide each other with a sounding board. Please call 860-441-6760 for additional information.



## WASH YOUR HANDS!!

The general rule is, sing "Happy Birthday" to yourself **TWICE** while washing your hands; this is equivalent to **20 seconds**. Wash with warm water, **use soap** and wash all surfaces of your hands, especially fingertips & nails, which collect more germs than other parts of the hand.

**Hand sanitizers are helpful, but nothing beats good hand washing!**

Source: American Public Health Association



## Outdoor Summer Safety

**INSECT BITES:** Be alert to insects that may bite or sting, particularly bees, wasps, hornets, and yellow jackets.



After a sting, the skin will show redness and swelling and may be itchy and painful. Insect stings may cause serious problems and even death for those who are allergic to them. Go to a hospital right away if you are stung and have any of these signs: Hives, dizziness, breathing trouble, or swelling around eyes and mouth.



**INSECT SPRAYS:** Be sure to check the label on any insect repellent. Be aware that most contain DEET, which can be dangerous in large quantities. Have an adult apply repellent to children. When using repellent on a child, put a little on your own hands, then rub them on your child. Avoid the eyes and mouth, and use only a little around the ears. Use separate products when there is a need for insect spray and sunscreen. Follow the label instructions. Do not use sunscreen that contains DEET. Repeatedly applying a product with DEET can increase the risk of harmful effects. For most products, after returning indoors, wash treated skin with soap and water. Check the label of the product you are using for more advice.



**PLANTS:** If you are allergic to poison ivy, poison oak, or poison sumac, touching it can cause blisters on your skin. Be sure that everyone in your family can identify these plants. Remember the phrase, "leaves of three, let it be." If someone touches one of these plants, rinse right away with running water for at least 5 minutes.



**ALCOHOL:** Alcohol can be a deadly poison for children because they are small and their livers are not fully developed. All of the following are dangerous for children: beer, wine, mixed drinks, other alcoholic beverages, facial cleaners, and mouthwash. Therefore, NEVER leave products containing alcohol where children can reach them. Alcohol will make a child sleepy. The child can develop low blood sugar. This can lead to seizures, coma, and death. Be alert at parties and gatherings: Children may find cups containing leftover alcohol within their reach.



Source: US Dept. of Health and Human Services

# Groton Town Council Members

Heather Somers, Mayor  
860-910-0045  
hsomers@groton-ct.gov

Dean Antipas  
860-572-1176  
dantipas@groton-ct.gov

Bruce Flax  
860-536-3532  
bflax@groton-ct.gov

Rita Schmidt  
860-536-1476  
rschmidt@groton-ct.gov

Karen Morton  
860-572-7562  
kmorton@groton-ct.gov

Harry Watson  
860-705-4551  
hwatson@groton-ct.gov

James Streeter  
860-445-5417  
jstreeter@groton-ct.gov

Deborah Peruzzotti  
860-446-8394  
dperuzzotti@groton-ct.gov

Bill Johnson  
860-961-3782  
wjohnson@groton-ct.gov

