Hello South Windsor Community Helpers!

I know that many of you have reached out with offers to help your local community during this difficult time. With the states stay at home order in effect, I recognize that if you’re staying home you’re already doing the best thing any of us can do to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

I understand that some of you may not be able to leave your homes, yet still want to help. Remote volunteerism is a great alternative that allows you to volunteer from the comfort and safety of your own home. Here are some easy and effective options for you to consider:

- Support local businesses through donations, purchasing gift cards for use at a later dates or using delivery services.
- Donate to your local food bank.
- Give blood.
- Sew masks for healthcare workers.
- Consider fostering or adopting a pet in need.
- Donate personal protective equipment to healthcare providers.
- Support nonprofits who are supporting your community.
- Perform wellness checks. Check on your older neighbor, healthcare workers, or those suffering from chronic illness and see if they need anything by simply calling, texting, or chatting through the door.

I just listed many ways in which you can help others but we cannot forget to also take care of ourselves during this crisis. For many the outbreak of COVID19 maybe causing feelings of fear and anxiety. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.

Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can include:

- Fear and worry about your health and the health of your loved ones
- Changes to sleep and eating patterns
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Worsening of chronic health problems

Ways to cope with stress include:

- Take care of your body by getting enough sleep (stick to a schedule) and exercise, eating a healthy, well-balanced diet, and avoiding alcohol.
- Take a break from hearing about the pandemic.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about how you are feeling.

Are you experiencing emotional distress and need someone to talk to? The Disaster Distress hotline is a free national hotline dedicated to providing immediate crisis counseling for people experiencing emotional distress. The number to call is 1-800-985-5990, or text TalkWithUs to 66746.

Here are some great resources for managing stress:
• **COVID-19 Stress & Coping Resources** (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
• **COVID-19 Mental and Behavioral Health Resources** (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response)
• **Taking Care of Your Behavioral Health: Tips for Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation During an Infectious Disease Outbreak** (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)
• **Mitigate Absenteeism by Protecting Healthcare Workers’ Psychological Health and Well-being during the COVID-19 Pandemic** (FEMA’s Federal Healthcare Resilience Task Force)

Staying information through credible sources is critical during this time. Here are a few resources:

- Sign up for alerts through CTAlert which is an emergency notification system used by state and local officials by providing critical information to citizens during emergencies. You can sign up by going here: [https://www.ctalert.gov/ctalert/site/default.asp](https://www.ctalert.gov/ctalert/site/default.asp)
- Visit the newly developed CT COVID-19 website: [https://www.ct.gov/coronavirus](https://www.ct.gov/coronavirus)
- Find resources you need by visiting [https://www.211ct.org/](https://www.211ct.org/)
- The state of CT has a new Facebook account dedicated to COVID-19: @CTCovid19Response
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID-19 website: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

Now that we are all home it’s the perfect opportunity to sharpen existing skills or deepen our understanding of information pertaining to our role are volunteers. Here are some links to free training resources:

**CT-TRAIN**

Signing up for a profile is quick and easy by visiting: [https://www.train.org/connecticut/user/register](https://www.train.org/connecticut/user/register) once you have an account please look at completing as many of the following trainings as possible. If a certificate of completion is given please forward them to me so that I can add to your training log.

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<th>Course Number</th>
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<td>1021342</td>
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**FEMA**

Additional online training can be found through FEMA’s Emergency Management Institute by visiting their website at: [https://training.fema.gov/is/crslist.aspx](https://training.fema.gov/is/crslist.aspx). Consider taking the following courses: IS-26 (Guide to Points of Distribution), IS-100 (Introduction to the Incident Command System) and IS-700 (Introduction to the National Information Management System). All of these courses have a certification of completion emailed after successfully completing the course. Please send a copy of the certificates to me for your training log.
Are you interested in knowing more about severe weather safety and how you can help the NWS with storm reporting? Free training from the comfort of your home! The National Weather Service encourages anyone with an interest in public service to participate as a Skywarn storm spotter.

To register click here: https://register.gotowebinar.com/rt/1418351714663781131?fbclid=IwAR03W_duA7k8mLCp06pq6oZB6d61F3airf5qTezkmTnJ-z4tN4Dzo5i7Jk

As COVID19 continues to unfold in Connecticut and around the world, I want you to know that I am continuing to collaborate with our community partners to ensure we can provide help where it is needed.

I cannot thank you enough for your service. My thoughts are with all of you and I will continue to provide updates as they become available.

Be well!

Sara Darlagiannis
MDA31 Volunteer Coordinator