



Participants gather for the first Care for Caregivers workshop offered by CCSC's Employment programs.

Caregiver Program Implements Focus Group Feedback

At the end of last year, CCSC's Professional Home Caregiver Training Program held focus groups to gain insights into the needs of current and aspiring caregivers. This year those insights will inform the program and help caregivers already employed in the field and those training with CCSC.

Teresa O., a new student in CCSC's January 18-February 24 class, is eager to enhance her expertise. "I already am a caregiver, but this class will help give me more skills and more opportunity to be successful in my career," Teresa said.

In-home caregiving is one of the fastest-growing employment areas in Houston. CCSC's program was featured in a recent Houston Chronicle [article](#) and enrollment in the program continues to increase.

One of the issues that focus group participants shared was how isolating caregiving work can feel at times. CCSC held its first Care for Caregivers workshop in December to facilitate community-building and peer support among caregivers. Participants were invited to meet other professional caregivers, share ideas and concerns, and learn more about CCSC's Caregiver Training program.

Other changes also came out of the focus groups. "The training class time and schedule were adjusted to better accommodate work and family demands," said Caregiver Program Manager Maureen Brunetti. "And we are connecting participants with our staff coaches earlier in their training so they can begin solidifying their post-graduation plans more quickly.

"Additionally, CCSC is also exploring partnerships with other community agencies to offer a higher level of support for those desiring work as independent caregivers," Brunetti added. "We are looking forward to supporting professional caregivers in achieving their career goals this year and in the years to come."

Louise J. Moran Vision Care Program

Generous investment from the Louise J. Moran Foundation once again allowed Christian Community Service Center to make a positive impact on the lives of local students during the Fall Semester of 2021.

CCSC's Vision Care program was suspended from March 2020 through June 2021 due to health-related limitations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the summer of 2021, opportunities opened as campuses returned to in-person learning with improved safety protocols. CCSC collaborated with 15 school partners, providing vision care services to students living in high-poverty areas with limited resources.



In the program's first stage, nine dedicated CCSC volunteers screened 895 students for visual acuity. Next, CCSC arranged 11 field trips, including bus transportation, to the University of Houston. Professional eye exams and prescription eyeglass fittings by optometry professionals were made at the University Eye Institute (UEI). The end result: 178 students received exams with 161 of these students accessing prescription glasses.

Because the pandemic caused disruption to every campus last year, CCSC services were in higher demand but more challenging to deliver in the current environment. School campuses rallied to adjust to the limitations, including shortages of full-time campus nurses. For safety, field trips were reduced from the prior capacity of 32 students per trip to 20 students.

Nurse Betty Reed Chenier, who serves at Pleasantville and Port Houston Elementaries, told CCSC: "We love this vision care program. UEI does such a thorough eye exam. CCSC and UEI take great care of our students.

"We look forward to continuing our partnerships and serving more students in 2022," said Youth Services Manager Cathy Brown. Contact Cathy at seasonal@ccschouston.org for more information on the Louise J. Moran Vision Care Program.

Winter Harvests and Spring Seedlings

CCSC's Garden volunteers cultivate and harvest seasonal vegetables all winter to help feed clients facing hunger and food insecurity.

Key crops this winter included cabbage, lettuce, kale, Swiss chard, bunching onions and radishes.

As we anticipate the return of warmer temperatures, the Garden team is already staging the beginning of the spring planting season. "We have seedlings growing in the greenhouse for tomatoes and peppers," Lead Volunteer Ron Smith said. Those tomatoes and peppers are soon to be joined by seedlings for cantaloupes, cucumbers and eggplants. Vegetables are planted in the Garden's 26 raised beds.



Garden volunteers work diligently year-round, usually on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings with occasional Saturday projects. In the month of December, volunteers harvested 551 pounds of fresh produce for food pantry visitors to take home along with their nonperishable food packages. Interested in volunteering in the Garden? Email Erin Donohue at volunteer@ccschouston.org.

**Support CCSC Through
Souper Bowl of Caring**

Souper Bowl of Caring is a nationwide grassroots movement utilizing Super Bowl weekend to mobilize youth to fight hunger and poverty in their local communities through food drives.



If your church, youth group or school participates in the Souper Bowl of Caring, we invite you to choose Christian Community Service Center as your beneficiary organization. You will help replenish our food pantries after the holidays so we can continue to feed hungry families in our community.

To arrange a Souper Bowl of Caring donation drop at CCSC, contact Emergency Services-Central Manager Lydia Bias at emergency_1@ccschouston.org.

CCSC Job Openings

CCSC's Employment programs team has two job opportunities. We are seeking a bilingual Financial Coach and a Senior Manager – Entrepreneurship. The Senior Manager – Entrepreneurship will oversee the Martha's Way and Professional Home Caregiver Training programs as well as the financial coach. For more information, please visit ccschouston.org/job-opportunities



Our mission is to serve the poor, hungry, disabled, and otherwise needy while respecting their religious, ethnic or cultural differences.



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