

# COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Vol. 1 Issue 2

April 2021

## Monthly Newsletter



## WELCOME...

With warm weather rolling in, I encourage you to go out and explore what Torrington has to offer. A great way to explore Torrington is by visiting one of our many parks or trails. If you're looking to escape to the woods, be sure to visit the [Northwest Hills Trail Finder](#). Whether it's a steep hike to the summit or a family friendly nature walk you're in the mood for, the Trail finder can help you plan your perfect hike.

After your outdoor adventure, be sure to support our local businesses by simply perusing local shops or dining at one of the many restaurants. We are in the process of further developing [It'shappeninghere.com](#), where you can find a business directory, event listings

and more. Be sure to check back regularly as we are planning to add new content throughout the summer! Thursday nights, mark your calendars to visit Franklin Farmer's Market and more! You can find a complete list of vendors and information on their products by visiting the [Franklin Plaza Farmer's Market Facebook page](#). We are excited to see this civic space utilized as the sun begins to shine, and welcome you to attend all of the events happening at [Franklin Plaza](#).

Sincerely,

Rista Malanca

Director of Economic Development

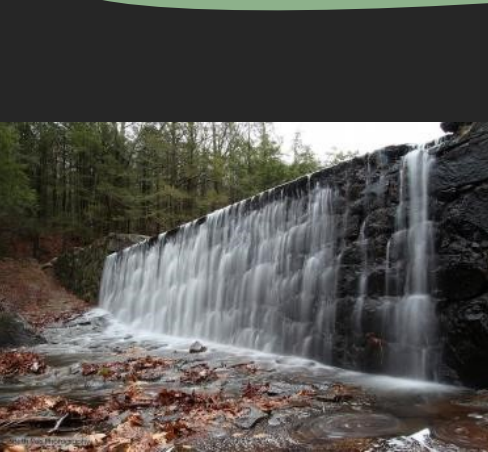
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Find us!



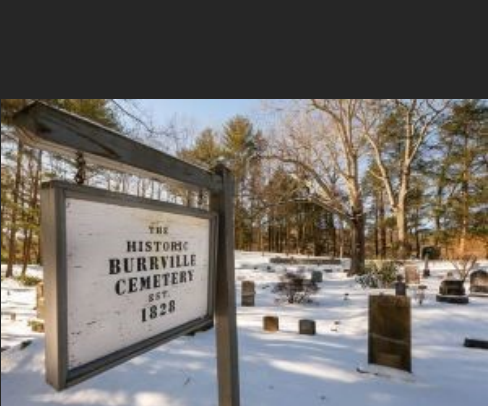
# Discover Burrville



Torrington is proud to be host to the Burrville community, where you can explore beautiful and historic sites. As the clear skies and warm breeze begin to come around, visitors can enjoy a scenic hike up at Burr Pond State Park and a dip in Burr Pond. Once part of Paugnut State Forest, Burr Pond State Park was established in 1949, nearly 100 years after Milo Burr dammed several streams to create a source of power generation. The water power was used to operate a tannery and three sawmills. One of the industrial buildings was used by Gail Borden from 1857 to 1861 as a condensed milk factory. Unfortunately, the building burned down in 1877 but remnants of the stone foundation can be spotted off of Burr Mountain Road.



Burrville was also home to several Civil War veterans and abolitionists, who reportedly helped guide slaves to Canada. The Burrville Cemetery is the final resting place for many Black Civil War infantrymen and their neighbors. Burrville resident, William Noad has researched and donated headstones for those black laborers that were laid to rest in unmarked graves. Burrville visitors can turn a leisurely, and educational hike into a full-day excursion by checking out Zac and Lou's Barbecue and the Rusty Nail Bar and Rusty General Store.



Pc: Jim Shannon Republican American

Lou Gabriel, with his wife Gina and son Zach, started Zach and Lou's BBQ in 2011. What began as a vending and catering business for house parties and local events, turned into a thriving brick-and mortar restaurant in 2017. With the help of Steve Tempkin of Torrington Downtown Partners, Lou had originally been searching for a place in the downtown area but settled in Burrville due to the outdoor space required for smoking the meats and plenty of parking. Lou added that this location fit the "BBQ & Blues" vibe that he was looking for and was excited about the possibility and room for growth.

Lou in his professional career, was a Global Master Data Manager but transitioned into the culinary field where he worked as a kitchen assistant and instructor. Lou developed a comprehensive menu complete with his own personal recipes. Everything on their menu is homemade fresh every day, and the meats are smoked in a large container onsite. Lou notes how exact and time-consuming the smoking process is, and he starts his day at 3:30 am to ensure that the meats are done on time, and that the food comes out tasty. His experience in master data has come in handy since he plans everything through the week, considering previous sales on the same day last year, how the week is trending, weather, and if there are any local events happening. Yet, he knows he cannot predict everything and attributes forecasting daily menus to "science and luck".



Covid-19 brought some challenges as Zach and Lou's had to adjust to meet regulations. They installed a new service-window complete with plexi-glass and a speaker for safe and clear communication with customers. While Covid-19 restrictions have removed the option for indoor dining, customers can still enjoy their BBQ at one of the many picnic tables outside as well as enjoy their food at home with their to-go option.





# Discover Burrville



Located at the edge of the Sue Grossman Still River Greenway is the Rusty Nail and Rusty General Store services a fun legal crowd. Five years ago, Anthony Cannavo worked out a deal with his friend, the previous owner of the Rusty Nail, in which he would manage the establishment for six months and then assume full ownership. In 2019, Anthony decided to open up the Rusty General Store complete with household items, snacks and drinks, house made sandwiches, and an ice cream bar. The store is a dedication to Burrville, decorated with historical memorabilia that was donated to Anthony by Burrville's unofficial historian, William Noad. Anthony wanted to keep old Burrville and its character alive within the store.

Like so many other businesses, the Rusty Nail and General Store were affected by Covid-19. Since Burr Pond was closed, Rusty Nail and General Store unfortunately did not see the revenue generated from typical 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebrations. In accordance with new restrictions and regulations, Anthony had to close down the Rusty Nail but was able to complete some needed renovations. The General Store saw a change in its demographic of customers as local residents looked to the store to provide food and sanitization products out of stock elsewhere. Despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic, Anthony notes how incredible the community has been as his businesses have survived by customer-based support. Since re-opening, Anthony has introduced a farmer's cart located outside of the Rusty General Store, where local producers sell, donate, or exchange their products, ranging from flowers to apples to farm-fresh eggs to duck.



# Act Natural Health & Wellness

Pam Pinto opened Act Natural Health & Wellness on Water Street in Torrington in 2014. Act Natural Health & Wellness is a family-owned and operated store that offers a wide variety of natural, GMP certified products including: supplements, vitamins, herbs, homeopathic remedies, hair and skin care, beauty products, natural pet care, and an organic smoothie and coffee bar. Pam attributes her interest in the world of health and nutrition to her upbringing, stating that “it is in my DNA”. Growing up, Pam’s grandparents had been deeply conscious of food products and only consumed natural goods, giving her an early exposure to the lifestyle.

After her husband’s cancer diagnosis and her own diagnosis of Fibromyalgia, Pam immersed herself in holistic health and nutrition as she was dissatisfied with how conventional medicine treated her condition. Pam searched for answers in traditional methods, refreshing her lifestyle. She took up studies at the Institute for Integrative Nutrition in New York City and the British Institute of Homeopathy for Clinical Nutrition and Homeopathy, in which she received accreditation from the American Association of Drugless Practitioners (AADP). Pam has now been practicing for 15 years as a Certified Nutrition Consultant and a Reiki and Therapeutic Touch master.

With the help from a friend, Pam settled here in Torrington with the mission to bring quality health and nutritional products to the community, as community awareness and wellness was Pam’s main motivation for opening the store. Her concern for the community and the wellbeing of our neighbors is reflected in the quality of products that she provides in store. Everything in stock is GMP certified and unique, and has been vetted by Pam herself. Pam’s customers and

clients have even coined the acronym PPA, questioning whether products are “Pam Pinto Approved”. Act Natural Health & Wellness stocks a wide array of products from professional lines to organic products from local sellers as close as Thomaston. Pam designates the store as a “bridge to community”, wherein local producers have a platform to sell their products and customers can trust that everything in store comes from safe and reliable source.

Act Natural Health & Wellness was fortunate to be an essential business throughout Covid-19. During the early months of the pandemic, Pam realized the community need and began stocking the store with sanitizers, toilet paper and fresh produce. She also initiated curbside-pickup and free delivery options, as well as wholesale pricing to help those challenged by the financial burdens of the pandemic. As one of the only available options for certified GMP pandemic essentials, Act Natural Health & Wellness was quite busy. Pam says that the store will continue to offer these amenities from now on.

Act Natural Health & Wellness will be expanding to Wolcott soon as their new location is under construction. The will also be participating in the Franklin Farmer’s market this summer, where they will be offering many of their products.





# “Where Community Comes First”



Friendly Hands Food Bank has been a pillar in the Torrington community for the past 30 years, actively fulfilling their mission to give back to the community. With a dedicated staff and board, Friendly hands has served over 2,000 families in the Torrington area and surrounding communities. Before Covid-19, friendly Hands Food Bank had close to 250 clients but the challenges of the pandemic saw a dramatic increase in those numbers. Friendly Hands was disheartened to have to turn families away in the beginning due to new regulations and their privacy policy. The food bank prides itself on protecting the privacy of their clients, so

their policy restricts pick-up intervals to ten minutes, and requires clients to schedule the day of pick-up. However, Friendly Hands realized the overwhelming need of the community, and increased their hours to help accommodate their clients. Executive Director, Karen Thomas, has always felt that “it is better to give than receive”, and says that Friendly Hands is committed to taking care of the community. They accept people from all walks of life because no one is immune to the effects of food insecurity.

Every two weeks, clients can check-in and receive a banana box of food products. Friendly Hands fills every banana box with the same “core” ingredients, and then adds the amount meat, milk, and eggs that correspond to the size of the family. The food bank has an organized process to fill and distribute these boxes. After the banana boxes are put together, a client will check in at the front desk, grab their box, and transfer their food products to their personal bags before taking them home.

Friendly Hands attests their strength and sustainability to the generosity of the community. Toward the beginning of the pandemic, Friendly Hands was endured difficult times and was faced with closing. But was able to stay open for those in need thanks to the help of police department, fire department, and residents. Friendly Hands even mentions that seven generous residents donated their first stimulus checks to help support the food bank.

Friendly Hands has recently started a senior-service initiative where they have collaborated with local senior homes to deliver food to residents once a month. So far, the food bank has 504 seniors registered for this program and invites more to take part. Over Easter, Friendly Hands delivered Easter baskets complete with canned ham, mashed potatoes, vegetables, and candy to those seniors. They also handed out 237 baskets with candy and dental products to children and 84 to soup kitchens. Friendly Hands also participates in monthly pet food and supplies giveaways that are sponsored by The Little Guild Pet Shelter. Families can check-in during these giveaways and receive food, collars, toys and other essentials for their furry friends.

Friendly Hands has a few plans rolling in for the summer. They are beginning to organize a Christmas in July event to hand out children’s toys and books. Friendly Hands also mentions that families can receive 2-3 toys per child for birthdays. Their first fundraising event since the beginning of the pandemic will be held on June 12<sup>th</sup> at the Haight-Brown Vineyard. Tickets will be sold at \$75 per person with a 100-person capacity limit as designated by Connecticut standards. The ticket price includes food and drink as well as admittance to participate in a silent-auction.





## BUSINESS RESOURCES

## COVID-19 RESOURCES



**Betsy Paynter**



**Northwest Transit District Is Hiring!!**

**DRIVERS WANTED!!**

Full and part-time positions available

#### Service Area

Northwest Connecticut Transit District is a local transit service that offers both door to door and fixed route transportation. Towns served include Barkhamsted, Canaan, Colebrook, Cornwall, Falls Village, Goshen, Hamden, Kent, Litchfield, Morris, New Hartford, Norfolk, Salisbury, Sharon, Torrington, Warren, and Winchester & Winsted.

#### Job Description

**Transit bus drivers needed!** Must have a public service license or be willing to obtain one. CDL license is helpful, but not a must. Non CDL drivers must have a V or F endorsement. CDL drivers must have a P and either an F or V endorsement. Potential hired drivers will be subject to a drug test, background check and will need an up to date medical card. Drivers are responsible for sanitizing their busses to maintain a sterile and virus free work area.

Part-time hours: 25 - 30 hours per week

Salary: From \$16.00 per hour

COVID-19 considerations: To keep our passengers and drivers safe, we've installed clear plastic barriers, masks, gloves, sanitizer and disinfectant sprays.

**PLEASE APPLY IN PERSON @ NWTD, 957 East Main Street, Torrington, CT, Monday through Thursday, 6 am - 1pm, or Friday 6am-noon. Ask for Dee or Leon Williams. Inquiries may be made to (860) 489-2535.**

## Northwest Connecticut Chamber of Commerce

## U.S. Small Business Administration

## CT Small Business Development Center

## COVID-19 Testing and Vaccine Sites

## Torrington Area Health District



## Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



## State of Connecticut Webpage



## Hartford Healthcare



### Press Release Covid-19 Update

A note from CT DECD's Commissioner, David Lehman:

"Governor Lamont just announced plans to further ease and then eliminate most of the state's COVID-19 restrictions contingent upon Connecticut maintaining sufficiently low rates of infections and increased vaccination rates.

Effective Saturday, May 1, 2021

- The curfew for restaurants, entertainment venues, recreation venues, and theaters will be moved back one hour to 12:00 am midnight.
- Bars that do not serve food can open for service – **OUTDOOR ONLY**. Food is still required when serving alcohol indoors.
- The 8-person per table limit will be lifted – **OUTDOOR ONLY**. The limit remains in effect for indoor dining.

Effective Wednesday, May 19, 2021

- All remaining business restrictions will end.
- The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) will issue recommendations for indoor and large outdoor events (e.g., concerts).
- Indoor masks will continue.

If you have any questions about these changes, information is available on the state's [Sector Rules](#) page. We encourage all Connecticut residents over the age of 16 who have not been vaccinated to [schedule their vaccination](#) today. Getting vaccinated protects you and the people around you. It also remains the most important thing we can do to ensure a smooth reopening."