

Hartford Leadership Academy Graduation

On May 30th at Trinity College's Cornelia Center the first cohort of the re-launched Hartford Leadership Academy (HLA) graduated. Twenty-three elated graduates gave presentations on their team community projects, received glass plaques, and were handed proclamations from the city presented by City Council members Alex Thomas and Josh Michtom. They were cheered on by 100 family members, friends, and community partners interested in celebrating their accomplishments and supporting their work going forward.

All of the groups gave informative presentations on their community projects. In the previous leadership academy, students conducted smaller projects completed within the time frame of the class. This cohort however, due to their passion and the support of the two alumni facilitators designed projects that would continue past graduation. Two students started a Facebook Page called HelpMe CT, a platform for people to organically share and find helpful resources. Another group created a comprehensive plan to launch a city-wide composting initiative in Hartford. One team worked to beautify the Wolcott Street Playground, another created a plan to create more housing to address homelessness, and the final team designed a program designed to support Latina entrepreneurs.



To help support any of these projects or any other ideas the graduates might have we established the HLA Alumni Micro-grant fund that graduates can apply to. We also informed graduates of other funding sources that exist. Already we have received applications for park improvements, a back to school event that also provides free haircuts, and a resource fair for the immigrant community. The ideas keep coming in.

The graduates have also expressed interest in helping the academy to succeed in the future. Many have shared their desire to serve as future facilitators, mentors, and help plan out the future class and alumni events. Next year we also plan to have a class offered in Spanish. This was one of the goals of the re-launch of the academy, to make it more sustainable by deeply involving alumni. This class was facilitated by alumni facilitators and the next cohorts will have alumni helping manage every aspect of the class.

From an idea shared at a meeting last year, to a ceremony graduating 23 passionate students, the Hartford Leadership Academy is officially back, and stronger than ever.



SINA
SOUTHSIDE INSTITUTIONS
NEIGHBORHOOD ALLIANCE
207 Washington Street
Hartford, CT 06106

About SINA

Since its founding in 1977 SINA has worked with residents and community organizations on issues such as affordable rental housing, education, public safety, homeownership and employment. With nearly 100 homes built, a thriving Walk to Work Program, and the creation of community gardens and murals, its visible impact in the Frog Hollow, Barry Square and South Green neighborhoods has been significant. SINA continues operations today in offices at 207 Washington Street. For more information call (860) 493-1618.

Hartford Bites



This summer SINA again partnered with Trinity College's Public Humanities Collaborative. Two students Priscilla Rubio and Violeta Villacorta Apaza are writing reviews of local restaurants called Hartford Bites printed this summer in the Hartford News as well as the Trinity Tripod in the fall. In addition, they are creating an interactive map and helping restaurants sign up for the

College Bites app, an app created by Trinity College students to give students and staff exclusive deals at local restaurants. Be on the lookout, we will be featuring their articles in future editions of SINA Reports. But be advised, you don't want to read them on an empty stomach.



**RECOGNITION
ALL AROUND**

SINA is a partnership between Connecticut Children's, Hartford Hospital and Trinity College. SINA's mission is to work cooperatively with community stakeholders to restore economic vitality and improve the quality of life for the people who live, work, play, and study in the neighborhoods of South Central Hartford.



18th Annual REACH Awards

SINA's 18th Annual REACH Award Ceremony was held June 5 at Hartford Hospital. The dinner honors winners of the Neighborhood Service Awards, Stephen Balcanoff Institutional Award, Kelly Styles STEM Scholarship, Ivan Backer Scholarships, and SINA Student Support Scholarships.



Jacquelyn Santiago Nazario, Larry Johnson, and Ryan Calhoun.

The **2024 Neighborhood Service Award** awardees were Diane Callis, Maria Caraballo, and Larry Johnson.

Diane Callis is currently the Athletic Director at Bulkeley High School. Diane has been employed at BHS for 41 years, having started as a part time teacher and pool coach, she eventually became a full-time teacher and then athletic director. Nominated by coach Juan Dominguez, he describes her as "a huge advocate for the South End, for Bulkeley and for our kids."

Maria Caraballo works for The Village in the Family Resource Center at Burns Latino Studies Academy and was nominated by the school's principal, Victor Cristofaro. He says, "Maria is one of those people that the more you get to know her, the more you realize how much she does and how many of our programs rely on her."

Larry Johnson is the Director of Crisis and Hospital Response at COMPASS Youth Collaborative. He was nominated by his colleague Ayelet Chozick. Ayelet explains "Larry has a unique job, being on duty 24/7. Authorized to enter emergency rooms, he helps calm patients and keep families informed. He makes sure patients have clothes that aren't bloody or torn, so they're not traumatized all over again."

Dorely Roldan, Manager for Community Health and Health Promotion at Hartford Hospital, is the **2024 recipient of SINA's Stephen Balcanoff Award**. The award recognizes an employee of one of SINA's three anchor institutions who demonstrates exemplary dedication to community service.



Dorely Roldan, Mary Diaz-Raymond and David Fichandler.

According to Mary Diaz Raymond, who supervises her, "What stands out about Dorely is that she is so aware of what the community needs. Dorely is so devoted and empathetic. She is able to do a great job of connecting with the community and gaining trust, because she's been there." Dorely truly believes in "doing the work and getting my hands dirty" to help Hartford residents access healthcare.



The **Kelly Styles STEM Scholarship** have been awarded for four years by Connecticut Children's Information Solutions Department employees in honor of their retired colleague, Kelly Styles. Jomelis Bruno is this year's recipient. Jomelis graduated from Hartford Magnet Trinity College Academy and plans to attend UConn to pursue a degree in Mathematics.



The **Ivan A. Backer Scholarship** recipients were Kebra-Nagast Takahashi, Ava Hamilton, and Sofia Cabello. Kebra-Nagast graduated from Bulkeley High School and plans on attending CCSU to pursue a degree in Social Work. Ava graduated from Sport and Medical Sciences Academy and plans on attending UHart to achieve a degree in nursing. Sofia Cabello studied at Hartford Magnet Trinity College Academy and plans on attending CCSU to major in Civil Engineering.

This year **SINA Student Support Scholarships** were awarded to CT State Capital Community College (CCC) Students Judith Appah and Anisha Nasrudeen. Judith studies nursing and Anisha studies radiology.

Visit www.sinainc.org to read more about the awardees.



3rd Annual Young Authors Awards

The 3rd Annual REACH Young Author Awards ceremony was held May 8th at the Hartford Public Library Park Street Branch @ the Lyric to honor local students who have written books. Students in grades K through 5 entered a disability awareness book writing contest. Winners' books were published, with copyrights, International Standard Book Numbers (ISBN), and bar codes. Copies were provided to Park Street Branch. 13 books were selected out of 54 submissions awarding 29 students. The keynote speaker was Amanda Russell, author & illustrator of the Karing Kritters series: "Jacob Learns to Fly" and "Jacob Loves Puddles". The winning entries were the following:



All About Blindness is written and illustrated by Mercy Hseezar, a second-grade student at Maria Sanchez Elementary School. This book is centered around the disability of blindness.

Alex is written and illustrated by ViyanKhaa Satish Kumar, a Hartford resident and a first-grade student at Glastonbury East Hartford Magnet School. The book is about a spider who can't understand why Alex doesn't respond to his questions.

A Tale of Two Friends is written by Jennyeliz Fontanez and Wilson Escalante-Morales, and illustrated by Saniyah Feliciano and Daily Velasquez-Garcia. They are fifth graders in the Hispanic Health Council's after-school program at Maria Sanchez School. The book is about how two people became best friends despite each other's differences.

Charlie and the Spelling Bee is written and illustrated by Myah Cruz, a third-grade student at Maria Sanchez Elementary School. This book is about a girl with autism who is adamant about proving that she can achieve her goals.

Charlie's Broken Leg is written by Victor Rojas and Jonathan Velez, and illustrated by Randy Gonzalez and Adrian Jimenez. They are fifth-grade students in the Hispanic Health Council's after-school program at Maria Sanchez School. The book is about a dog who has to relearn how to walk after his leg is amputated.



Delilah is Dyslexic is written by Aaliyah Lawrence, and illustrated by Jomyra Valentin. Aaliyah is a fifth-grader at Noah Webster Microsociety Magnet School. Jomyra is a Hartford resident and fourth-grader at CREC Academy of Aerospace and Engineering Elementary School. The book is about learning to deal with a disability and standing up for yourself.



Don't Deny It, Defy It! is written by Kaiden Baptiste, and illustrated by Kaiden and Marley Williams. They are fourth-grade students at CREC Ana Grace Academy of the Arts Elementary School. The book is about an individual with a disability finding the person they can connect with.

Fly Bird Fly? is written and illustrated by Olivia Leroux, a fifth grader at CREC Montessori Magnet School. The book is about a one-wing bird who is trying to return to its nest.

Millie and Roofus is written and illustrated by Eliana Rios-Segui, Olivia Starr, and Ava Marques. They are fifth-grade students at CREC Montessori Magnet School. The book is about a girl with epilepsy and her service dog Roofus.

My Voice is written by Nathaniel Redi, and illustrated by Nathaniel, Danino Sgro, Jayce Thelwell, Micah Vernon, Jayvion Butler, and Zackary Perez. They are fourth-grade students at CREC Ana Grace Academy. The book is about overcoming a speech disorder to achieve your dream.



Rainbow Smile is written and illustrated by Anaya Gupta, a winning author for the second year in a row. A Hartford resident, Anaya is a third grader at Betances Learning Lab Elementary School. The book is about the importance of empathy, friendship, and creativity in overcoming challenges like a disability.

Sparkle Sparkles is written and illustrated by Dhyanaa Satish Kumar, a winning author for the third year in a row. A Hartford resident, Dhyanaa is a third grader at Glastonbury East Hartford Magnet School. The book is about a one-legged skeleton named Sparkle who has to deal with a mean bully.

The Cat with Three Legs is written and illustrated by Ashly Tema, and Joniel Navarro Cintron. They are fourth and fifth-grade students in the Hispanic Health Council's after-school program at Maria Sanchez School. The book is about a cat who is determined to be treated as ordinary despite her appearance.

