

Press Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

General Inquiries:

Maybeth Morales-Davis

Maybeth@nestct.org



Community Celebrates Art, Fresh Food, and Connection at Love and Care Community Garden

Waterbury, CT – April 13, 2026 — NEST is celebrating the success of a community gathering at the Love and Care Community Garden that brought together residents, families, local artists, and community partners for a day centered on creativity, connection, and neighborhood pride.

The event marked the community's first opportunity to experience *One Leaning on Another*, the newly installed 1,800-pound bronze sculpture by acclaimed artist Joy Brown. Throughout the day, families and children were drawn to the sculpture's playful and welcoming design, climbing, touching, and exploring its whimsical features while discovering the artwork's themes of connection, trust, and shared strength.

The gathering also provided residents with access to fresh produce distributed free of charge thanks to the generous support of the Whole Foods Distribution Center in Cheshire. Community members collected healthy fruits and vegetables while connecting with neighbors and learning about resources available through NEST.

NEST staff were on hand throughout the event to engage residents in conversations about pathways to homeownership, financial empowerment, and opportunities to become more involved in neighborhood revitalization efforts.

One of the most inspiring moments of the day emerged organically as residents chose to stay after the event to help clean and care for the garden. Volunteers worked side by side to remove debris and litter, demonstrating the sense of ownership and stewardship that has become a hallmark of the Love and Care Community Garden.

"This event reflected everything we hope this space can be," said Maybeth Morales-Davis, Deputy Director of NEST. "Neighbors connected with one another, children played freely, families accessed fresh food, and residents took pride in caring for a space they helped build. It was a beautiful reminder that community grows when people come together."

Adding to the day's excitement, artist Joy Brown joined residents for a hands-on art experience that invited participants of all ages to create clay "heart cookies" using the same clay she works with in her Kent, Connecticut studio.



nestct.org

203 753 1896 / Fax. 203 757 649 | info@nestct.org

193 Grand Street · 3rd Floor · Waterbury · CT 06702

During the workshop, Brown shared stories about her artistic journey, including her experiences living and working in Asia and the techniques that inform her sculptural practice. Residents then had the opportunity to work directly with clay while reflecting on a simple but meaningful question posed by the artist: "What do you love?"

The responses reflected the diversity and heart of the community. Participants inscribed words and phrases including *family, pets, sports, friends*, and even *this community garden* onto their heart-shaped clay creations. "These hearts become a record of what matters most to the people who live here," Brown shared with participants. "They tell a story about the community itself."

Brown will bring the clay hearts back to her studio, where they will be fired over the summer. In the fall, the finished pieces will return to the Love and Care Community Garden and be displayed on the trees throughout the space, creating a lasting community art installation made by the residents themselves.

The Love and Care Community Garden was originally envisioned by alumni of NEST's 2019 Resident Leadership Training Program and has since grown into a vibrant community hub featuring gardening activities, wellness programming, bee education, food access initiatives, and opportunities for neighborhood engagement.

With the addition of *One Leaning on Another* and the community-created heart installation to come, the garden continues to demonstrate the power of art, nature, and collective action to strengthen neighborhoods and foster meaningful connections among residents.

About NEST

NEST is a non-profit, HUD certified, NeighborWorks America affiliate organization with a passion for creating homeowners, supporting individuals in achieving financial stability, and revitalizing communities.

www.nestct.org.

About Joy Brown

Joy Brown is a contemporary sculptor known for her bronze works that evoke human connection through abstracted, figurative forms. Her sculptures are held in public and private collections and are celebrated for their warmth, playfulness, and emotional resonance.

Joy Brown has exhibited in galleries and museums in the United States, Europe, Japan, and China. Her figures and three-dimensional wall installations are represented in prominent private and public collections, including parks, sculpture gardens, and urban public spaces around the world. The monumental bronzes have been widely shown in China, represented by Purple Roof Gallery in Shanghai. The first exhibition of these works in the United States was a nine month show on Broadway in NYC in 2018. There was a concurrent exhibition in Sanya, China.

In 1998, she co-founded Still Mountain Center, a nonprofit organization that fosters artistic exchange between East and West, bringing people together in the arts.

<https://www.joybrownstudio.com/>