

**Asylum Hill Congregational Church – a church turned outward to its neighborhood and beyond,
listening, serving and building relationships**

What's important about our connection to West Middle School?

Our relationship with West Middle School goes back to the very beginning of AHCC. Our congregation formed after a group of women started a Sunday school for neighborhood children there. Ever since then, we have committed to serving the adults and children of the Asylum Hill neighborhood.

We were a significant leader in the establishment of The Asylum Hill Boys and Girls Club. Homes throughout the neighborhood continue to be renovated thanks to our work with ServCorps, Habitat for Humanity and NINA.

Now we have a chance to take the next step.

West Middle School is transforming its building and identity with a compelling new vision and strategy. Lynn Estey, principal of Middle Grades Academy at West Middle School, has identified a Volunteer Resource Center as a key component of building community engagement.

Why the Volunteer Resource Center?

With help from AHCC's Love Hartford committee, the school secured its "community school" designation. A community school is the center of community life. Open longer each day, community schools meet the urgent needs of students and their families. The resources they provide include:

After school programs

- GED and ASL classes for adults
- Job readiness programs
- Financial literacy training
- Physical and mental health services

West Middle School will move back to its renovated and expanded Asylum Avenue campus in June 2016. The refurbished facility will have space where community partners can assist in many ways.

They need our help to make it possible.

To deliver services effectively, the Volunteer Resource Center will need a full-time coordinator along with administrative support staff and a program budget. There is no money available within the school budget to fund the center at this time.

How will our investment impact the community?

West Middle School's new status as a Community School means the school will be a center for the community.

The Volunteer Resource Center is the logical next step in our church's commitment to our neighbors. This project offers a profoundly meaningful opportunity to help.

Imagine volunteers working with a small group of students to strengthen their math skills. Or with a class of fifth-graders bringing a history lesson to life. Or helping children learn the art of storytelling.

The Volunteer Resource Center will match the gifts of volunteers – including those from AHCC – not only with the needs of the school but with the possibilities that emerge as the number, expertise and passion of volunteers grows.

We'll experience the results of our work in our community and especially with our young neighbors. What a wonderful way to mark our 150th anniversary!

This is an effort big enough to involve the whole congregation. Together, we can transform our community.

It is also absolutely achievable.

Why do we need to act now?

Funding must be in place well before West Middle School reopens in June.

Principal Estey feels confident that within several years she can cover the Center's operating costs in her budget. With our help, Principal Estey also plans to involve other community partners, particularly local corporations, on the project.

But without our leadership now, the Volunteer Resource Center will not open.

What will it cost?

To launch this project successfully, \$300,000 is needed.

\$150,000 of that amount must come from AHCC members now. Our contributions would fund a full-time volunteer professional, administrative support, and program expenses.

Then over the next three years, the school can seek \$150,000 in matching commitments from a combination of corporate and school funds.

Who can I contact with questions?

Email Matt Laney (mlaney@ahcc.org) or Deb Holden (dholden@ahcc.org), or call 860.525.5696 if you have any questions.