

Join Us For Our Burn Calories For Fuel 10K, 5K Run/Walk And The Turn Up The Heat Chili Challenge

When: Saturday April 14, 2012

Where: The Metropolitan Learning Center
1551 Blue Hills Avenue
Bloomfield, CT 06002

Cost: Pre-register - 5K/walk - \$25
10K - \$35
Register the day of the race - 5K/walk - \$30
10K - \$40

You may pre-register at www.hartfordmarathon.com or www.operationfuel.com

Time: Check in begins at 8:00 am.
Races start at 9:00 am.

Chili Challenge will begin immediately following the races.



Many Thanks To Our Sponsors:



Operation Fuel | One Regency Drive | Bloomfield, CT 06002 | (860) 243-2345 | operationfuel.org



Our Mission:

Operation Fuel brings together communities, businesses, government and individuals to ensure people in need have access to vital year-round energy assistance.

How to Contribute

Send a Check

- Send a check payable to Operation Fuel to: Operation Fuel, One Regency Drive, Suite 200, Bloomfield, CT 06002
- Or you can write out a check to Operation Fuel and enclose it with your utility bill. The utility companies will forward all checks to Operation Fuel.

Add-a-Dollar

- Support Operation Fuel through the Add-a-Dollar program with your utility company. You may donate \$1.00 or more by adding the amount to your utility bill, both paper bills and electronically. 100 percent of funds raised through the Add-a-Dollar program are used for energy assistance grants. The utility companies also match a percentage of Add-a-Dollar funds raised. You may contact your local utility companies to become enrolled in an automatic Add-a-Dollar program.

Donate Online

- Donate online through Operation Fuel's secure Web site, www.operationfuel.org. Click on the "Donate Now" button at the top of the page.

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Operation Fuel, Inc.

WE'RE ALL PART OF THE OPERATION.

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INSIDE THE OPERATION

Winter 2012

Operation Fuel Begins 35th Year

Need Is Greater Than Ever

When Operation Fuel began 35 years ago, it was supposed to be a temporary program for working-poor families who were struggling to pay their escalating energy bills that had resulted from the world-wide oil embargo

Concerned that so many people couldn't afford their energy bills, the late Governor Ella Grasso started Operation Fuel in 1977 with the help of Father Thomas Lynch and civic and business leaders from the Greater Hartford area.

That first year, Operation Fuel gave out \$216,813 in emergency assistance to 867 households, with an average grant of \$250 per household. But instead of being the short-term program that it was projected to be, the energy affordability crisis has continued to get worse with each passing year.

During 2011, Connecticut's annual home energy affordability gap increased from \$480 million to \$505 million. As a result, Connecticut's low-income families are paying an average of \$2,200 more for their annual energy costs than they actually can afford.

Since it began, Operation Fuel has given out nearly \$32 million to over 105,000 households throughout Connecticut. Last year alone, Operation Fuel helped over 5,000 households with more than \$1.7 million in energy assistance grants.

Throughout the years, individual donors have been critical to Operation Fuel's success. "For 35 years, Operation Fuel has been an organization that has responded to families and individuals in need and we couldn't have done it without the generous support of our donors," points out Patricia Wrice, Operation Fuel's executive director.

She adds, "Many of the families and elderly people that we help have nowhere else to turn. If it weren't for Operation Fuel, many would be forced to choose between paying for their energy costs and providing food for their families. Our elderly recipients are living on fixed incomes and might have been forced to give up their homes if they hadn't received emergency energy assistance. Operation Fuel truly has been an organization of neighbors helping neighbors."

Donor Uses Social Media to Raise Money for Operation Fuel

On August 13, 2011 Monika Doshi, posted on her Facebook page "Happy Rakshabandhan" in observance of a holiday that is celebrated every year in India, and by many Indians around the world.

The annual "festival" of Raksha Bandhan, is meant to commemorate the abiding ties between siblings of opposite sex, usually takes place in late August, and is marked by a very simple ceremony in which a woman ties a rakhi — which may be a colorful thread, a simple

bracelet, or a decorative string — around the wrist of her brother(s). This symbolizes the sister's love and prayers for her brothers well being, and the brothers lifelong vow to protect her. The brother in return offers a gift to his sister.

Monika's brother, Kumar saw her post and decided to give \$1 for every "like" that the post received to Operation Fuel. A total of 74 friends responded.



A Word from the Executive Director



Dear Friends of Operation Fuel:
As Operation Fuel began its 35th year of providing emergency energy assistance to low-income households, we started our winter season with grave concerns. This year, we anticipate getting requests from more than 10,000 families and individuals—almost double last year’s demand.

We are concerned that if we do not meet our funding goals, many people who need us will have fewer options this winter, or none at all, to get help for their high energy bills. Operation Fuel helps families and individuals who are going through an economic hardship such as a serious illness or recent unemployment and do not qualify for government assistance. For some people we are a last resort. They have nowhere else to turn.

But sometimes we need to step back and take stock. If you work for an organization that helps people in crisis, it’s easy to see the glass as only half full. Looking back on last year, it hasn’t always been gloom and doom. There are many things to be thankful for. Operation Fuel along with members of the state’s Low Income Energy Advisory Board achieved a legislative victory that could mean low-income households finally will have more affordable utility rates. After six years, legislation was passed that directs the state’s Public Utilities Regulatory Agency (PURA) to develop a plan for an affordable rate for low-income households.

Although we should celebrate our victories when we can, there continues to be a significant gap between what Connecticut’s lower income households are paying for energy bills and what they can actually afford. Even with the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) providing over \$100 million in 2011 to Connecticut residents who qualified for government assistance, the home energy affordability gap increased from \$480 million to \$505 million last year. As a result, Connecticut’s low-income families are paying an average of \$2,200 more for their energy costs than they can actually afford -- forcing many to choose between paying their heating bill or buying food or medicine. Buying Christmas presents for their children isn’t even an option.

When Governor Ella Grasso helped start Operation Fuel in 1977, it was supposed to be a short-term program. But here we are 35 years later and the need continues to grow. These are our friends and neighbors. The least we can do is help Connecticut’s families and elderly stay warm and safe in their own homes. With everyone’s help, we can prevent some of the tragedies we saw in 1977 when Operation Fuel was created.

Sincerely,

Patricia Wrice
Executive Director, Operation Fuel

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The First Baptist Church of Branford Raises Awareness

On Saturday, November 19, 2011, the First Baptist Church of Branford held their annual Christmas Fair to raise money and awareness for Operation Fuel. The fair included arts and crafts, baked goods, and



a tag sale. The day was filled with great food, fun and celebration. According to Jeff Wallace, fair organizer, over \$3,500 was raised for Operation Fuel.



Connecticut’s Annual Home Energy Affordability Gap Grows to \$505 Million

There continues to be a significant gap between what Connecticut’s lower income households pay for energy bills and what they actually can afford, and the problem increasingly is affecting more and more households with moderate incomes, according to the Home Energy Affordability Gap: Connecticut (2011) report, which was released on December 15, 2011 by Operation Fuel during a news conference at the state capitol.

Connecticut’s annual home energy affordability gap is now \$505 million and lower-income families and senior citizens currently face a home energy affordability gap of nearly \$2,200 per household, which is the difference between what households can afford to pay and what they actually owe for their annual energy bills. In 2010, the state’s annual energy affordability gap was \$480 million or about \$2,000 per household.

Operation Fuel’s Executive Director Patricia Wrice said, “It’s extremely distressing that Connecticut’s lower income households are continuing to lose ground in their efforts to keep up with their energy bills. We continue to see more moderate income households that need emergency energy assistance.”

The energy affordability gap is statewide, in both urban and rural areas, according to the report that was prepared for Operation Fuel by regional economist Roger D. Colton, a partner with Fisher, Sheehan & Colton Public Finance and General Economics, of Belmont, Mass.

As a result of high unemployment, a weak economy, rising energy costs, and cuts to the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) for 2012, Operation Fuel is bracing for an unprecedented need for energy assistance this winter, especially from vulnerable households with young children or elderly residents on a fixed income.

On a positive note, Wrice said that thousands of low-income families will be able to take advantage of the recently approved Connecticut Earned Income Tax Credit (CT-EITC), which will free up about \$108 million for working families to use towards their expenses such as energy bills.

In addition, the state of Connecticut has allocated \$1 million to Operation Fuel and Northeast Utilities is providing an additional \$1 million. These news funds will allow Operation Fuel to provide assistance to an additional 2,000 low-income families and seniors. Last year, Operation Fuel provided energy assistance to over 5,000 households with \$ 1.7 million.

Wrice added, “We must continue to work together to find ways to resolve our state’s energy crisis with immediate and long-term solutions that are far reaching.”

Some of the key issues cited in the energy affordability report include:

- LIHEAP only covers a fraction of the home energy costs for a fraction of the income eligible population.
- Low-income households do not have the discretionary income to absorb energy bills that are not offset by public or private assistance programs.
- When low-income households pay their bills in a full and timely manner, it often is at the expense of other basic necessities such as food, health care, and housing.
- Unaffordable home energy has a substantial impact on the nutrition of low-income households.

Operation Fuel provides emergency energy assistance through its statewide network of over 100 fuel banks to lower-income working families, the elderly and disabled individuals who are not eligible for energy assistance from government-funded programs. For more information, go to www.operationfuel.org.

Operation Fuel’s New Board Members



Daniel Canavan of Northeast Utilities has been elected chairperson of Operation Fuel’s board of directors. Canavan, who previously served as vice chair, has been on Operation Fuel’s board since 2009. In addition, several new board members have been elected. Joining Operation Fuel’s board are: John Bowman of F.F. Hitchcock Oil Company, Timothy Cole of the Connecticut Energy

Efficiency Board, Renee DiNino of Clear Channel Radio Connecticut, Paul Pendergast of the University of Connecticut, and Matt Service of Service Internet Solutions, LLS.

We Are Almost There!

This year Operation Fuel will raise over \$1.5 million dollars from foundations, corporations, faith organizations and individuals.

Our goal for individual giving this fiscal year is \$425,000. We are almost there, but we need your help.

As of January 20, 2012 we are at \$296,000

Your gift will help Operation Fuel give the gift of heat and light to a needy family in Connecticut.

