

“House of Hope” Food Drive To Help Veterans and the Underserved

BRIDGEPORT, CT, September 10, 2014– St. Vincent’s Health Services and Aquarion Water Company are launching the 4th Annual “House of Hope” Food Drive, running from September 15 until November 14 to help reduce hunger throughout the Greater Bridgeport area. **A ribbon cutting will be held on Monday, September 15 at 11am at the House of Hope at the entrance to St. Vincent’s Medical Center.**

Visitors to St. Vincent’s Medical Center, employees of the health system and Aquarion, and the public are being asked to drop off donations in the “House of Hope” – a special shed located at the hospital entrance for the duration of the drive.

Items collected will be delivered to area food banks and to a veterans’ group. Last year more than six tons of food were donated and organizers hope to surpass that total this year.

Veterans Organization to Benefit for First Time

This year’s collection will benefit The Spooner House in Shelton, Bridgeport Rescue Mission, The Thomas Merton Center, and the St. Vincent’s Family Health Center all in Bridgeport, and for the first time, the Port Five Naval Veterans organization, also in Bridgeport. All branches of the armed forces belong to the Port Five group, which will redistribute donated food to other veterans’ organizations. Plans call for Port Five to use the turkeys donated to host dinners for veterans in need.

“We are happy to once again partner with Aquarion to help bring food to so many families in our region,” said St. Vincent’s Health Services President Stuart G. Marcus, MD, FACS. “Our employees and the public have displayed great generosity and enthusiasm for this project, which is well aligned with the mission entrusted to us by the Daughters of Charity to serve the poor and vulnerable. We are very pleased this year to expand our reach to area veterans and in this small way thank them for their service.”

“Aquarion is delighted to partner with St. Vincent’s Health Services to offer assistance to individuals and families who require a lift,” said Charles V. Firlotte, President and CEO of Aquarion Water Company. “As the difficult economy continues to negatively impact local families, we hope to make the holiday season a bit brighter for them and for our veterans who have given so much to our country and to the global community.”

What to Donate

The organizers ask that only nutritious, non-perishable, non-expired items be donated.

They suggest canned fish, meat, soup, stews, fruits and vegetables as well as pasta, peanut butter, cold cereal and powdered milk.

Serving this year as co-chairpersons are Lucille Bentley, RN, and Kareem Wali of St. Vincent's and Carolyn Giampe of Aquarion.

Monetary donations are also accepted and are turned into double the amount in food purchases thanks to the generosity of Big Y in Monroe, which is continuing its "buy one get one" arrangement. Stew Leonard's will again be donating turkeys to the House of Hope.

People wishing to make a monetary donation to the House of Hope may do so at the hospital information desk. Gift cards to grocery stores will also be accepted.

For more information, please contact *at St. Vincent's*: **Lucille Bentley at 203-576-5130** or **Kareem Wali at 203-576-5221**; *at Aquarion*: **Carolyn Giampe at 203-337-5908**.

St. Vincent's Health Services (SVHS) is a member of Ascension Health, the nation's largest Catholic and largest non-profit healthcare system. SVHS offers regional centers of excellence in cardiology, surgery, cancer care, orthopedics, diagnostics, women's and family services, behavioral health, senior health and an array of specialized services. SVHS comprises St. Vincent's Medical Center, a 473-bed community teaching and referral hospital with a Level II trauma center, providing a full range of inpatient and outpatient services with more than 500 affiliated physicians in more than 50 medical and surgical specialties and subspecialties; St. Vincent's College, St. Vincent's Special Needs Services (SVSN), and St. Vincent's Medical Center Foundation. St. Vincent's Medical Center has received the "A" Hospital Safety Score from the Leapfrog Group five consecutive times and is one of only two hospitals in the state to receive both the Leapfrog "A" and Nursing Magnet® recognition for nursing excellence. U.S. News & World Report named St. Vincent's Best Hospital in Fairfield County and all of Western Connecticut for 2014-15 and high performing in ten specialties. St. Vincent's serves as the principal clinical partner for the new Frank H. Netter MD School of Medicine at Quinnipiac University. For more information on programs and services, call the toll-free Care Line at 1-877-255-SVHS (7847) or visit www.stvincents.org. www.facebook.com/pages/St.VincentsCT. www.twitter.com/StVincentsMC

About Aquarion Water Company:

Aquarion Water Company is the public water supply company for more than 625,000 people in 49 cities and towns throughout Connecticut, as well as serving customers in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. It is the largest investor-owned water utility in

New England and among the seven largest in the U.S. Based in Bridgeport, Conn., it has been in the public water supply business since 1857. Across its operations, Aquarion strives to act as a responsible steward of the environment and to assist the communities it serves in promoting sustainable practices.

For more information on Aquarion Water Company and its subsidiaries, please visit www.aquarionwater.com or www.facebook.com/aquarionwater.