

Administrative:
635 Main Street
Middletown, CT 06457
860.347.6971

Locations:

CHC of Bristol
395 North Main Street
Bristol, CT 06010
860.585.5000

CHC of Clinton
114 East Main Street
Clinton, CT 06413
860.664.0787

CHC of Danbury
8 Delay Street
Danbury, CT 06810
203.797.8330

CHC of Enfield
5 North Main Street
Enfield, CT 06082
860.253.9024

CHC of Groton
481 Gold Star Highway
Groton, CT 06340
860.446.8858

CHC of Meriden
134 State Street
Meriden, CT 06450
203.237.2229

CHC of Middletown
675 Main Street
Middletown, CT 06457
860.347.6971

CHC of New Britain
85 Lafayette Street
New Britain, CT 06051
860.224.3642

CHC of New London
One Shaw's Cove
New London, CT 06320
860.447.8304

CHC of Old Saybrook
263 Main Street
Old Saybrook, CT 06475
860.388.4433

CHC of Waterbury
51 North Elm Street
Waterbury, CT 06702
203.574.4000

Day Street CHC
49 Day Street
Norwalk, CT 06854
203.854.9292

Franklin Street CHC
141 Franklin Street
Stamford, CT 06901
203.969.0802

www.chc1.com

Facebook/CHCInc

Twitter(@CHCConnecticut)



Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, and Members of the Children's Committee, good afternoon. Thank you for this opportunity to speak before you. I am Lauren Crowley, a licensed clinical social worker working at the Roosevelt Middle School - School Based Health Center in New Britain sponsored by the Community Health Center, Inc..

On a volunteer basis, I work with my certified therapy dog, Cooper. He is a 5-year old black lab who loves people! We visit 2 settings, an assisted living facility and children's mental health facility. When we go to visit the children's mental health facility, Cooper and the other dogs enjoy going through an agility obstacle course alongside the children. The children love to pet, hug and walk the dogs around the gym – and the dogs simultaneously give the children unconditional love in return. Some of their comments on a survey about the visits are:

- The dogs make me feel better and happy
 - The dogs are a coping skill
 - The dogs make me smile
 - The dogs calm me down, help with my depression, a time to enjoy
- Cooper
- The dogs help me have fun
 - The dogs cheer me up
 - Staff report that one dog helped a client talk who hadn't talked in 3 months!

Post Sandy Hook, Cooper and I visited a Winter Fest in Newtown to visit with the children and families there. We also visited Newtown children attending an after school program. Our visits provided these children and families a little distraction from the recent tragic event – they actually appeared to be having fun. As most of us, I felt that I wanted to help the community of Newtown. I thought that Cooper could be a great way to help bring some joy to the children and community who have suffered a tragedy. Our visit did just that.



Although I don't currently bring Cooper to work with me, I have quite a few pictures of him on my desk. My school based clients often ask me about him and then tell me about the dogs in their family. It has been a great way to develop rapport and share feelings around something familiar. Research has been shown that dogs help with rapport building between a client and a therapist, especially in the beginning of their work together.

Please consider passing H.B. 6465. Therapy dogs can do so much to help children who are dealing with stressors and trauma. Having a furry friend and seeing a wagging tail by their side does a great deal to ease some of the emotional issues and help begin work during therapy. They love unconditionally, are nonjudgmental, are empathic, and enjoy the company of children!