

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER: FEBRUARY 2021 EDITION

LOOKING BACK

Since the end of February 2020, [United Way 2-1-1](#) has received nearly 7,000 calls from people in our region about food, almost triple the number as compared to the same time last year. A majority of those going to distribution sites have never needed food pantry assistance before. In response to the urgent and increased need for access to food, ELS created the [ELS Virtual Cooking Challenge](#) and the [Food for Thought Challenge](#).

COVID-19 has underscored the health and economic disparities of lower-wage earners and people of color; the vulnerability of those already hungry, homeless or developmentally compromised. ELS hosted conversations around social media and participated in community conversations discussing race, diversity, equity, and inclusion; such as National Day of Empowerment: Breaking the Chains of Generational Poverty hosted by [Urban League of Greater Hartford Young Professionals](#) and Black Voices hosted by [Middlesex United Way Young Leaders Society](#).

Through these experiences, we came together as a community to listen, understand, and act. Engaging 1,500+ individuals and raising \$5,000+.

In 2021, ELS will continue to bring young people together and create spaces where we can learn, grow, innovate, and impact the most pressing community issues.

A LOOK AHEAD



Exploring Microaggressions | March 11, 5:30-7:00 p.m.

Connecticut United Ways Young Professionals are coming together with community partners to host Exploring Microaggressions, a virtual conversation led by young professional, LeRon Barton, international speaker and author.

Microaggressions are often unconscious actions or statements that may impact others without the micro aggressor even knowing.

While each of us has been affected by COVID-19 differently, the pandemic has emphasized the health and economic inequalities of people of color. Funds raised through this event will directly support local individuals and families most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

LeRon Barton is an international speaker who has given multiple talks and appeared on TEDx, Al Jazeera, the University of San Francisco, Navis, Speakers Who Dare, Nas Dubai, Glide Memorial Church, The City of Cupertino, Los Altos Chamber of Commerce, Square, and Defy Ventures.

[LEARN MORE AND PURCHASE YOUR \\$10 TICKET](#)



ELS Virtual Cooking Challenge | First Round: March 22-April 5; Final Event: April 26, 6:00-7:00 p.m.

ELS is thrilled to announce the return of the *Virtual Cooking Challenge* presented by ConnectiCare for the second year. Celebrity Chef, Xavier Santiago, is back and better than ever bringing new opportunities, twists, and challenges for contestants and cooking enthusiasts alike.

Last year, ELS responded to COVID-19 by launching the 1st *ELS Virtual Cooking Challenge* to provide emergency assistance to local families and children most affected by the pandemic. This year, funds will support long-term recovery efforts.



Watch two-minute video recap of 2020 *Virtual Cooking Challenge*

The *Virtual Cooking Challenge* will help address barriers that contribute to local hunger and access to food by raising money and awareness and sharing healthy affordable recipes.

Put your cooking skills to the test by participating in this year's challenge. Enter to win a cooking experience with Chef Xavier by fundraising and recording a 2-5-minute video tutorial of you preparing your favorite recipe using simple ingredients.

[Watch videos from 2020 participants.](#)
[Registration link and additional details will be posted here soon!](#)

Funds raised will to the United Way COVID-19 Fund, where 100 percent of proceeds are invested in meeting the growing needs of local families for food, housing assistance and employment as well as supporting the education needs of children and youth.

3rd ELS Case Competition | Competition Dates: Sept. 21-Nov. 16

The *ELS Case Competition* offers a unique opportunity for young professionals and executive leaders to work together to solve a community challenge. During this eight-week experience, teams, consisting of 3-5 of young professionals, will be immersed in learning about a particular community challenge and positioned to identify creative solutions, while developing personally and professionally, sharpening their virtual presence, and being exposed to diverse leadership styles.

Teams pitch to a panel of judges in two rounds with three teams proceeding to the final round. ELS created this "Shark Tank" style competition to allow for innovative thinking, problem solving and professional development, all while offering up ideas that may have long term impact for our community.



Watch five-minute video recap of 2019 *ELS Case Competition*



Watch two-minute video recap of 2017 *ELS Case Competition*

2021 LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Join us.

ELS LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY | Case Competition Committee Member

This team consists of individuals with diverse talents and skill sets who are invested in planning and leading our 3rd (and virtual) *ELS Case Competition*.

ELS LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY | Social Media Support

Are you a marketing superstar or looking to sharpen your social media skills? ELS is seeking our next social media guru who will help enhance and support existing strategy and execution. The ideal person for this role will be dependable, self-motivated, have strong personal accountability, and strong communication skills. This is a great opportunity to get creative, grow as a leader, and get involved to Do Something BIG for your community!

UNITED WAY LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY | Community Investment Committee Member

The Community Investment Committee is responsible for making recommendations to United Way's Board of Directors concerning funds to be awarded to particular organizations.

[EMAIL REBEKAH CASTAGNO](#)

VIRTUAL VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES

Want to make a difference in the community from your home? As our society practices social distancing, United Way wants to ensure that you have the opportunity to do so virtually.

[VOLUNTEER TODAY](#)

ELS MEMBERSHIP

Why be a member of ELS?

As a convener for local young professionals, ELS:



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