SINA 10th Annual
REACH Awards Ceremony

Wednesday, May 25, 2016

Hartford Hospital’s
Education Resource Center
Heublein Hall
560 Hudson Street, Hartford, CT
**Program**

**Masters of Ceremony**
- Steve Balcanoff  
  *Manager, Non-Medical Services*
  Connecticut Children’s Medical Center
- Katherine Ramirez  
  *Sr. Community Care Coordinator*
  Connecticut Children’s Medical Center

**Greetings from SINA**
- Melvyn Colón  
  *Executive Director*
  Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance

**Welcome from Host Institution**
- Lawerence E. Milan  
  *Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer*
  Connecticut Children’s Medical Center

**Dinner**

**Awards Presentation**
- **SINA / Ivan A. Backer Scholarship**
  Presented By: Maman Cooper, Charlene Diaz, and Julia Rivera
- **SINA Student Support Scholarship**
  Presented By: Joseph Barber and Steve Balcanoff,
- **Neighborhood Service Award**
  Presented By: Nancy Canata, Lt. Gabriel Laureano, & Adrian Texidor, and Juliana Rivera
- **Institutional Award**
  Presented By: Danielle Warren Dias

**Closing Remarks**
The SINA / Ivan A. Backer Scholarship program was established in 1997 in honor of Ivan Backer, who served as president of SINA for nearly 20 years and who was one of the driving forces behind the revival of Hartford’s Southside neighborhood. The recipients are selected based on service to community, school, family, and academic achievement. The scholarship consists of three awards of $4,000 ($1,000 per year for 4 years) to Bulkeley High School seniors continuing their education at an accredited 4-year postsecondary program.

2016 Scholarship Recipients

**Liliana Patricia Garcia Guzman**

“In college I would like to do as many activities as possible because I know that it would help me and let me help others even more. My experiences have helped me realize that I am going to be able to keep helping others because that is something that makes me feel great.”

Liliana plans to attend the University of Connecticut to pursue a career as a psychologist.

**Imanol Santana**

“Need is universal. I feel a responsibility as a citizen of society to help my fellow beings, human or animal, and impact them in a positive way.”

Imanol plans to attend the University of Connecticut to pursue a career in business administration.

**Garcia A. Zaldivar**

“I participate in community service because in order to help our community, we need to stand up and give our time helping as much as we can to save our planet, which involves not only people but animals too... We need to help each other in order to have less problems in our community.”

Garcia plans to attend the Central Connecticut State University to pursue a career as a psychologist.
The SINA Student Support Scholarship program was established in 2012. The purpose of the program is to provide much needed financial support to students who are attending Capital Community College (CCC). One to four scholarships in the combined amount of $2,000 per year will be awarded annually to students on a full or part time basis, who reside in the 06106 or 06114 zip codes, and who have completed at least one semester of study.

**Shantel Cameron**

I am enrolled in nursing courses with the plan to become a mid-wife. Throughout my life, I have achieved my goals solely through hard work and determination. I am determined to receive a good education so I can support my three beautiful children and provide them with more than I ever had. I want to be a role model for my children - someone they can look up to and aspire to be like. I am very grateful for the opportunities like the one your fund is providing to students. It reminds me that I am not alone on this journey to accomplish my educational goals.

**Tiffany Lewis**

A nursing degree is honestly my true calling... I believe in myself and I’m doing the academic work to show my family that regardless of the poverty around us we can build ourselves higher on the foundation of education just like the American Dream promised. I want to be able to leave behind a legacy for myself and my family to prove to others that regardless of what we have, we can overcome the obstacles around us if we are determined enough to succeed.
Reykelis Rosario
I want to be a teacher. Growing up all of my role models were teachers that taught me life skills – Not just the subject they were responsible for teaching. For example: Mr. Santee emphasized the importance of attending and finishing college. He routinely explained the benefits and skills we would acquire if we decided to go to college... My desire is to have an impact on children’s lives the way Mr. Santee had an impact on mine. I plan on transferring to Eastern Connecticut State University to pursue a Bachelor’s degree in Education.

Torre Shorter
Although I have had many obstacles in the past, I take all my experience to help me focus on my academic goal. Some of the issues were financial, health issues, and also deaths in the family. While facing these obstacles I never lost sight of the need for education. Advocating, caring for and loving people are what I do and I feel that the healthcare industry needs more of it. When you’re working with people in that type of field, it just can’t be a job; it has to be more than a job. This is how I made it to Capital community College to pursue a nursing degree.
The Neighborhood Service Awards recognize individuals in the community who have made outstanding contributions to Hartford neighborhoods.

**Rosa Flores**

Rosa Flores is widely known for her compassion and humanity for others. Rosa came to Connecticut from Santa Isabel, a small agriculturally rich town in the southern coast of Puerto Rico. Rosa grew up in a large family with seven children. It was with her family that she learned to be a team player and a leader. Her father was a particularly strong influence in shaping her values and aspirations. As a youngster, she watched him mentor students seeking to apply for college. Often he would reach into his own pockets to pay for their transportation.

In high school, her love for volunteering flourished and she involved herself in organizing community activities. “I always had the passion for helping others because that was the philosophy in my house.”

In 1983, after obtaining her bachelor’s degree in Education at the Interamerican University in Puerto Rico, she found employment as a program coordinator.

A visit to Connecticut changed her life. She determined that Connecticut offered better opportunities for career advancement as well as superior educational opportunities for children so she made the difficult decision to migrate.
Rosa became the first Latina Preschool Teacher at Trinity College’s Community Childcare Center. Her qualities as a teacher impressed the parents of her charges to the extent that they requested she teach their children Spanish. Rosa obliged and taught the language once a week.

While she loved teaching, she recognized within herself a desire to work in social services. When the opportunity arose, Rosa accepted a position as Director of the newly developed Parent Power Program at the Childcare Center.

As her own children grew older and needed less of her time she also took the opportunity to complete her Master’s Degree in Education and Counseling.

When she took a position at the Connecticut Birth-to-Three System, a program that provides services to children with special needs, she was able to join her passion for early childhood education to her belief in the importance of robust support services for children and their families. Within a short time Rosa was promoted to Program Coordinator for the Parent Program. Rosa quickly developed a reputation as a person who went beyond the duties listed in her job description to find ways to help children and their families.

About 15 years ago Rosa went to work for CREC. In her current position at CREC as Coordinator of Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) Rosa displays the compassion and commitment to the total welfare of children and parents that has been her lifelong trademark. She couples this with years of relationship building and accumulated knowledge of the very complex systems that families must navigate. Her responsibilities include facilitating Parent Support Groups and working with individual

“I always had the passion for helping others because that was the philosophy in my house.”
- Rosa Flores
families to address their specific circumstances. She provides home-based intervention and prevention assistance, including education and advocacy, to families who are at risk of child abuse and/or neglect. To assist program families she joined a New Haven area Diaper Bank, works with Toys for Tots, Gifts of Love and numerous other service organizations, and holds two holiday dinners with all the trimmings every year. Rosa now counts among her volunteers parents who “graduated” from her program as well as staff from other programs and organizations who pitch in to assist during major events.

Nancy Canata, Program Director of CREC’s Child and Family Development Services, observes, “Rosa shines in everything she does. She makes connections and supports the families in the way they need to be supported. She’s a guru, she makes it work and she does it with style.” Canata adds, “Some families deal with autism, ADHD, and other developmental challenges. She learns about what they are dealing with within the diagnosed disability and connects the family with the help they need”.

Although reductions in funding for her programs have meant working with fewer staff members, Rosa continues to find ways to provide support and identify solutions for the families with whom she works. She also does fundraising for the program in an effort to provide the full range of needed supports for all who seek help. Rosa explains her driving force in very simple terms, “I love families and working with kids”. She also takes strength from her unique work environment at CREC, “we share resources, it’s a give and take relationship, we can count on each other”.

Recently, Flores was recognized as a Community Hero for her commitment and dedication to the community by the Restoration Temple Deliverance Mission and the Charter Oak Clinic.
Matthew Labbe

In 2003, Officer Matt Labbe made a choice to become a Hartford Police Officer. Labbe tells it this way, “back in 2003, it seemed like every day there was a shooting in Hartford. Kids were dying. As the father of a newborn baby girl these stories bothered me. So instead of complaining about how messed up Hartford was I decided to become a part of the solution. So I applied to the Hartford Police Department.” Hartford’s ethnic diversity and its cultural richness also contributed to Labbe’s decision to apply to the Hartford Police Academy.

The Hartford Police Department accepted him into the 2003 class. Labbe graduated from the police academy’s accelerated four and a half month program and began to work the night shift thirteen years ago.

Since then he has worked to protect and serve Hartford’s residents, business owners, and visitors as a patrolman and as the senior officer in Hartford’s K-9 Unit.

One day, while on patrol, Officer Labbe noticed a makeshift shelter made of odds and ends on a vacant lot. He immediately pulled over and walked towards it. As he moved closer, a man popped out wearing worn-down fatigues and a ragged shirt—caked dirt visible throughout his body from days, if not months or years of living in a homeless situation.
Whereas other officers would have arrested this man, thrown him into a squad car, and transported him to Hartford Corrections for processing, Labbe chose to learn about his past. He listened intently without judgement. Labbe learned that he was a veteran who was a homeless heroin addict. During their conversation Labbe realized he didn’t need to be incarcerated, he needed assistance a jail couldn’t provide.

Labbe connected this man to a property manager who was once a social worker in order to help the veteran secure a residence and gain employment.

Labbe explained his actions as being consistent with police practices, “We can’t arrest our way out of addiction. We must do something else. We must serve by connecting addicts with social services.”

This wasn’t Labbe’s only instance in which he spent some time getting to know someone on the street or connecting someone with resources. According to Lt. Laureano, “Matt will get out of his car and interact with anyone. If he sees kids playing football, he will stop and throw the football around with them; if he sees a shanty on a particular street he will stop see if it’s occupied, then use his cellphone to find the nearest social services agency to help the person living in the shanty. He is also a guy who will run into his car to be the first on the scene or back up his brothers in blue. He has done this since we first met back in 2003. That is why I recommended him for this award.”

When asked if he had followed up with the homeless veteran, Labbe responded, “I ask about him. I heard he is trying to work the program [Narcotics Anonymous] to get his life in order, and he is off the street.”
Tim Ketterer’s first job after graduating from Central Connecticut State College with a degree in Music Education was a summer job as an ice cream truck driver. On a gray rainy day he received a call from the Principal of Bulkeley High School that was to change his life.

He was not a stranger to Bulkeley High School. He had spent his senior year in college developing a new drumline at the school. But this was a job with a formidable challenge. He was asked to build Bulkeley’s Music Program from the ground up. Tim was ready to take on this challenge. At an early age, Tim sat in the basement with his dad and practiced the drums. His dad took notice and arranged for private instruction. In his senior year of high school, his skills as a percussionist helped him achieve the rank of number one in the state and earned him several regional distinctions.

By the age of 12, Tim knew that he wanted to teach music. His music teacher, who also happened to be his dad, made the class fun and inspired in Timothy a desire to become an educator.

It didn’t take Tim long to make a home for himself at Bulkeley, “In my first year, I absolutely fell in love. I found that every ounce of effort that I put in here goes 10 miles further than it would anywhere else.” When he arrived there were only 10 students in the music program. By the end of his first year Tim managed to recruit 60 students into the program.
Since arriving at Bulkeley he has devoted himself to recruiting, training, and mentoring his students. It’s been 5 years since he’s taken a vacation. Every summer he teaches summer school, provides enrichment programs and recruits for the music program during Summer Bridge, a transitional program for incoming freshman.

“It’s been an uphill battle the whole time. It’s hard creating this culture in a place where music had not really been present, and getting kids to value it as much as they value athletics.” His tireless efforts have borne fruit. At one point 113 students were involved in the music program. His influence reaches beyond the music program and affects students’ lives in unexpected ways: “I’ve had kids with terrible attendance issues that would never show up all of a sudden have a reason to come to school”.

In just a few years, Tim has developed a strong and exciting music program at Bulkeley High School. When a few of his students were asked to audition for Central Connecticut State University’s Music Program, he made sure to accompany them. His presence helped calm his students’ nerves during their auditions. He credits the students’ hard work and resilience for their admission to CCSU’s music program but there is no doubt that his inspiration played a major part in their success. Now some of those same students plan to become music teachers as well.

This summer Tim will finally take a vacation to Vermont to play with his new band, Some of Everything, as the band’s drummer.
Each year SINA gives out an Institutional Award that recognizes and honors an employee from one of our three institutions. This individual goes beyond the call of duty and contributes significantly to the betterment of the Hartford neighborhoods.

Myrna Millet-Saez

Myrna Millet Saez grew up in Guayanilla, a town on the southwestern coast of Puerto Rico. Caring for others was a deeply ingrained value in her family. Myrna recalls that every year her father would buy the kids in her neighborhood gifts for Three Kings Day, the traditional celebration of Epiphany in many Latin American countries.

Myrna’s parents were avid about education. They set a standard that all five of their children were to obtain some form of post-secondary technical training or a college degree. It took a personal tragedy for Myrna to fulfill this expectation to her own satisfaction. Her son died from cancer at the age of six. The person who helped her most during this sad time also influenced her career choice. “This wonderful social worker helped me through my grief so well, she helped me so much. The experience was eye-opening for me. I realized I wanted to help people like she helped me.” Myrna took the first step towards becoming a social worker herself when, with the help of her older brother, she went back to school and received her Bachelor’s Degree at the Interamerican University in Puerto Rico.
In 1989, Myrna and her husband Abraham moved to Hartford. Myrna found employment at the Charter Oak Health Center. During her 5 years as a Community Health Advocate, Myrna worked with the growing Latino population to provide counseling and education and to conduct community outreach.

During this time Myrna found a mentor in Clara Acosta Glynn, the founder of Latino Community Services. In 1995, Acosta Glynn helped her to secure a position with Connecticut Children’s Medical Center and UConn Health Center’s Pediatric, Youth and Family HIV program. The program’s primary mission is to “assist HIV infected and affected children, youth and women to be as healthy as possible and at the same time to prevent HIV transmission and acquisition in the people we serve”.

For over 20 years Myrna has been on the front lines of prevention, intervention, and care management; aiding adults, children and families affected by HIV/AIDS. During this time she has endured the loss of many young children to this unsparing disease.

Her co-worker, Danielle Warren Dias lauds Myrna for going above and beyond:

She is so committed, she takes calls on her days off and during vacation. Sometimes she comes in when her clients need her to accompany them to court, to hospital appointments, to the department of social services and to other places where her presence and support are so important. It’s almost like magic, the way she can deal with complex cases. She doesn’t give up and encourages her clients to find at least one positive thing to hang on to during their challenging times.
Myrna never abandoned her ambition of becoming a social worker. With encouragement from her mentor, Clara Acosta Glynn, Myrna attended Springfield College and obtained her Master’s Degree while raising three children and working full-time.

“\textit{It’s good when you find a field, a job you feel comfortable in. That’s me, I like what I do}”

\textit{- Myrna Millet-Saez}

Twenty years is a long time to work in a job in which the death of a patient, of a cared-for human being, is an ever-present possibility. Myrna explains what keeps her going, “When I see someone with no hope regain it and start living independently and setting new goals for their life, that makes me feel like, wow, I did something good for somebody. It’s very fulfilling. It’s good when you find a field, a job you feel comfortable in. That’s me, I like what I do.”
Recognizing over 125 neighborhood service recipients
Since 1991

2015   Evelyn Lopez
        Judy Johnson
        Iris Ruiz
        Mayra Lozada
2014   Judy Dworin
        Ana Alfaro
        Greg Secord
        Art Bouchard
2013   Lt. Robert Allan
        Leticia Cotto
        Allan H. Reese
        Luis Rivera
2012   Nilda Fernandez
        Gary & Karen O'Maxfield
        Rosa Plaza
        Ana maria Reyes-Scott
2011   Carlos Espinosa
        David O. McKinley
        Lee Boulanger
        Charlene Perez
        Lt. Brian Foley
2010   Paul Kapustinski
        Hartford Peacebuilders
        Sylvia Garcia
        Evelyn Figueroa
2009   Benjamin Cruse
        Leticia Colon
        Cornell Lewis
        Noel Casiano
        Alison Giuliano
2008   Elly Jacobson
        Gloria Diepca
        Sally Vazquez
        Doug Campbell
2007   Luis Valentin
        John Nelson
        Walter Kienia
        Father Charles Jacobs
        Robert Sampl
2006   Maxine Sullivan
        Shannon Raider
        Reynaldo Morales
        Carlos Gonzalez
        Eddie Lacey
2005   Richard deMey
        Earl Costenoble
        Ethel Austin
        Chris Lyons
        Charlie Morris
2004   Alan Carbonneau
        Barbara Hennigues
        Aura Alvarado
        David Corrigan
2003   Maria Negron
        Helen & Walter Krepcio
        Judy & Tom Lyona
        Maelyn Rossetti
2002   David Botero
        Laure Web
        Yolanda Rivera
        Edgar Reyes
        Hector Robles
        Nilda Santana
2001   Descautour Potier
        Caleb Cutler
        Robert O’Conner
        Bruce Johnston
        Joyce Boysco
        Gerry Murasso
        Lew Espyo
2000   Sister Maris Stella Hickey
        Michael Lawton
        Maria Capeles
        Yvelte Gonzalez
        Joe Barber
        Hector Hernandez
1998   April Goff Brown
        Edith Lacey
        Garry Lapidus
        John Tornature
        Hycacinth Yennie
1997   Kim McClain
        Liberty Ortiz
        Francesca Reale
        Jame R. Reed Jr.
        Robin Standifer
        Margaret Stewart
1996   Jackie Fongemie
        Bruce Johnston
        Aida Morales
        Yolanda Rivera
        Maxine Steward
        Tara Lawson Gill
1995   David Martinez
        Rina Reyes
        Janis Mitchell
        Susan Santilli
        Ann MacGillis
1994   Rosa Morales
        Marc Rubera
        Julio Concepcion
        Diane Zannoni
        Nancy Galarza
        Ron Cretaro
        Bernadine Silvers
1993   Carol Blanks-Lawson
        Barry D’Onofrio
        Emmie Galarza
        Dulcie Galarza
        Silas Shannon
        Mollie Shelton
        BR. Marcus Turcotte
1992   Ann Baker
        Rev. Lyle J. Beckman
        Bethy Berrios
        Kenneth Eltherich Jr.
        Lydia Rolan
        Patrick H. Tallman
        Gloria Williams
1991   Dr. James Aherene
        John Bonelli
        Gladys Capo
        Barbara Jean Easly
        Imelda Morneaul
        Boy Scout Troop 105
The SINA / Ivan A. Backer Scholarship were first awarded in 1997. To date over 60 students received awards totaling over $160,000.

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<td>Jordan-Elijah V. Baez</td>
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<td>Lesly Otero</td>
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<td>Shakira Padilla</td>
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<td>Didier A. Narcisse</td>
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<td>Jamal Nixon</td>
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<td>Marie Angely Rosa</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>Izet Krdzic</td>
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<td>Koralys Maldonado</td>
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<td>Annabell Moquette</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>Sefedin Begic</td>
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<td>Saida Cooke</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ceilena Gurahoo</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>Racquel Bowen</td>
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<td>Jose Colon</td>
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<td>Dorota Panek</td>
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<td>Evebonee Acosta</td>
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<td>Shaneca Napier</td>
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<td>Ruben Castillo</td>
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<td>Chariunis Perez</td>
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<td>Andrew Moran</td>
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<td>Lisa Tromba</td>
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<td>Van Nguyen</td>
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<td>James Reed</td>
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<td>Rexana Rodriguez</td>
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<td>Julio Roman</td>
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SINA Student Support Scholarship first awarded in 2012 to date 15 students received awards totaling $8,000.

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<td>Carmen M. Rodriguez</td>
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<td>Jennifer Farr</td>
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<td>Carla C. Williams</td>
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<td>Jack Silva</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Christina James</td>
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<td>Robert Soto</td>
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REACH Committee

Steve Balcanoff*
Chairperson
Connecticut Children’s Medical Center

Joe Barber
Trinity College

Charlene Diaz-Perez
Hartford Community School

Nilda Fernandez
UConn Health / Connecticut Children’s Medical Center

Ariel Pino
Hartford Hospital

Katherine Ramirez
Connecticut Children’s Medical Center

Julia Rivera
Trinity College

Luis A. Rivera
Subcommittee Member
Connecticut Children’s Medical Center

Adrian Texidor
Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance

Amneris Torres
Connecticut Children’s Medical Center

Linda Valentín
Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance

*SINA Board Member
Connecticut Children’s Medical Center

Dr. James E. Shmerling  
President & CEO

Jane Baird*  
Steve Balcanoff  
Lawerence E. Milan

Hartford Hospital

Dr. Stuart Markowitz  
President

Dr. Peter Beller  
David Fichandler  
Yvette Meléndez*

Trinity College

Dr. Joanne Berger-Sweeney  
President

Dr. Xiangming Chen  
Dickens Mathieu*  
Jason Rojas

SINA Staff

Melvyn Colón  
Executive Director

Keith Hedman  
Dean Iaiennaro  
Adrian Texidor  
Linda I. Valentín

*Executive Committee Member
REACH is sponsored by SINA and its member institutions: Trinity College, Connecticut Children’s Medical Center, and Hartford Hospital

The REACH Committee’s mission is to develop, support and recognize individuals who contribute positively to the well being of the Hartford Community.