

From Hard Work to Center Stage, Celebrating a Year of Growth

The stars were out as Kuhn's Rushford-Based program welcomed their rockstars for their annual end-of-year celebration, transforming the event into a memorable Grammy Awards-themed celebration. More than just a fun afternoon, the event recognized the perseverance, determination, and accomplishments of individuals who have worked tirelessly throughout the year to achieve their employment goals.

Each award celebrated the unique strengths and personal growth of the recipients while recognizing the challenges they have overcome on their employment journeys.

Joe M. was presented with the "Dream Chaser" Award, Jenny R. earned the "Standing Ovation" Award and Lynn C. was honored with the "Rockstar of Recovery" Award. Mike V. received the "Rock Solid" Award in recognition of his unwavering dependability and commitment, demonstrating day after day what it means to be a dedicated job seeker.

The celebration's highest honor, the V.I.P. Award, was presented to Tim F. for truly embodying Kuhn's mission of being Valued, Independent, and Proud. Tim's positive attitude, dedication, and commitment to personal growth made him an outstanding representative of the Rushford-Based Program and an inspiration to everyone around him.

Of course, no Grammy celebration would be complete without music. After the awards were presented, the mic was turned on for an energetic karaoke party where clients sang their favorite songs, danced the afternoon away, and celebrated one another's achievements. Laughter, applause, and plenty of unforgettable performances filled the pavilion, making the event a fitting finale to another successful year.

The annual celebration served as a reminder that every employment journey is unique, and every milestone—big or small—is worth celebrating. Congratulations to all of this year's award recipients and to every participant whose hard work, resilience, and determination made this year one to remember.

(See Photos on cover)

To learn more about Kuhn Services visit
www.kuhngroup.org



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Together We Rise: Advocating for Mental Health Every Day



Each May, communities across the country come together to recognize Mental Health Awareness Month, a time dedicated to reducing

stigma, encouraging conversations, and reminding everyone that mental health is an essential part of overall well-being. This year, Kuhn was proud to participate in the Rotary Club of Middletown's Mental Health Fair, joining organizations, advocates, and community members in raising awareness and promoting hope.

Our team was thrilled by the incredible turnout and deeply grateful for the enthusiasm shown. It was a wonderful reminder of the strength that comes from standing together as a community. Events like these not only bring people together but also reinforce the message that no one should have to face mental health challenges alone.

Supporting individuals in managing their mental health is a key part of Kuhn's mission. Every day, our staff work alongside individuals living with mental health conditions, helping them build confidence, develop skills, obtain meaningful employment, and maintain successful careers. Employment provides more than a paycheck, it offers purpose, routine, social connection, and independence, all of which play an important role in supporting positive mental health.

While Mental Health Awareness Month shines a spotlight on these important conversations, caring for our mental health should never be limited to one month each year. Just as we schedule regular checkups for our physical health, it's equally important to take time throughout the year to check in with ourselves and those around us. A simple conversation, practicing self-care, reaching out for support, or encouraging a loved one to seek help can make a meaningful difference.

Kuhn is proud to be part of a community that continues to champion mental health awareness and support. Together, we are helping build a stronger, healthier, and more compassionate community, one conversation, one step, one person at a time.



Quarterly Newsletter

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SAVE THE DATE:

2nd Annual Fall Festival and Paddle Race

October 17th, 11am-4pm

For inquiries about being a sponsor or vendor
contact shoisington@kuhnemployment.com

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For comments or questions contact shoisington@kuhnemployment.com

Making Waves in Employment: Celebrating a Year of Achievement

Kuhn's Middletown-based program wrapped up another incredible program year with a festive "Surfin' Safari" Celebration, bringing together employment specialists and clients for an afternoon of recognition, reflection, and fun.

With tropical décor, beach-themed festivities, and plenty of smiles, the event celebrated much more than employment milestones, it honored the perseverance, determination, and resilience that defined each person's journey throughout the year.

The road to employment is rarely easy, and this year was no exception. Every individual faced unique challenges while working toward their goals, but with dedication, hard work, and the support of Kuhn's Employment Specialists, they continued moving forward. During the celebration, staff shared heartfelt stories highlighting not only each person's accomplishments but also the obstacles they overcame along the way. Their achievements served as a reminder that success is measured not only by where you finish, but by the determination it takes to keep going.

Damien C. received the "LifeSaver Award" for his exceptional dedication to volunteerism and his commitment to giving back to the community. Antonio R. earned the "Sun Catcher Award" for his unwavering dedication to his job search and his persistence in pursuing employment opportunities.

As the celebration came to a close, it was clear that the afternoon represented more than the end of another year, it was a celebration of resilience, personal growth, and the strong relationships that make Kuhn's employment programs so successful.

Congratulations to everyone who was recognized, and to every person who continued to work toward their employment goals. The future is bright, and we can't wait to see where the next wave takes you. (See Photos on cover)



One Voice, One Mission: Standing Together for Connecticut's Nonprofits

Each year, the grounds of the Connecticut State Capitol become the gathering place for a powerful movement. Nonprofit Rally Day continues to grow, bringing together thousands of nonprofit professionals, advocates, community members, and the individuals who rely on these vital services. With every passing year, the message becomes louder and clearer: Connecticut's nonprofits are essential, and they deserve the support needed to serve our communities.

For Kuhn, Rally Day is about much more than attending an event, it's about empowering the people we serve to become advocates for themselves. The individuals who participate have the opportunity to stand alongside thousands of others, share their stories, and remind lawmakers that the services they depend on are not simply programs; they are pathways to independence, employment, community inclusion, and a better quality of life.

This year's rally was filled with optimism and determination. On a beautiful May day at the Capitol, Kuhn staff and participants proudly carried signs, greeted legislators, and joined advocates from across Connecticut in calling for continued investment in the nonprofit sector. Their smiles reflected the pride they feel in being part of something much larger than themselves, a statewide effort to ensure that every person has access to the supports they need to thrive.

As nonprofit organizations continue to face increasing demands while navigating limited resources, events like Nonprofit Rally Day provide an opportunity to remind state leaders that investing in nonprofits is an investment in Connecticut's future. Every dollar directed toward community-based services helps create stronger neighborhoods, healthier communities, and greater opportunities for people of all abilities. As Kuhn's Rushford-Based Program Manager, Mary Apuzzo, so powerfully stated, "We are not a line item, we are a lifeline."

For many of the individuals Kuhn serves, advocacy can be a life-changing experience. Standing before the State Capitol, knowing their voices matter, reinforces an important truth: they are not just recipients of services, they are citizens, self-advocates, neighbors, and friends whose perspectives deserve to be heard. Rally Day gives them the confidence to speak up for the programs that have helped them achieve meaningful employment, independence, and full participation in their communities. (See photos-left)

Networking for Success: Where Conversations Become Opportunities

Kuhn's "Networking – Spring Into Employment" event brought together individuals supported by Kuhn's Middletown-based and Rushford-based programs for an afternoon focused on building employment skills, creating connections, and learning the value of networking. This collaborative effort between staff from both locations welcomed approximately 30 participants to the larger, brighter space at the Meriden Public Library, creating an ideal setting for conversation and connection.

The event focused on the many forms of networking and how building relationships can help open doors to employment opportunities. Participants received a networking packet that included tips for developing connections, conversation starters, and guidance on creating and practicing an effective "elevator pitch" to introduce themselves, highlight their skills, and share their employment goals.

Senior Employment Specialist Walt Kita led the discussion, reminding attendees that networking is about making connections that benefit both people involved. While online applications are a common part of a job search, the strongest tool remains personal connection. The group explored how everyone has a network—including coworkers, friends, family, and community members—and how those relationships can provide support, recommendations, and new opportunities.

Participants also discussed the importance of keeping those connections active by staying in touch and building trust over time. Networking is about conversation, and although it takes time, meaningful relationships can make a significant difference in finding the right employment opportunity.

Attendees actively participated by practicing networking conversations, sharing their strengths, and learning how to stand out from the crowd. The group engaged in excellent discussions, listened attentively to one another, and encouraged their peers as they worked toward their employment goals. The event also provided an opportunity to celebrate several attendees who shared that they had upcoming job interviews.

The success of the event highlighted the value of collaboration between Kuhn programs and the importance of providing opportunities for individuals to connect, grow, and move closer to their employment goals.

Marching Together Through Beautiful Hubbard Park

Gray skies and a little morning rain weren't enough to stop one of Kuhn's favorite traditions.

For the past several years, Kuhn has proudly joined the Meriden Daffodil Festival Parade, bringing a sea of bright yellow Kuhn shirts, enthusiastic smiles, and an unwavering sense of community spirit to one of the city's most beloved annual events. What began as a new tradition has quickly become one that is staff and individual's favorite days.

The day may have started with raindrops, but by the time the parade stepped off, the skies had cleared just enough to make for a beautiful walk through Hubbard Park, filled with family, friends, and neighbors who refused to let the weather keep them away.

For Kuhn, the parade is about much more than walking a route. It's an opportunity to celebrate the city we proudly call home and to thank a community that has embraced and supported our mission for more than 60 years. Every wave, smile, and cheer from the crowd is a reminder of the partnerships, friendships, and generosity that have helped Kuhn grow while empowering thousands of individuals to build meaningful, independent lives.

Watching our staff and the individuals we support walk side by side through beautiful Hubbard Park is always a highlight of the year. Their laughter, pride, and excitement perfectly capture what Kuhn is all about, creating opportunities, building connections, and celebrating inclusion within our community. Events like these remind us of the strength of our community and the importance of coming together to celebrate what makes Meriden such a wonderful place to live, work, and thrive.

