Exploring Asylum Hill - HARC

Long a fixture on Asylum Ave, just West of Sigourney St, the HARC building may only really be noticed if you're driving westbound in the morning or afternoon when the countless vans and buses line up to drop off or pick up the 300 – plus participants in their day program. What goes on inside is much more interesting, and important.

When you go to their website you see that "HARC helps people with intellectual disability and their families enjoy lives of quality, inclusion and dignity by providing support, education and advocacy." When you go inside, you see just what that means.

Founded in 1951, when there were institutions instead of programs for people deemed "retarded", HARC has continued to grow and evolve into the multi-faceted service provider that it is today.

These services range from home visits and education, to all day, five days a week care. Their programs begin serving birth to three year olds in the home, continue to support education and development through childhood and adulthood, and include services for adults as they progress into their senior retirement years.

Aside from age, participants span a wide range of needs from those most medically fragile to higher functioning adults capable of mostly independent living with some assistance.

One very interesting program that they have is the arts program where with staff assistance they learn to paint and create works of visual art.

A series of works were created of iconic Hartford scenes from cardboard glued to canvas and painted. They are now looking for places to be displayed in Asylum Hill first, and then in Hartford and the area.

It's comforting to know that the compassion for our brothers and sisters with special needs that gave this neighborhood its name so long ago is still being practiced on a daily basis.

To learn more or to discover volunteer opportunities, contact Lori Gailey, Associate Director of Development at 860-218-6089 or lgailey@harc-ct.org. Photos of the murals are available at https://photos.app.goo.gl/G1POIlQ9H5jqrWf02