

## More from Fairfield Citizen



Police: Teens, 16, arrested in CT school bus stop



Data: Overtime drives up Manchester police



21 CT restaurants make it to Yelp's 'Top 100 In New

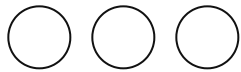


## HARTFORD

# Local officials recognize Hartford-based charity Dignity Grows

Jonah Dylan

Updated: Aug. 24, 2022 11:48 p.m.



Dignity Grows founder and CEO Jessica Zachs speaks alongside local officials at a Wednesday event to recognize the charity.

Jonah Dylan/Hearst Connecticut Media

HARTFORD — In March 2019, Jessica Zachs called a few of her friends and asked if they wanted to help out with a one-night event to pack tote bags filled with female hygiene products.

Getting people there was easy, Zachs said, but what happened afterward was more difficult.

“You create a need, a positive need, when you do stuff like that. And we started getting calls from other social service agencies. They tracked me down,” she said. “And we started fundraising.”

More than three years later, that idea has turned into a fully fledged 501(c)3 charity called Dignity Grows, with more than 50 chapter around the country. Zachs and her team were honored Wednesday afternoon at Charter Oak Community Center by local officials, including Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin, U.S. Rep. John Larson and Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz.

Dignity Grows benefits from a significant community of volunteers, especially teenage volunteers, some of whom were present at Wednesday’s event. The charity partnered with the Hartford Public Schools in October 2020, and it has been a huge help for students and families, Superintendent of Schools Leslie Torres-Rodriguez said.

“One of our priorities is to ensure that we are working in partnership with our communities and our families in order to ensure that we remove as many barriers as possible, so that our students can access and have academic outcomes that we are all proud of,” she said. “And each month, Dignity Grows drops off tote bags filled with products that are necessary for our students and families. That is a perfect example of the power of partnership.”

Though Dignity Grows has continued to expand, Zachs said she’s proud that the

group has almost no overhead, so all of the money that comes in through donations can be put to good use. The tote bags that the charity delivers to the community cost \$10 each, so even small donations have an immediate impact.

The charity's goal is to reduce the number of people in period poverty, or a lack of access to menstrual products and sanitation products. That's particularly important as the cost of products has continued to rise throughout the country.

---

## MOST POPULAR

- 1. Former UConn women's basketball star Napheesa Collier marries longtime partner Alex Bazzell**
- 2. One man's mission to find Connecticut's rarest snake: 'It's my white whale'**
- 3. UConn women's basketball coach Geno Auriemma's coaching tree: Where are the former Huskies?**
- 4. Connecticut was featured in a 'Celebrity Jeopardy!' question, and none of the contestants knew the answer.**
- 5. 21 CT restaurants make it to Yelp's 'Top 100 In New England' list**
- 6. Temporary dog park set to open in West Hartford**
- 7. Many CT movie theaters have closed or struggled since pandemic: 'You will see more of this'**

Zachs and Dignity Grows COO Jennifer Tolman Schwartzman said they both want to raise awareness about this issue and make it something that people talk more about on a consistent basis. They also hope to expand Dignity Grows into more cities around the country.

cities around the country.

“This mission to try to make accessible period products, menstrual products, basic hygiene products, to provide dignity, to remove indignity and anxiety, is so important,” Bronin said. “And it’s getting more important, because the price of those products has gone up dramatically in just the last year alone.”

*jonah.dylan@hearstmediact.com*

---

Written By  
**Jonah Dylan**

---

## IN-DEPTH COVERAGE

---

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>21 CT restaurants make it to Yelp's 'Top 100 In New England' list</b></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Official: CT educators charged in sex abuse case may get fired</b></li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>As US scrutinizes drug price inflation, CT analyzing next steps</b></li></ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Connecticut billionaire buys jet ownership, leasing company</b></li></ul>    |



[TOP](#)

## ABOUT

<a href="#">Our Company</a>	<a href="#">Terms of Use</a>
<a href="#">Ad Choices</a>	<a href="#">Privacy Notice</a>
<a href="#">Careers</a>	<a href="#">Interest Based Ads</a>
<a href="#">Advertising</a>	<a href="#">Your California Privacy Rights</a>

## CONTACT

<a href="#">Contact Us</a>	<a href="#">Hearst Connecticut jobs</a>
<a href="#">Annual DEI Report</a>	<a href="#">FAQ</a>

SERVICES

Profile