



Happy New Year and Announcing the Carnegie Classification

As we begin a new semester and year, the Center for Hartford Engagement and Research (CHER) is thrilled to share that Trinity College has earned the [Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement](#). This national designation affirms the impact of community-engaged work across our campus and recognizes the strength of the mutually-beneficial partnerships with Hartford and beyond.

This achievement was made possible through a strong, institution-wide effort led by Amy Myerson, Senior Director of the Grants Office. Myerson brought together a range of leaders and perspectives from across campus through a core application team composed of Liliana Polley, Sarah Raskin, Hilary Wyss, Erica Crowley, and Jason Rojas, as well as the many faculty, staff, students, and community partners who contributed to this collective success. This includes the leaders of the [Urban Engaged Learning Initiative](#), whose commitment continues to make community engagement a central part of Trinity's mission.

Upcoming Events and Deadlines

- **January 29: VITA Tax Clinic.** Free tax preparation services to the community. The VITA Tax Clinic is located at Trinfo, 1300 Broad Street, Hartford, CT. [Click here for more VITA Tax Clinic information.](#)
- **January 29: Hartford Environmental Justice Research Partnership's Pop-Up Exhibit.** Connecticut Museum, 1 Elizabeth Street, Hartford, CT. 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. [RSVP Here.](#)
- **March 12: Red Cross Blood Drive.** Contact [Joe Barber](#) for more information or to make an appointment. Mather Hall. 10:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
- **April 4: Chapel/ACES Easter Egg Hunt.** A celebration of Springtime with families and children. The Main Quad. 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
- **April 11: GreenFest.** A celebration and promotion of environmental sustainability. The Mill, 79 Vernon Street. 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
- **April 17-19: Trinity International Hip Hop Festival.** [View the full schedule of events here.](#)
- **April 30: Liberal Arts Action Lab Presentations.** Teams of students from CT State Community College Capital and Trinity College present semester-long research with Hartford partners. 1 Constitutional Plaza. 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

CHER RECAP FALL 2025



633

Students participated in 51 community service events

14

Students on three Liberal Arts Action Lab teams conducted semester-long research on a question posed by Hartford partners

\$17,022

Raised by student groups to be donated to Hartford community partners



317

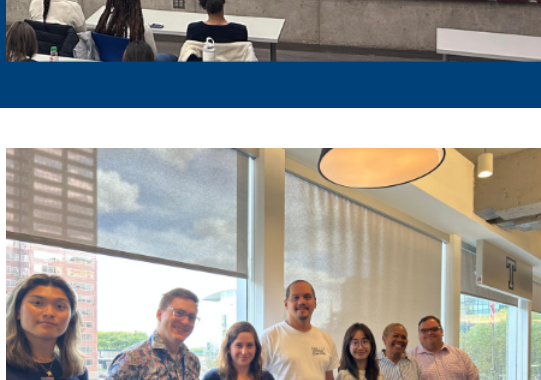
Students enrolled in 31 Community Learning courses

740

Visits to Trinfo by campus and community patrons

65

Hartford Magnet Trinity College Academy (HMTCA) students met twice weekly with 18 Trinity student mentors



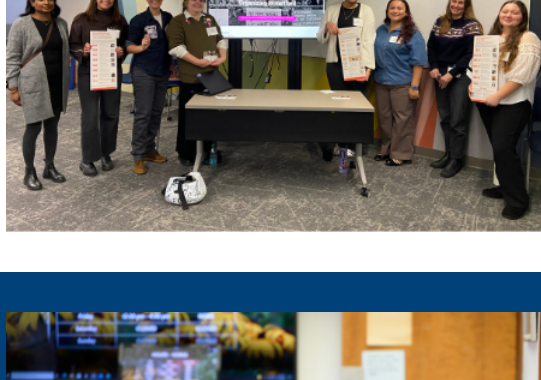
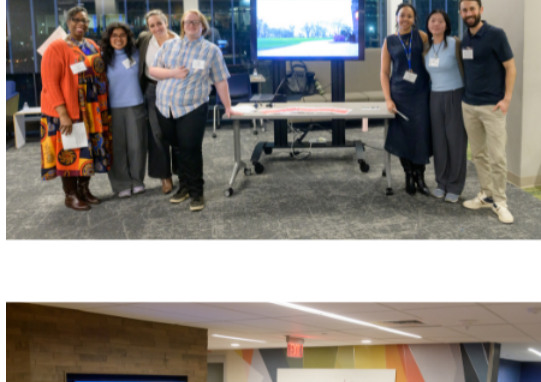
Health Science and Service Learning with Trinity Medical Humanitarian Association (TMHA)

The Trinity Medical Humanitarian Association (TMHA) is a new student organization formed through the merger of Doctors Without Borders at Trinity and the Trinity Collegiate Health Service Corps.

TMHA unites students passionate about healthcare, public health, and medical sciences, all sharing a commitment to humanitarian service and community engagement. The organization hosts hands-on learning experiences, such as suture clinics, and participates in community health initiatives like the Light the Night Walk.

TMHA collaborates with Hartford organizations to support health education and assemble care packages. Students Ella Schaffer and Shreyasi Oli emphasize that health is shaped by social, environmental, and structural factors, as well as biology and chemistry.

By blending experiential learning with service, TMHA is building a strong community of future health professionals committed to compassionate, informed, and impactful healthcare. [Read more here.](#)



Housing Equity, Transportation Justice, and Inclusive Cinema at The Liberal Arts Action Lab

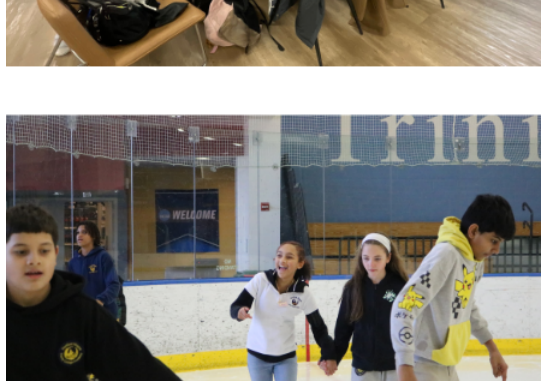
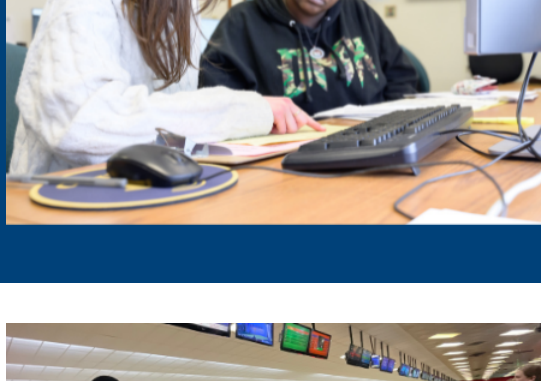
This past fall semester, the Liberal Arts Action Lab engaged fifteen students in three research projects: Housing equity, transportation justice, and inclusive cinema. Students worked alongside faculty and community partners to address research questions from community partners.

The Housing Equity Tenant Organizing Project partnered with the Connecticut Fair Housing Center and the Connecticut Tenants Union to explore the history of tenant organizing in Hartford throughout the 20th century, with students combining archival research and oral history interviews to examine key periods of tenant activism and create organizing tools, including zines and timeline posters.

In the Transportation Equity and Parking Justice Project, students collaborated with Advocacy to Legacy to study how parking policies and enforcement shape mobility, access, and equity for Hartford residents.

The Inclusive Cinema Project, in partnership with Cinestudio, focused on understanding why nearby residents are not attending Cinestudio programming and developed a report and summative booklet with recommendations to help make the theater more accessible to the Hartford community.

[Read more about their projects here.](#)



VITA Clinic Opens January 29th

CHER is excited to host the eighth year of the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Clinic at Trinfo. VITA provides free tax preparation services to the community ([view details here](#)). Trinity Professor Serena Laws directs the clinic and students in her *Tax Policy and Inequality in Hartford* course are trained as IRS-certified tax preparers to assist with tax preparation.

The VITA clinic will run from **1/29/2026 to 4/15/2026. Trinfo is located at 1300 Broad Street, Hartford CT, 06106.**

Tuesday - Thursday: 4:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Friday: 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Saturday: 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Appointments are available by calling 211 or online [here](#).

Trin-HMTCA: Reflecting on Fall and Looking Ahead to Spring

The Trin-HMTCA Tutoring Program concluded last semester with a field trip to Bowl-O-Rama, where HMTCA students and their Trinity mentors gathered to celebrate the end of a successful semester.

Trinity College student mentors supported HMTCA students with homework assistance and teaching general academic skills. Each mentor also designed and led an enrichment activity tailored to their students' interests, including cookie decorating, painting sessions, and campus visits. These experiences helped students feel more connected to Trinity College and develop strong relationships with their mentors.

As the new semester begins, we are excited to see the HMTCA - Trinity Partnership continue to expand programming and creating new opportunities for student engagement. For example, 15 HMTCA students have completed their orientation for the semester, with many now enrolled in Trinity College courses. Additionally, The HMTCA Learn-to-Skate Program will begin on Wednesday, January 28, from 12:00-1:00 p.m. at the Koppell Community Center led by Trinity College student coaches.

Community Engaged Learning in Action

This fall, the Center for Hartford Engagement and Research (CHER) was proud to participate in the Hartford Community-Engaged Teaching Conference, a regional gathering of educators, students, and community partners committed to advancing community-based and experiential learning.

As part of the conference, a panel discussion highlighted the Liberal Arts Action Lab, which was presented as an interdisciplinary and collaborative model of community-engaged learning that connects students with community partners to address real-world challenges in Hartford.

Another example of community engaged learning and teaching in action is the Community Action Gateway (CACT) which serves as a foundational entry point into CHER's community learning and action.

CACT introduces first-year students to Hartford's history of activism and social change through place-based learning and community partnerships.

[In this recap](#), teaching assistant Makayla Cervantes reflects on her experience with the course and highlights students' final presentations, which documented the work of Hartford "Changemakers" shaping Hartford's communities today. These and other programs represent CHER's continued commitment to connecting the college with meaningful, community-driven engagement.



Student Highlight: Thad Hempel Building Community Through the Action Lab and HMTCA

[Meet Thaddeus Hempel, a junior in Applied Mathematics and Philosophy.](#) From the Liberal Arts Action Lab to tutoring and coaching with HMTCA, Thad has combined his academic interests with meaningful work in Hartford. His experiences have shaped his perspective on cities, strengthened his connections with community partners, and shown the power of trust, collaboration, and relationship-building in community research.

IDEAS OR QUESTIONS ABOUT PARTNERING WITH TRINITY COLLEGE?

CONNECT WITH THE CHER TEAM.



CHER Senior Program Manager: [Erna Alic](#)

Director of Liberal Arts Action Lab: [Derin Atalay](#)

Community Service and Civic Engagement Director: [Joe Barber](#)

CHER Executive Director: [Liliana Polley](#)

CHER Faculty Lead: [Davarian Baldwin](#)

Center for Hartford Engagement and Research at Trinity College

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