Nearly 2,000 of the University’s Greater Hartford neighbors enjoyed the 10th-anniversary edition of Community Day on Saturday, April 28.

While a strong spring sun worked to lessen the effects of a chilly morning wind, guests had a tough time deciding where to spend their time, with more than 70 free attractions to choose. In Hartt Village alone, at least 26 different music-, theatre-, and dance-related activities, performances, open rehearsals, and classes were offered. For those wanting to perform themselves, the Presidents’ College sponsored a limerick reading and contest that spurred good-natured, fun-loving members of the University and Greater Hartford communities to take to the podium to meet the challenge.

Student participation reached new heights this year. Seventeen student organizations sponsored events, and more than 50 individual student volunteers worked in a variety of capacities.
Hawks Helping Others at Home and Afar

**Day of Service**
More than 200 University students, faculty, and staff spent an afternoon volunteering throughout Greater Hartford during the University’s second annual “Hawks Helping Hartford” Day of Service on April 27.

The Center for Community Service and the Student Government Association planned the event to give members of the campus community the chance to get out into Hartford’s neighborhoods and do some good. Volunteers chose from more than a dozen projects, including picking up litter along Albany Avenue in Hartford’s North End, sorting books at the headquarters of a local literacy program, and doing some spring cleaning in Riverside Park along the Connecticut River.

Ersha Llakmani ’13, an architecture major in the College of Engineering, Technology, and Architecture, was the student leader of the team that worked in Riverside Park. She learned of the Day of Service while working in the Center for Community Service and thought it was a good idea.

“It was a good opportunity to get out there and give back. It was fun working with everyone,” says Llakmani. “It makes me feel good that I can help other people and make a difference.”

Llakmani and other organizers plan to continue the tradition and hope to see the number of participants increase every year.

**Alternative Spring Break 2012**
More than 60 students from the University used their March spring break to make a difference beyond Connecticut. A group of 30 students helped residents of Tuscaloosa, Ala., rebuild after a devastating tornado killed dozens in April 2011. Their efforts involved removing debris, planting trees, and volunteering at food banks, soup kitchens, and free-clothing outlets.

Members of the University’s Habitat for Humanity chapter traveled to Fort Lauderdale, Fla., not for sun and fun but to work on a community of about 10 houses. In addition, nine students from University of Hartford Hillel joined students from other Hillel organizations to work at an urban middle school in Miami-Dade county in Florida.

**Community Service Honor Roll**
Thanks in part to the Day of Service, the University earned a spot on the 2012 President’s Higher Education Service honor roll for the second time in three years. The honor roll recognizes higher education institutions that reflect the values of exemplary community service and achieve meaningful outcomes in their communities. It is the highest federal recognition a college or university can receive for its commitment to volunteering, service-learning, and civic engagement.

“We are excited to be recognized on the President’s Higher Education Honor Roll again this year,” says Matthew Blocker, director of the University’s Center for Community Service. “Being recognized on the honor roll reinforces our community service programs and successes as a University.”

The Center for Community Service places approximately 1,200 students in volunteer opportunities each year. This participation is a big reason why the University is included on the honor roll, but Blocker is quick to point out that service-learning is also a big part of the award. Service-learning is becoming increasingly common on campus as more faculty members become interested in incorporating service into their curricula.

“I look forward to seeing more collaborations as we continue to grow our community engagement initiatives,” says Blocker.
New American Music Lives on at The Hartt School

Concert celebrates composer, music director, arranger, and television producer Jack Elliott’s private collection

He wrote the theme songs for TV’s Night Court, Charlie’s Angels, and Barney Miller. At various times he was the music director of the Academy Awards, Emmy Awards, Kennedy Center Honors, and the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, Calif. He served as music director for the Grammy Awards for 30 years. He scored the films Sibling Rivalry, The Jerk, Oh God!, and Where’s Poppa?, and produced the Blade Runner soundtrack album.

At the time of his death in August 2001, Jack Elliott ’51 (Hon. ’97)—prominent television and film composer, conductor, music arranger, and television producer—was the music director of the Henry Mancini Institute at the University of Miami.

Thanks to the generosity of his wife, Bobbi Elliott, the Jack Elliott Collection, associated with Elliott’s Foundation for New American Music, was recently acquired by The Hartt School. To mark the occasion and celebrate American music, noted conductors and musicians gathered on campus in April for the “Collaborative Concert of American Music.” Students in the Hartt Symphony Orchestra and Hartt’s Jackie McLean Institute of Jazz performed Elliott’s and other American musical treasures under the batons of Michael Barrett, Edward Cumming, and John Clayton. Grammy Award–winning recording artist Dionne Warwick (Hon. ’86), a Hartt alumna, was the featured speaker.

The concert was the first in a multiyear commitment by The Hartt School to perform, study, digitize, and record the works of Elliott. The first half of the evening featured the Hartt Symphony performing “Symphonic Dances” from West Side Story by Leonard Bernstein and An American in Paris by George Gershwin. Barrett, artistic director of the Caramoor Festival for the past eight seasons, conducted both pieces. A protégé of Bernstein, Barrett has earned an international reputation as a conductor, pianist, administrator, and champion of American music.

The second half of the program, conducted by Cumming, Hartt’s director of orchestral activities, included performers from the Jackie McLean Institute and featured six symphonic works commissioned by the Foundation for New American Music.

Warwick spoke about her friend Elliott. Composer and bassist Clayton was featured in a solo piece and introduced the instrumental version of his arrangement of the “Starspangled Banner.” His vocal arrangement of the national anthem was first performed by the late Whitney Houston, whose original recording of this arrangement was conducted by Cumming with the Florida Orchestra at Super Bowl XXV in 1991.

A West Hartford native, Elliott was named Hartt Alumnus of the Year in 1975 and received an honorary Doctor of Music from the University in 1997. His wife and other members of the Elliott family were in attendance for the inaugural concert.

The Elliott collection is an invaluable trove of more than 350 commissioned works, largely symphonic with jazz influences, by nearly 100 composers, including Erich Korngold, Henry Mancini, John Williams, Ray Brown, and Elliott himself. In addition to honoring Elliott’s legacy, the collection will provide Hartt students with an exciting opportunity to study, perform, and record a unique body of late-20th-century music of both historical and artistic significance.
John Corigliano  Hartt’s 2012 composer-in-residence

The Hartt School welcomed John Corigliano, one of the world’s most celebrated composers, as its 2012 Unclaimed Property composer-in-residence. The early-May residency consisted of three concerts of Corigliano’s music featuring the students and faculty of The Hartt School.

Corigliano’s scores, now numbering more than 100, have won him the Pulitzer Prize, the Grawemeyer Award, three Grammy Awards, and an Academy Award. All of his works have been performed and recorded by many of the most prominent orchestras, soloists, and chamber musicians in the world.

“One of the aspects that I admire most about John’s music is the incredible diversity,” says Glen Adsit, director of bands and associate director of the Instrumental Studies Division at Hartt. “[The] three concerts of his work allowed the audience and the students a chance to witness live his diverse voice both instrumentally and vocally.”

Foot in the Door, Hartt’s contemporary music ensemble, opened the series. This recital featured Hartt faculty members Anton Miller, Cherie Caluda, Janet Arms, Rebecca Flannery, and Christopher Ladd; members of the Foot in the Door Ensemble, led by Glen Adsit and Edward Cumming, the Primrose Fuller Professor of Orchestral Studies; and the Hartt Chamber Choir, under the direction of Edward Balikovac, the Primrose Fuller Professor of Choral Music and director of vocal studies.

For the second concert, Foot in the Door performed one of Corigliano’s latest chamber pieces, “Mr. Tambourine Man,” featuring soprano Cherie Caluda, a faculty member in the Hartt Vocal Studies Division. This remarkable work uses the poetry of Bob Dylan, set to music by Corigliano. This truly virtuosic work won two Grammy Awards for Best Contemporary Composition and Best Vocal Performance.

In the final concert, the Hartt Wind Ensemble and Hartt Symphony Orchestra performed Corigliano’s epic First Symphony and his Circus Maximus. Circus Maximus creates the atmosphere and decadence of the Roman Colosseum with marching bands and 17 trumpets.

The Unclaimed Property concerts are generously sponsored by Susan Brake.

University Magnet Schools Receive Honors

Both magnet schools on the University of Hartford campus—the University of Hartford Magnet School (UHMS) and the University High School of Science and Engineering (UHSSE)—have been recognized nationally as among the best by the Magnet Schools of America organization.

UHSSE was named a Magnet School of Excellence, the highest award given to select magnet schools across the country. Only 57 schools nationally received the designation in 2012. UHSSE also received a Magnet School of Excellence Award in 2008.

UHMS was honored with a Magnet School of Distinction Award.

The schools selected as Magnet Schools of Excellence will be further considered for the Dr. Ronald P. Simpson Distinguished Merit Award, bestowed annually on the one magnet school in the United States that most exemplifies a commitment to diversity, high academic standards, and curriculum innovation.

This year’s awards were presented on May 20 in Dallas, Texas, at the Magnet Schools of America’s 30th Annual National Conference on Magnet Schools.

Magnet Schools of Merit Awards are a way of recognizing the best schools of their kind in the country. There are approximately 6,000 magnet schools in the United States, serving more than 1 million students.
For the first time, the University of Hartford held a separate Commencement ceremony for graduate students. Approximately 400 students received their master’s and doctoral degrees on Saturday, May 19, with an estimated crowd of 3,000 in attendance. The ceremony, during which each graduate walked across the stage to receive a diploma, was held under a large, 12-peak, white tent with red University of Hartford flags flying from each peak.

University President Walter Harrison noted that the separate graduate Commencement ceremony was a chance to “shine a brighter light” on the University’s growth in graduate education. The University of Hartford currently offers nine doctoral degrees, 45 master’s degrees, and several sixth-year certificate and diploma programs.

Lewis Hyde, a noted poet and cultural critic whose work focuses on the public life of imagination and creativity, was presented with an honorary Doctor of Letters and delivered the Commencement address.

“Going forward, remember that the true path to individual greatness passes through individual self,” he told graduates. “To make your mark in the world, begin by making your intelligence, your imagination, your spirit hospitable to all that is not you. Join in, and nurture what Benjamin Franklin and his contemporaries believed in: a republic of letters, the civic republic. Obligate yourself to that and you will leave this world a better place.”
On Sunday, May 20, nearly 1,100 students received their bachelor’s and associate’s degrees at the University’s undergraduate Commencement.

Under bright, sunny skies, U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) received an honorary Doctor of Laws, then spoke to the graduates, urging them to take up the challenges that his generation has so far been unable to solve.

“I don’t doubt that my generation will leave a lot of unfinished business for you graduates and others,” he said, “but I also have no doubt that you will live up to this challenge, you will fulfill that compact, you will serve and give back.”

In his charge to the Class of 2012, graduating student Om Ramrakhiani said, “As we prepare to step out into the world, I echo the senator’s words. We promise to make a difference. Every one of us has somehow, in some way, contributed to someone else’s success, and it won’t stop here. As we step out of this University and enter the world as graduates, we shall have the University motto, ‘For humanity,’ etched in our hearts.”

The crowd of approximately 7,500 proud and excited family members and friends was introduced to two exceptional graduates. Kevin Sliwoski, a music major at The Hartt School with a concentration in jazz trombone, is the first student in University history to receive both the Belle K. Ribicoff Prize for academic excellence and the John G. Martin Scholarship, which provides two years of study at the University of Oxford’s Hertford College in England.

Brittany Wallace, who graduated with a double major in politics and government and English, was presented with the John G. Lee Medal, given annually to a Greater Hartford graduate who has excelled academically and demonstrated a deep commitment to the community.

See more news, video, and photos from Commencement at hartford.edu/commencement.

1 After their tassels were moved from right to left, the graduates’ celebrations began.
2 U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) addressed the Class of 2012, family members, and guests after receiving an honorary Doctor of Laws. Honorary degrees were also presented to Joseph Marfuggi, president and chief executive officer of Riverfront Recapture in Hartford, Conn., and Ruth Ross Ziolkowski, president of the board of directors and chief executive officer of the Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation in South Dakota. Ziolkowski’s daughter, Jadwiga Ziolkowski, accepted the honor on her mother’s behalf.
3 University regent Paul Sittard ’85 (left) presented the Distinguished Alumni Award to Elizabeth Park (center) a successful business leader in the fragrance and beauty industry. On Park’s left is regent Bobbi McNeil ’94.
4 Kevin Sliwoski ‘12 (right) accepts two of the University’s most prestigious awards, the Belle K. Ribicoff Prize and the John G. Martin Scholarship.
5 Brittany Wallace ‘12 (center) graduated with a double major in politics and government and English. She was presented with the John G. Lee Medal at the main Commencement ceremony.
6 Katherine Black, professor and cochair of the Department of Psychology in the College of Arts and Sciences, was one of five faculty members recognized during the May 20 ceremony. She received the Oscar and Shoshana Trachtenberg Award for Sustained Service to the University. Ken Steen, professor of music theory and composition in The Hartt School, was the recipient of the Roy E. Larsen Award for Excellence in Teaching. Mahmoud Wahab, professor of finance in the Barney School of Business, was awarded the James E. and Frances W. Bent Award for Scholarly and/or Artistic Creativity. Maria Esposito Frank, professor of Italian Studies and chair of the Department of Modern Languages and Cultures in the College of Arts and Sciences, was presented with the Donald W. Davis All-University Curriculum Award. The recipient of the Belle K. Ribicoff Junior Faculty Prize was Joyce Ahsuntantang, assistant professor of English in Hillier College.