

## The Hartford Courant.



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# EDITORIALS

## Getting Down By The River

When Riverfront Recapture decided to build a boathouse on the Connecticut River near downtown Hartford, it envisioned a facility that would serve its rapidly expanding rowing program. It had no idea that the handsome \$3.6 million building, which has a second-floor community room and deck overlooking the river, would become a hot spot for birthday parties, corporate receptions, weddings and family reunions.

By the end of the year, the boathouse will have hosted more than 100 events and 10,000 visitors, with virtually no marketing. The facility has been so successful that there already is talk of some day expanding it or adding a second boathouse.

Notably, the boathouse was constructed entirely with private money, including a \$500,000 donation from the Greater Hartford Jaycees.

All of this is a tribute to the vision of Riverfront Recapture, the dynamic nonprofit that for two decades has labored successfully to reconnect Hartford with the river. The results have

been spectacular — river cruises, concerts, sporting events, a walkway along the riverbank, a popular ropes course and a thriving rowing program for students and adults.

Many who attend a dinner or social event at the boathouse are introduced to the river's charm for the first time. Socializing on the deck, they might observe herons and egrets, rowers on the water and mountain bikers entering the woods. Riverfront officials hope, one day in the future, to illuminate the Bulkeley Bridge, which can be seen to the south.

Those who want to rent the community room pay \$75 to \$200 an hour, depending on the time and date. They choose from a list of 10 approved caterers because the boathouse has no kitchen.

This success story offers more evidence that downtown Hartford — and the river — are coming alive. If you have not had the pleasure of attending a boathouse event, wrangle yourself an invitation for a firsthand look at this jewel on the river.

### OUR TOWNS



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