



- Edger, Tony Vengrove's Story -

Anthony Vengrove is one of the newest “Edgers” to sign up for Over the Edge NWCT. He is the founder of Miles Finch Innovation and Makery Coworking, a collaborative work space in New Milford, CT. Here is his story in his own words:

Throughout my life, I have never been scared of heights. Then 9-11 happened. Perhaps it was the horrifying images of people jumping out of the buildings that triggered a sense of vertigo whenever I found myself elevated. Just thinking about being high up was enough to create a queasy feeling in my head and gut. Alarmed, I wanted to stop the fear in its tracks before it limited my participation in activities I enjoyed for decades.

Fast forward a few years, I was living in Richmond, VA and attending a business-networking event. A woman from Special Olympics told me about their Over the Edge fundraising event, which involved rappelling down Richmond's second-tallest building—just over 400ft.

I thought, "When would I ever get the chance to do something like this?" I signed up immediately. Soon thereafter, I realized it just might be the trick to quell my increasing fear of heights. My wife thought I was nuts. Actually, she was a bit ticked since she was pregnant with twins and the rappelling event was scheduled three weeks before her due date! Call me crazy.

The big day came and I was quite nervous. Truth be told, the hardest part of the whole experience was waiting on top of the roof for my turn. Once I was strapped in and moved into position, there was a team of people guiding me through the preparation. I was focused more on their instruction than anything else. As you can see in the pictures, I was relaxed enough to smile for the camera!

On my way down the building, I felt both exhilaration and fear. The view was beautiful, striking. Yet, every so often, I'd have a holy “you-know-what” moment when I feared what would happen if the rope broke, the backup system failed, and I fell to the concrete below.

In those instances, I relied upon the sage advice of Eckhart Tolle, who suggests asking the following question to pull your mind out of an egoic state into presence: What is my relationship to the present moment? Whenever a sense of panic filled my mind, asking that simple question pulled me back into presence. The answer every time, of course, was that I was fine--living, breathing, and enjoying a spectacular experience!

I thoroughly enjoyed the adrenaline-filled trek down the building and immediately proclaimed that I would do it again in a heartbeat. I am also happy to report the experience corrected my growing fear of heights, for the most part. I highly recommend this event to all my Connecticut friends! It is a truly invigorating experience in support three wonderful causes in northwest Connecticut.

(<https://www.otecwe.com/nwct/anthony-vengrove/>)



- Edger, Kerry Palmer's Story -

Kerry Palmer is an Edger. She surpassed her goal with 38 small donations from friends and family and colleagues. Here is her story in her own words:

A co-worker gave me the information on the event and said to me "this has your name all over it". I chose to participate because I live, work and play in Torrington. This awesome event has come to our town and I was not going to miss it. This is going to be a fun day for Torrington and I'm hoping the community comes out to support the event and then support our downtown shops and restaurants, I know I'm going for a beer and truffle fries at Sawyers once I have landed safely on the ground.

I think I gained support for Edging, because I made it clear that donating was not for me but for our community. And I wasn't shy - I put it out there. I did multiple Facebook blasts. \$1,000 is a challenge to raise, and I am blessed with wonderful family and friends. People were so incredibly generous. I think they recognized this as a unique experience and wanted to be part of it. Participants who are skeptical about being able to reach their goal should reach out to family and friends and stress the importance of the organizations that the event will support. I took the information from the sample letter that the organizers provided, reworded it and made it my own.

My thoughts on the day...Let's get T-Town on the news! Bring in folks to watch and make donations that day. Then shop and dine downtown!

*My thoughts on rappelling...OH MY GOSH WHAT HAVE I GOTTEN MYSELF INTO??!!!
I'm not a fan of heights, but I can't wait to shout WOO-HOO on my way down!*

(<https://www.otecwe.com/nwct/kerry-palmer/>)



- Edger, Jack Sheedy's Story -

Jack Sheedy is a local author and journalist who grew up in northwest Connecticut. This is his story about why he is Going Over the Edge, and how he is approaching his participation in this event:

If I were not a member of the Northwest Connecticut Arts Council, I likely would not have thought about going Over the Edge. I was among the first wave of volunteers, signing up the same day as Arts Council Executive Director Amy Wynn did. Also, I've experienced some sadness this past year and was looking for something to lift my spirits. I get to take a ride down the side of a building and help hundreds of people who are served by three great regional non-profits!

Almost immediately after signing up, I composed an email asking people to support me. I tried to be light-hearted in my approach, but also I appealed to my friends' sense of adventure, their willingness to help a friend, and their eagerness to support the causes that the Arts Council, Chamber Education Foundation, and Prime Time House stand for. I made sure I listed on my personal "Edger" page some of the services each non-profit provides.

Another idea I came up with was Dining for a Cause! Ninety-Nine Restaurant in Torrington authorized me to hand out vouchers to potential diners on July 26 between 5 p.m. and 9 p.m., when 15% of each diner's bill will go toward my goal to support the three non-profits! That is potentially several hundred dollars! Vouchers, I understand, are available from all three non-profits, or from me, free for the asking. I hope dozens of diners will join me that night.

As the big day approaches, my only worry is what to wear. Spider Man costume? King Kong? I'm open to suggestions. The act of rappelling doesn't really frighten me, because I have confidence in the Over the Edge professionals. I look forward to being part of one of the most spectacular events ever witnessed live by potentially thousands of bystanders in Torrington, an event that will benefit thousands, an event that will be talked about for years to come!

*I am already half-way toward my \$1,500 goal, even though I only am required to raise \$1,000. I could use a few more donations! If people aren't able to come to **Dining for a Cause on June 26**, I hope they will go to my OTE page and make a donation. <https://www.otecwe.com/nwconnecticut/jack-sheedy/>*



- Edger, Jeff Geddes' Story -

Jeff Geddes, Senior Vice President of Residential and Consumer Lending at Torrington Savings Bank, is Going Over the Edge for NWCT. He's an active member of the community serving on several boards. Here is his story about why he has signed up to rappel down Torrington Towers for the benefit of the three partnering non-profits:

My initial reaction to rappelling was "No Way!" Then I attended the first Over the Edge information session at Prime Time House and something inside me told me to put my fear of heights aside and take advantage of this once in a lifetime opportunity. I've always avoided heights my entire life but last October I zip lined at my friend's urging while on vacation and I had the time of my life. The adrenaline rush and feeling of accomplishment is hard to describe but I was able to overcome my fear then and I'm hoping I can again in September. You don't grow if you don't push your boundaries so I decided to challenge myself and rappel. It goes without saying that I am happy and proud to raise money for Prime Time House, NW CT Chamber Foundation and NW CT Arts Council; they all contribute to the quality of life in NW CT but it's more than that. I do have a personal understanding of mental health issues having had people I love very much affected; the impact is immeasurable so I'm very excited to support Prime Time House.

Once I put my page up and sent the link out to my friends and colleagues, the donations literally came pouring in. I have a very generous group of friends and business associates. I'm so grateful for all the support both financial and emotional. People that know me, know this is going to be a challenge. They have been very encouraging, so I think all that support makes me want to do it even more. As of now, 38 people have contributed and have helped me surpass my \$2,000.00 goal. I'm currently sitting at \$2,125.00 and I have financial commitments from many others that will make donations before the event. I'll be really thrilled if I hit \$3,000.00.

Besides being scared out of my mind, I'm trying to focus on the fundraising and not thinking about going over the edge. Now when I drive by the Torrington Towers I actually look at the building and talk to it, trying to make friends with it and convincing myself it's not that tall and that I have the courage to do it. I did purchase a costume for the big event but I'm not revealing that until September 16th. I promise it won't disappoint!

<https://www.otecwe.com/nwct/jeff-geddes/>