

Unity House of Troy
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INSIDE

unity house

Making Life Better



Uncertainty Calls for Action

Winter is often a time of reflection. It's when we plan ahead for Spring, a time of renewal. At Unity House we reflected on projects to best serve the needs of people who come

to us struggling and hurting. Like many non-profit organizations, we have been forced by the changing national landscape to question what it will take to reach the goals we've been working toward these many years. How will we handle an increase in the numbers of people struggling to attain life's essentials such as food, housing, clothing, jobs, and care for their children?

These questions and more make me grateful for the staff, friends, and partners of Unity House. Our Board of Directors works to keep Unity House on a path of fiscal responsibility so we can be agile in times of uncertainty. Our partnerships with local organizations help us all better serve our consumers. Our volunteers are vital to the mission of Unity House, helping us ensure fidelity to our core values: that everyone deserves equal economic, political, and social rights. We work together to open the doors of access and opportunity for everyone, particularly those in greatest need.

Certainly Unity House is not alone in planning for the possibility of decreased government support while demand for services increases locally. Part of our strategic planning is to continue to work with fellow agencies and groups who help us maximize efficiencies while delivering needed services with dignity. But I worry it won't be enough. Enough to ensure that families threatened by eviction have a place to go. Enough to ensure our

food pantry is stocked for those who are forced to pay rent or buy medicine before groceries. Enough to offer help in obtaining SNAP benefits, commonly known as food stamps.

Will there be further cuts to food programs, we wonder. We see job seekers who come looking for help in finding employment, or enough employment, to meet their basic needs. We see parents seeking help for their toddler diagnosed with a developmental delay. We meet victims of domestic violence who are in crisis, and adults living with conditions such as persistent mental illness or HIV/AIDS, or those challenged by chronic homelessness. Trying to help people meet their needs in a challenging time is both heartwarming and heartbreaking work.

Your support of this work is crucial. Together, we can help people bridge the gap between helplessness and self-sufficiency, between panic and security. If you haven't already, I urge you to get involved. Consider a donation to the Unity House program that speaks to you, come and volunteer, or help us to advocate for people in need.

As Spring arrives, we see beauty all around us. At Unity House, I am grateful for the goodness I see in people helping each other. In whatever way you are a part of this work, thank you.

With gratitude,

Chris Burke, Chief Executive Officer



The I Love Unity House Gala was a great night honoring Community Heroes: the Muslim Soup Kitchen Project, the Grace in Action volunteers from Grace Fellowship, and Brad Shear of the Mohawk Hudson Humane Society. Thank you to our many sponsors and volunteers for a memorable event.



CORE VALUES With passion and integrity, Unity House embraces the view that everyone deserves equal economic, political, and social rights. We work together to open doors of access and opportunity for everyone, particularly those in greatest need.

Be the Change You Wish to See in the World

Our community lost two beloved figures: Mary Jane Smith and Dean Leith.

Mary Jane Smith, a founder of Unity House, passed away in January at the age of 87. We learned of her passing on Martin Luther King Day. It seemed fitting for a woman who was dedicated to social justice and had a tremendous impact over the course of her life. You can read more on our website about Mary Jane Smith, her role in founding Unity House in 1971 with Regis Obijiski and the late Peter Callaghan, and her life of advocacy for people in need.

The other loss was that of Dean Leith, who passed away at the age of 84. Dean was an early volunteer and board member to Unity House who was seminal in founding what is now known as Capital Roots. What started as a service project spun out of Dean's work at Garden Way (formerly Troy-Bilt Rototiller Co.), is now a network of community gardens in three counties with Troy's Urban Grow Center committed to food justice. Unity House proudly partners with our neighbor Capital Roots.

We take inspiration from Dean's and Mary Jane's lives well-lived and we work to honor the legacy they each leave. We are grateful for the many people who shared their wonderful memories of those who helped shape Unity House. Your condolences, your stories, your memorial gifts, and your commitment to honor their memories with loving kindness are very much appreciated.



Partnering for Teen Dating Abuse Awareness & Prevention

Staff from Unity House's Domestic Violence Services program teamed up with CEO's YouthBuild, the Troy Boys and Girl's Club, Team HERO, the Block Center, Troy High School's WAVE Club, and the Sexual Assault and Crime Victims Assistance Program to host a Teen Night for Teen Dating Violence Prevention and Awareness. Many thanks to the Rensselaer County District Attorney's Office for their support of a fun night!

Would you like a speaker to visit your book group, office, or faith community to talk about the topic of domestic violence? Our staff are available to offer in-service training. Please call (518) 274-2607 and ask for Diane Cameron Pascone.

Volunteer at Unity House!

Come to a monthly Information Session to learn more. Call our Volunteer Desk (518) 274-2607 x4135 and check our website or Facebook page for dates and times.



The Run for Help

JUNE 11, 2017 Goff Middle School, East Greenbush

This family-friendly 5K Race/Walk co-sponsored by the Family and Friends of Liza Ellen Warner Association, Inc. and The Nikki Hart Children's Memorial Fund raises awareness of the needs of victims of domestic violence. Proceeds benefit the Domestic Violence Services program at Unity House and The Nikki Hart Children's Memorial Fund. To register, go to www.unityhousesny.org.



Super Bowl Jersey Winner!

Were you one of the many who purchased a raffle ticket to win this New England Patriots' Football Jersey signed by Pat's Runningback Dion Lewis? Many thanks to all and congratulations to raffle winner, Dr. Paul Byron, shown here with Linda Lewis. Special thanks to Dion Lewis for this wonderful donation and all you do for Unity House!

News from our Community Resources Program

Food insecurity, when an individual or a family does not have consistent access to adequate food due to a lack of money and other resources, is what prompts many to come to Unity House.

If you are struggling to pay the rent or weren't counting on such a long heating season, the grocery budget gets whittled down. It means people can't get enough food or they can't get enough quality food. Compounding matters, some have chronic medical issues, making access to quality, nutrient-dense food all the more important.

For families facing food insecurity, a community meal, food pantry, and food backpack program can be lifelines. In addition, food programs often serve as a gateway to other needed services, such as screening a child for developmental

delays, help escaping an abusive partner, housing support and case management services for mental illness, clothing from our store ReStyle, job coaching for help finding a job – or a better job, one that might pay closer to a living wage.



It can be overwhelming when we see upwards of 100 diners ready for lunch at Unity House. It's daunting when our food pantry shelves are not as flush as we'd hope, especially toward month-end when needs increase. It's a tremendous undertaking, but with your support we can help meet the basic needs of the men, women, and children who come to Unity House for one of life's essentials. If you haven't already, please consider a gift in support of Unity House's Community Resources program. You'll be helping to serve a hot meal, and so much more.



What's a Food Backpack Program? It's the mountain on the move.

Staff who are trained in providing trauma-informed services go out into the community with backpacks of food and other sundries for those in need. Simple gifts with life's essentials, the backpacks are a means to foster communication and build relationships with people who may benefit from services but, for various reasons such as fear, trauma, or mental illness, may not be ready to access them in a setting like a community resource center.



Follow ReStyle on Instagram

to see the amazing merchandise on sale!

The store is open weekdays from 10:00-4:30 with extended hours on Thursday when Community Resources is open until 7:00 pm.



Traveling Summer Camp Needs Your Help!

No one wants to sit in a stuffy apartment this summer. Especially when the Capital Region offers so much wonderful hiking, museums, and ice cream! Help send a child to camp this summer and make a difference in the life of a child.

Special thanks to The Robison Family Foundation for their continued support of the Unity House Traveling Summer Camp.

PERSONAL CARE ITEMS NEEDED

• shampoo • soap • laundry detergent • toilet paper • feminine hygiene products





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MISSION STATEMENT

Unity House is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for people living in poverty, adults with mental illness, victims of domestic violence, children with developmental delays and their families, people living with HIV/AIDS, and others whose needs can effectively be met by Unity House services and philosophy.



Our 5th Annual Co-Hosted Charitable Golf Event

AUGUST 21, 2017

Schuyler Meadows Club, Loudonville, NY

Proceeds benefit Catholic Charities & Unity House Programs

To register or for more info: Events@unityhouseny.org

Make the Gift of Your Lifetime

One of the easiest and most effective ways to leave your legacy is to make a bequest to Unity House of Troy, Inc. You can designate Unity House as a partial beneficiary of your estate or life insurance policy or donate a policy you no longer need.

For more information or a confidential conversation about bequests, trusts, life insurance or charitable annuities, please call Diane Cameron Pascone, Director of Development & Grants at (518) 271-2607 ext. 4133.



Got Little Ones?

The Unity Sunshine Program has openings for infants, toddlers and preschoolers at their three locations: South Troy, Downtown Troy and Downtown Albany. Call or text (518) 538-8666 to arrange for a tour today.

Unity Sunshine proudly partners with local school districts to offer community-based Pre-Kindergarten.

Since 1971, therapists have been providing physical, occupational, speech therapy and more to children in the home, center and community. Today, Unity Sunshine is where children of all abilities grow and learn together.