



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**UNITY HOUSE AND TROY SAVINGS BANK MUSIC HALL CELEBRATE
EXPANSION OF AMBASSADORS PROGRAM**

Troy, N.Y. – Leaders of the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall and Unity House announced today that the Unity House Downtown Troy Ambassadors Program, which employs individuals to guide visitors through downtown Troy and provide assistance to residents who may need it, has been expanded to help patrons visiting the music hall.

The Troy Savings Bank Charitable Foundation has invested \$15,000 on top of its initial \$50,000 investment, which funded the start of the program, to support its expansion to the neighborhood around the Music Hall. The foundation's initial grant for the program was for the launch of a peer-to-peer mentoring program to reach people in need of community services. The program has been highly successful and is now expanding to include Ambassadors providing hospitality staffing of performances at the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall.

"The Ambassador program gives people an opportunity to learn new skills and be successful. We are so pleased to partner with Unity House and The Troy Savings Bank Music Hall on this important community initiative," said Leslie Cheu, executive director, Troy Savings Bank Charitable Foundation.

"We are thrilled that the pilot program in partnership with Unity House has been so successful. Our patrons really appreciate the friendly greeting they get when they arrive. And the Ambassadors have now become an integral part of our Front of House Team. We look forward to expanding this program, making a trip to downtown Troy a real treat for visitors from all over the region," said Jon Elbaum, Troy Savings Bank Music Hall executive director.

"Our mission at Unity House is to make life better. The Ambassador program helps make life in Troy better for both guests visiting the Music Hall and the lives of our Ambassadors, who are now trained employees. This is a win-win-win for the guests, the Ambassadors and the greater Troy community," said Mike Maloney, Unity House's assistant service director of community resources.

City of Troy Mayor Patrick Madden, who participated in the announcement of the new funding, applauded the program, saying, "The successful partnership between Troy Savings Bank Music Hall and Unity House demonstrates both organizations' commitment to improving the lives of those in our community. The expansion of the Ambassador Program, which offers participants the necessary skills and training to succeed and grow, meets a critical need for those transitioning back into the workforce. We commend the Troy Savings Bank Charitable Foundation for their recognition of this need and applaud their continued investment in the neighborhoods and people of our great City."

The eight Ambassadors were recruited and trained by Unity House. They were selected for the program after demonstrating the skills essential to being successful Ambassadors: effective communication, positive attitude, and broad knowledge of services and resources offered in the community and through Unity House. Additionally, they all demonstrated that they embraced the agency's commitment to promoting social justice in the community and to treating all with dignity and compassion, and a desire to help create a positive environment at Unity House and in the City of Troy.

An intensive series of group trainings were delivered to the Ambassadors early in 2016. The training was provided by both Unity House staff and external trainers who were expert in the various topics, including boundaries and ethics, personal safety, customer service, poverty issues, veteran's issues and mental health first aid. The Ambassadors continue to receive training on an ongoing basis.

The Unity House Downtown Ambassadors Program is intended to provide temporary employment for participants and to give them training in the hospitality industry with a goal of helping them find a job within the industry. It is similar to programs operating in Schenectady and Albany, which are supported by the City Mission of Schenectady and the Homeless and Traveler's Aid Society, respectively.

Troy's Ambassadors are outfitted with green vests and hats so they are easily recognizable by those needing assistance.

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