

# INSIDE

## unity house

*Making Life Better*



## The people who come to Unity House's Front Door, their needs are staggering.

**Unity House has always helped people** who are living in poverty, homelessness, a victim

of domestic violence, or living with the challenge of mental illness or HIV/AIDS, but there is another face we are seeing more of that you may not expect. They are the working poor.

You might be surprised to learn that many of the people who come to Unity House for help do work, often in demanding service jobs. Their wages are low to the point that even a slight increase in their expenses can lead to calamity. The working poor face numerous obstacles in trying to move out of poverty: low wages, lack of employment skills or available hours, and limited mobility being chief among them.

At Unity House we see the ways in which this poverty manifests. We see mothers making spending trade-offs where they have to decide to pay the rent and have too little left over for groceries or buy groceries and risk a utility shut-off, or worse, the threat of eviction. This food insecurity- when you can't consistently meet your or your family's nutritional needs- is something we see a lot of. Our food pantry dispenses 22,000 pounds of food each month and over 2,000 people enjoy a meal in our dining room.

We realize we can't solve the systemic problem of poverty, but we can make a difference in the here and now. Our efforts are geared toward helping people with life's essentials, always mindful of each person's inherent dignity. We strive to offer our services with compassion and respect so people maintain their dignity and hope. Truly, it is work that is both heartwarming and heartbreaking.

We often meet people at a time of crisis: the eviction notice is posted, the utilities are off, a medical emergency

has put the household in the red, or affordable childcare is not available, so a job is threatened. We work to stabilize a risky situation before it compounds to homelessness or leads to unsafe choices. From there we work to help people find balance, in their finances and in their lives. If they had groceries, would that free up resources to get the car fixed? What about daycare, a better job, learning new skills, winter boots for their kids, or affordable childcare? Access to these things can mean a world of difference to someone teetering on the edge.

I want to close by telling you about our amazing staff. They work to stabilize and prevent the compounding of issues the working poor face. They are compassionate professionals who help our consumers deal with many obstacles. It's challenging work as resources are limited and solutions are not always readily at hand. Yet they work to make life better because they see the positive impact.

I invite you to learn more about our work. Come volunteer in our pantry or our kitchen, join us at a community event, or just stop by to say hello or call me for a tour. We are grateful to have many partners who share our commitment to preserving the dignity and safety of all who come to Unity House for help. I hope we can count you among our partners.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Chris".

Chris Burke  
Chief Executive Officer

**Hours on select Saturdays means improved access to needed services**

Unity House's Front Door is open on Select Saturdays. Stop in to drop off a donation, inquire about services, enjoy a meal, or shop in ReStyle, the Unity House store: November 17 and December 15th from 10:00 – 2:00 pm.

**Looking for an easy way to help?**

**Children's programming** is in need of diapers (any size except newborn)

**Children's Holiday Program** needs elves to shop for specific needs and wants.

**Do you shop online?** Consider checking out the Unity House Wish List on Amazon- Don't forget to shop via AmazonSmile to support Unity House!



**Friday, February 8, 2019  
Hilton Garden Inn, Troy**

**Honoring Community Heroes:**

Capital District Physicians Health Plan (CDPHP)

Clara Hunt, Charlena Keels, and Louise Liberty

Congressman Paul D. Tonko and Assemblymember John T. McDonald III

For more information: [events@unityhouseny.org](mailto:events@unityhouseny.org) or

call (518) 274-2607 x4139



## Summer Camp

Special thanks to the Robison Family Foundation for a fantastic time at the Unity House Traveling Summer Camp. We couldn't have done it without you!



## SEFCU Carnival for Children a Great Time

It was a great day on October 4th when SEFCU volunteers helped out at the SEFCU Carnival at A Child's Place. Families enjoyed ponies, clowns, music, and bounce castles on a gorgeous fall day.



## October marks Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Unity House staff and volunteers were busy all month with outreach and awareness efforts that spanned Rensselaer County. On October 12th the Domestic Violence Services Program hosted 'Out of the Darkness: Healing Through Art' an art exhibit highlighting the work and poetry of survivors of dating and domestic abuse. The Rensselaer County Department of Probation was honored with the *Coordinated Community Response Award*

and the volunteer group Strong Through Every Mile (STEM) with the *Volunteer Leadership Award*. Many thanks to our honorees and all the community collaborators who help address this issue and raise awareness of the needs of survivors of domestic violence.



## Thanksgiving Baskets Address Food Insecurity

The joint effort by Unity House, CEO and Capital Roots to help families with Thanksgiving food packages will serve over 400 households! Eligible households will receive pantry goods, fresh produce, and a voucher for turkey/main dish of choice. Contact us about hosting a food drive for needed pantry goods, or make a donation in support of Working Together.

**ANNUAL REPORT NOW  
AVAILABLE ONLINE!**

Visit [www.unityhouseny.org](http://www.unityhouseny.org) to view our Annual Report and list of donors. Want a paper copy? We'll drop one in the mail. Contact Diane Cameron Pascone at (518) 274-2607 x4133 or [info@UnityHouseNY.org](mailto:info@UnityHouseNY.org).





November marks Hunger & Homelessness Awareness month

Unity House's Supportive Housing programs serve adults with mental illness, people living with HIV/AIDS, medical conditions, and/or chemical dependency. Unity House staff work closely with area agencies to provide needed services without duplication. Working together ensures efficient delivery of services while offering varied service points for people in need.



**Children's Holiday Program: an enormous undertaking involving lots of elves!**

**Can you help? It's easy!**

- Conduct a toy drive
- Shop for individual children, from their wish list of wants & needs
- Donate gift cards or make a donation

*Thank you to the many individuals, businesses, and families who are already committed to putting the sparkle in the holidays for a child in need.*

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: The Kids are Alright



- **Local teens** helped sort and organize donated food.
- **Siena Office of Academic Engagement's Bonner Service Program** helps at various events at Unity House and beyond.
- **Fraternity Members** collect non-perishable goods for the food pantry.

If you or your group are interested in volunteering, contact our Volunteer Desk at (518) 274-2607 x4135 or Volunteer@UnityHouseNY.org



Consider hosting a *Care & Sip* gathering at your home or fave sipping spot. We'll bring the expertise on community concerns, mental health, addiction and recovery, domestic violence, children's issues. We'll help you learn about the topic of your choice- and ways to help and why to care. No solicitation and No fundraising.

Just conversation with good friends, learning and laughing.

For more information:  
Call Diane at (518) 274-2607 x4133 or Dcameron@UnityHouseNY.org



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## Talk Soup gathers diners and ideas Join the conversation!

Come to Unity House's dining room the last Thursday evening of the month for a light supper followed by a conversation on food insecurity. For more information, contact Amy Halloran, Food Security Case Manager, at (518) 274-2607 x4192



## Calling All Chopaholics

Can you or your small group help out in our kitchen? We are looking for small groups to help with meal preparation, specifically prepping and chopping fresh produce. Contact us for more details: (518) 274-2607 x4135 or [volunteer@unityhouseny.org](mailto:volunteer@unityhouseny.org)

## Personal Care items needed

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



## Make the Gift of Your Lifetime

By including a bequest to Unity House in your will, you are ensuring that we continue to help people in need for years to come. One sentence designating Unity House is all that is needed. That bequest gift entitles your estate to a federal estate tax charitable deduction.

Next steps:

1. Contact Diane Cameron Pascone (518) 274-2607 x4133 for additional information on bequests, or gifts of life insurance, etc.
2. Seek the advice of your financial or legal advisor.
3. If you include Unity House in your plans, please use our legal name and federal tax ID number:

Unity House of Troy, Inc.  
Federal Tax ID#: 23-2378930