

# INSIDE

## unity house

*Making Life Better*



## Work-Life Balance: something we all strive for

**The kind of work-life balance I'm referring to is different than what you might think.**

**What if the balance between your work and life was so precarious that**

**disruption to either side of the scale could start a tumble that could lead to catastrophe?**

For everything there is a tipping point, and for people living on tight budgets those tipping points are closer than you might think. Something like a change in income, even when minor, can lead to food insecurity, cancelled child care, job loss, or even homelessness. At Unity House we see many examples of this where, for people who are considered the working poor, a seemingly small thing can start a chain reaction of events that lead to dire outcomes, ones that we work to prevent.

Perhaps this is best illustrated by someone I'll call J. This person lives with persistent mental illness. J had skills to offer in the workplace but was not able to hold down a job since full-time work was not feasible given J's mental health issues. Conversely, not having the dignity of work was not good for J's well-being. This left few options for J and served to only compound problems: lack of housing options, food insecurity, managing a medication schedule, transportation, and so on. J's work-life balance was not good. J was not gainfully employed yet it was a full-time job to secure the essentials of life.

Through a variety of programs at Unity House, J was able to get their needs met. J learned how our food pantry and community meal are not just hand-outs, they are bridges to broader horizons. Today, I'm proud to say that J is a valued part-time employee of Unity House. J has transformed in ways we could not have imagined and serves not only as a good colleague, but as a peer ambassador for those who come to Unity House via a similar path. It's not always easy, and of course J benefits

from support and case management services offered through Unity House, but it is so rewarding to see the pride J takes in working while prioritizing mental and physical well-being. Honestly, J's is the kind of work-life balance you'd wish for anyone.

At Unity House we are working harder than ever to both meet the needs of the working poor and preserve their dignity. It can be a challenge to ask for help. Imagine if your work-life balance suddenly tipped, where would you go for help?

Inside is information we've put together to explain this cycle of cascading consequences that can be devastating to people who work and still struggle to find balance. Because we see how often a seemingly minor event can tip the scales toward disaster, we've launched a *Campaign for the Working Poor*. You can read more about this inside our newsletter and on our website.

I want to thank our Board of Directors, especially James Spencer, for their work on shaping this campaign. Their commitment to helping others and advocating for programs that best serve people in need inspires me. Please, I invite you to learn more about this work and to join us in *Making Life Better*.

With gratitude,

Chris Burke  
Chief Executive Officer

## Get Involved, a little or a lot

**Thanksgiving food packages** will serve hundreds of households with all the fixings for a feast! 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, our joint venture with neighboring non-profits CEO and Capital Roots.

## Children at Holiday Time

- Shop for individual children, from their wish list of wants and needs
- Conduct a toy drive
- 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.*

## 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!



**When: Friday, February 14, 2020**  
**Where: Hilton Garden Inn, Troy**

**Join us as we celebrate Community Heroes:**

Stewart's/Dake family  
 RPI/Dr. Shirley Jackson  
 Susan Shipherd

Questions? Contact Mandy at (518) 274-2607  
 or [events@UnityHouseNY.org](mailto:events@UnityHouseNY.org)



## 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

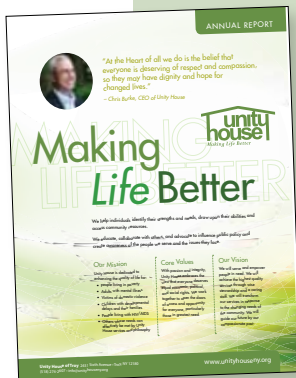
It was a great day on October 4th when SEFCU volunteers helped out at the SEFCU Carnival at A Child's Place. Families enjoyed ponies, clowns, music, and bounce castles on a gorgeous fall day.



## October marks Domestic Violence Awareness Month

A busy month of outreach and awareness efforts started with a block party and ended with a conference that helped elevate the conversation about domestic violence and the needs of survivors.

Special thanks to our community partners and those we honored with special recognition: Cynthia Urbach of Families in Need of Assistance received the *Volunteer Leadership Award* and the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Capital Area received the *Coordinated Community Response Award*.



## 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).



## In memorium

Kathryn Allen was a champion of people in need and served most recently as the board president of Unity House. A life-long volunteer and champion of many causes,

Kathryn was of tremendous support to Unity House and helped pioneer signature programs and events. She passed away on October 2nd after battling brain cancer. While she is missed, we take inspiration from her legacy.





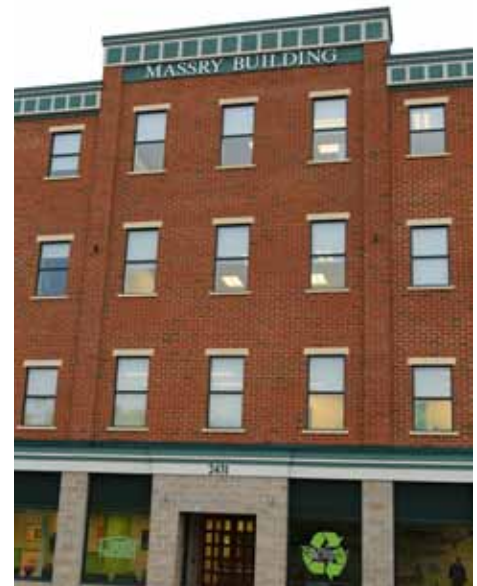
Unity House has always been linked to serving the homeless, those living in extreme poverty or coping with mental illness, children, and victims of domestic violence. We still serve those populations, but more and more the people coming through our doors are the working poor.

We help people avoid crisis. For example, addressing a major crisis like impending apartment eviction by working with someone behind on their rent due to unforeseen expenses like a car repair. By avoiding eviction, we prevent homelessness, a condition that is much more expensive and difficult to alleviate. Most of the time, the people we help would be familiar to you: they work in service jobs, are recently laid off, or their work has been disrupted by some event. The crisis prevention we provide is often the difference between being proactive instead of reactive.

You can be a part of these efforts to support the working poor through initiatives that stave off crisis. For more information on how you can help directly, contact Unity House's Director of Development, Diane Cameron, at (518) 274-2607 or [Dcameron@unityhouseNY.org](mailto:Dcameron@unityhouseNY.org)

## Building on a solid foundation

Since 1971 Unity House has worked to make life better, and in 2013 we became a more effective organization when we built our community resource center at 2431 6th Avenue in Troy. We were able to consolidate under one roof all programs except for those for children and for victims of domestic violence, who are served at stand-alone locations. We forecasted that an easily accessible location would enhance our effectiveness. We have exceeded expectations. Funding for the facility was made possible by the generosity of the many individuals, companies, and foundations that choose to make taking care of others a priority. All are invited to visit Unity House's community resource center, often called The Front Door. Join us for a meal, visit the food pantry, see the Unity House store, tour the building. We'd be happy to show you all there is to offer.



## November marks Hunger & Homelessness Awareness month



Unity House works with local agencies like Joseph's House & Shelter to prevent homelessness by providing needed services without duplication. This ensures efficient delivery of services while offering varied service points for people in need. Especially appreciated is the emphasis on Housing First principles, non-judgement, and harm reduction. If you'd like to help, contact our Volunteer Desk to learn more.



## An enormous undertaking involving lots of elves!

Contact us about how you can make the holiday sparkle for a child in need: (518) 274-2607 x4139



Unity House of Troy  
2431 Sixth Avenue • Troy, NY 12180



Find us on Facebook

Non-Profit  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Albany, NY  
Permit #220



## Volunteers Needed:

Join us for a Volunteer Information session to learn more about volunteer opportunities across Unity House programs. Held monthly, these free sessions are a chance to visit Unity House. Current programs needing volunteers are food pantry, thrift store, donation receiving, kitchen, and dining room. Consult our website or Facebook page for scheduled sessions or talk to our Volunteer Desk: (518) 274-2607 x4135 or 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