



Unity House of Troy
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VOLUME NINE
ISSUE ONE

Spring 2022



Retirement: an ending that is also a beginning

As I look ahead to retirement, I can't help looking back on the 41 years I have been at Unity House, 31 as CEO. When I started at Unity House in 1981, things were very different, yet much remains the same.

Our founders started from the ground up: they asked people what they need, rather than tell people what to do. This empowering, efficient approach preserves dignity and is part of what attracted me to Unity House. Today, all of Unity House's programs and services stem from this client-centered focus. Much of the Unity House offering today dates back to those early days.

While I am looking forward to retirement, I know I will miss the daily work at Unity House. I will especially miss the staff who have been particularly dedicated over the past two years. They have risen to the occasion with challenge after challenge. I will also miss the guests I've connected with personally. Human services work can be daunting, if you let it. Over the years, I have taken inspiration from the perseverance, tenacity, and resilience among the people we serve. For people living in poverty and with other challenges, the pandemic has been especially difficult. Again, I am grateful to our staff, partners, and supporters who have helped us all pull through tough times together. I leave with

tremendous gratitude for the work Unity House is able to do.

We all owe a debt of gratitude to the founders of Unity House. As we close out on our 50th year, I can't help but think of Regis Obijiski, the late Peter Callaghan, and the late Mary Jane Smith, the trio who started

had big shoes to fill. After her retirement, Mary Jane Smith volunteered and lived life to the fullest, right up until the end of her 88 years. She truly was an amazing person who still inspires. Her example gives me faith that my next chapter will also be fulfilling.

As for the next CEO of Unity House, I am confident they will embrace the Unity House commitment of treating everyone with compassion and respect so they may have dignity and hope for changed lives. Whoever will lead our agency, they only need to look to the vision we hold at Unity House: we serve and empower people in need. We aim for the highest quality of service. We guide our future by our compassionate past.

I leave Unity House with a heart full of gratitude for having been a part of the amazing work that goes on every day. Thank you to everyone who has extended their good wishes on my retirement.



Unity House. I have tremendous respect and admiration for our founders and their many helpers.

I grew especially close to Mary Jane, my first boss at Unity House. After she retired and I took over as head of the organization, I

With gratitude,

Chris Burke
Chief Executive Officer


**Domestic Violence
TEXT HOTLINE**
We are here for you 24 hours a day 7 days a week!
Text us or visit us on the web:
TEXT 518-720-6161
CALL 518-272-2370
or
rc.chat/uhdvs

Can you help with these items needed in shelter, children's programming and housing services?

Diapers, feminine hygiene products, new underwear/bras, general toiletries.



When you make a monthly or quarterly commitment, you are supporting more than your local non-profit.

\$10/month

keeps our hotline available 24/7

\$25/month

feeds a family with emergency groceries

\$50/month

houses vulnerable adults

STAY UP TO DATE ON UNITY HOUSE HAPPENINGS BY FOLLOWING US ON SOCIAL MEDIA. Did you know you can link to every available Unity House job opportunity via our LinkedIn Page? Check it out!



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.



Children's programs have openings for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. **Call (518) 271-6777 for information.**



Community collaboration: the key in addressing violence

Partnerships help meet the needs of victims of domestic violence. Our Youth Outreach Team is especially active in communities, where connections are key. Check out our website to learn more about one dedicated partner, Noteworthy Resources

On the Calendar

Our online calendars list events, volunteer information sessions, and opportunities to visit.

For those interested, consider saving the date of June 30th for a Cocktail Party Farewell to outgoing CEO Chris Burke.

Chris thanks everyone for all the good wishes on his retirement, after 41 years at Unity House.

Thank you for showing up!

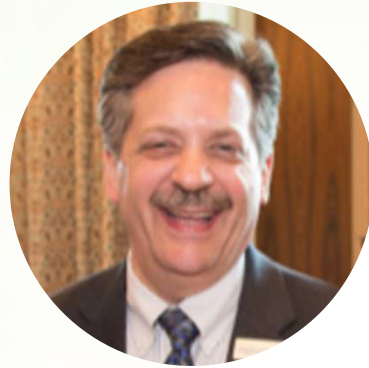
To sponsors and those signed up for our **Golf Tournament**, thank you!

To everyone who helped celebrate **Mary Jane Smith Day**, we appreciate you!

Get in the know on upcoming events by liking our Facebook page or checking our website.

BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Advocates in Action: Michael DiAcetis



Interview has been lightly edited and condensed. You can read the full interview on our website.

Mike DiAcetis loves spending time with his family, eating barbecue, watching basketball, and daily walk with his pups. He works at National Grid, where he seems to wear many hats, all about people and connections. We recently sat down with Mike to talk about advocacy and making a difference.

Q: How did you first learn about Unity House?

A: My first job was with a Department of Social Services, where I met my wife and heard about the great work being done at Unity House. Fast forward thirty years, I had the pleasure of meeting Unity House CEO Chris Burke, when we both served on the board of the local chamber of commerce. I became reacquainted with Unity House and its mission through getting to know Chris. I respected that Chris was the lone dissenter on a board vote that did not align with Unity House. His passion and advocacy came through during that vote; and it was something I have never forgotten. Chris piqued my interest to learn more about the organization.

Q: What makes for an effective advocate?

A: Most of my career at National Grid has included problem-solving and advocating for customers of all backgrounds; both residential and commercial/industrial. I've also spent time communicating key issues to local government, organizations, and community groups. To advocate effectively often starts with active listening. It takes patience to work through difficult topics and issues. I am fortunate that my company has always had a strong sense of community, supporting and encouraging advocacy in worthy causes.

Q: Why is advocacy at the board level important?

A: The late Kathryn Allen was our Board Chair when I first got involved with Unity House. She was passionate about an Advocacy Committee to identify, discuss and act upon issues that are important to the organization and impact the people it serves. While board governance is an important responsibility, advocacy and community outreach are an inherent part of what we should be doing. Through our presence in the community, we have the opportunity to articulate public issues that affect our organization; acting as ambassadors of its mission and champions of the people we serve. Participation in the Advocacy Committee has allowed me to hear from Unity House service directors to gain a better understanding of the challenges and obstacles faced by our staff and by people in need.

Q: What has the advocacy committee been working on and why?

A: Funding and Public Policy are recurring themes at the federal, state and local level. Recently we advocated for Cost-of-Living increases for Human Services workers, Mental Health Housing support and improved Child Care/Special Education reimbursement. The opportunity to help shape the outcome of public policy issues has a direct impact on the people we serve and the amazing staff who do the hard work.

Q: What would you want others to know about Advocacy?

A: There is a broad network people who recognize the importance of improving the quality of life for those that are disadvantaged. Numerous local, elected officials have met with us and the groups we work with to better understand issues that impact the people in the communities they represent. Assembly members John McDonald, Jake Ashby and Senator Neil Breslin have always opened their doors to hear and advocate on issues that are important to the people we serve. I would encourage everyone to volunteer in a cause important to them, and make advocacy a part of that work.

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 a confidential conversation about bequests, trusts, life insurance or charitable annuities, please call Diane Cameron Pascone, Director of Development at (518) 274-2607 x4133.

Welcome Claudette!

Claudette Senior is the new Director of Community Resources, but she is not new to Unity House: she worked in various roles in the Unity House Domestic Violence Services Program.



DID YOU KNOW?

Our pantry distributes **over 1,000 pounds** of food each week, and provides upwards of 600 meals to adults and children in need.

experience in meeting complex needs and navigating available resources make her an expert with clients and a familiar face to many.

Focusing on life's essentials such as food, housing, and more, Community Resources is often the first point of contact for many, including people in crisis.

Come in and meet Claudette! See our services and tour our community resource center. Call (518) 274-2607 to set up a date and time.



ReStyle Shoppers are welcome back inside to shop for needed clothes, shoes, and accessories. Anyone with an emergency need, can shop with a voucher. In this way,

needs are met, while people have the dignity of choice.

Due to an overwhelming amount of donations, we ask that people hold off on dropping off more clothes. Unsure about an item you wish to donate? Please call us for a conversation. We always make room for high-needs items like coats, baby clothes, and other high demand items.



The pharmacy located in the Unity House lobby is not just for our consumers, who benefit from its proximity to other services. Anyone can access Genoa. Congratulations to the pharmacy team who have helped dispense over 1,000 vaccinations against Covid-19. If you or someone you know is looking for a vaccination or a booster shot, consider calling Genoa at (518) 874-0096.



Faith communities help over decades and generations

It is special people who give from the heart so that others can live with dignity and safety. We see that especially in our longstanding supporters. For example, members of the Christ Sun of Justice and Our Lady of Victory parishes have helped Unity House and other organizations dedicated to helping the most vulnerable among us. Recently, the two groups started working more closely together, to better meet needs in their parish communities and in the broader community.



Help Wanted!

Check out our website for a list of job openings across programs and sites.