

Columbus House December E-News

You Keep Our Neighbors Safe

Your continuing support keeps our neighbors safe from COVID-19 and the cold weather. Almost 400 people have moved into affordable apartments since mid-March. Those staying in the New Haven shelter moved back to the hotels, and we were able to attain additional beds to keep up to 152 clients safe – close to the same number of people we usually serve during the harsh winters in New Haven. The Wallingford Emergency Shelter (WES) for single adults and the Middletown Warming Center (MWC) are operating at The Wesley Inn & Suites in Middletown, with room for eight WES and 25 MWC clients. Meals and case management services are being provided. Because of you, they are safe not only from the virus but are also safe from the dangerous storm expected to hit CT tonight. Thank you for making an impact on those experiencing homelessness.

Photo: Just a few of the hundreds of weekly meals – most made with food and funds you donate – prepared by our kitchen staff of two.



Days of Inspiration

Do you need a pick-me up? [Watch "Days of Inspiration"](#) and get uplifted by people like you who want to one day see an end to homelessness. A very personal and moving experience with homelessness is shared, as well as heartfelt and insightful messages from our John S. Martinez Community Service Awardees: Janice Hart, Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel and Medtronic. We hope you are inspired by the accomplishments you make possible!



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Columbus House Loses a Legend

Mae Olmstead has been a fixture in the Columbus House kitchen from our very first days running the shelter on Columbus Avenue. As one of the volunteer leaders of Guilford's St. George Roman Catholic Church meal serving team, Mae could be found on the 1st Tuesday of every month in the kitchen – sometimes as early as 8:00 am preparing for the evening meal. Impeccably dressed and hair done as if she were going out to dinner with family and friends, Mae always made those she served feel welcome and respected. She was famously known for refusing to use instant potatoes and insisted on mashing fresh potatoes.

In her younger years, Mae would visit her favorite spots throughout the area securing donated desserts for the shelter guests. In her later years, Mae could be seen riding shotgun in the St. George van with her trusted sidekick Giacomo. When the van was parked out back, you knew Mae was in the building!

Mae's humble, selfless concern for those who were in need is a trait that will be sorely missed but never forgotten.

The CARES Act Makes it Easier to Give to Columbus House

A provision in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES) makes it possible for many to make a \$300 contribution to Columbus House and receive a charitable deduction – even if you do not itemize and plan to claim the standard deduction. \$300 will purchase Welcome Kits for people moving into their new apartment.

Other CARES Act changes for 2020 include:

- If you do itemize, charitable deduction limits have been raised and you may be able to claim a charitable deduction for up to 100% of your adjusted gross income (AGI).
- If you are age 70½ or older and have an IRA, you can continue to make a qualified charitable distribution directly to Columbus House of up to \$100,000.
- Also, if you are age 70½ or older and have an IRA, the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) has been suspended for 2020 (but we hope you continue to make qualified distributions directly to Columbus House if you are able).

As always, please check with your financial advisor or visit www.irs.gov/coronavirus

Vlock Building Project – Virtual event January

Included in the cancellation of Columbus House events was an open house for the fourth Homeless: Housed building project with the Yale School of Architecture's Jim Vlock Building Project. Former students and their advisors were

able to finish construction safely during the pandemic, but we have not yet been able to share the new housing units with you. We are planning a virtual tour in January to showcase the two one-bedroom units and will keep you posted. The fifth and final building in the initiative will consist of a two-bedroom owner-occupied house with a Veteran preference. With the completion of this final home, Columbus House will have created 10 brand new units of affordable housing for those who were formerly staying in the shelter or living on the streets.



Yale School of Architecture students in front of the building constructed specifically for people experiencing homelessness

Clunkers for Columbus House

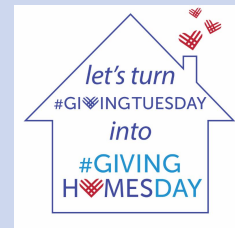
Do you have a car you want to get rid of? Whether it runs or not, it can help end homelessness if you donate it! Columbus House has partnered with Vehicles for Charity, a respected national nonprofit, to help us turn your old car into funds to support our neighbors. All donated vehicles will be sold at auction or for scrap and Columbus House will receive 80% of the net proceeds. Ready to donate? Have your title handy and [click here!](#) Thank you!

Please contact info@columbushouse.org if you have questions.



Vote by December 31!

We're participating in the Target Circle program! You can vote for us and help direct Target's giving to benefit Columbus House. For full program details and restrictions visit [Target Circle](#).



Thank you to all who gave on GivingTuesday

You helped us turn #GivingTuesday into #GivingHomesDay by raising over \$5,500 to support our work to end homelessness.

Thank you to **some** of our partners who have gone above and beyond helping to end homelessness with their financial support since our October E-News (through 11/30):

A-1 Auto Service Inc.
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