

the way home



Shepherd Home ribbon cutting on May 21, 2019

A Message from *Alison Cunningham, CEO*

A REPORTER CONTACTED ME RECENTLY asking for a good spring story, and by that he meant a good news story of someone who had made their way out of homelessness, making a new life for themselves housed in the community. Of course, I thought to myself, we have so many to choose from. There is the story about a client in our Medical Respite program who has successfully completed treatment for cancer, is now cancer free and working on reuniting with his family so that he can move home. There is the story of the family in our Middletown shelter who will soon be moving into an apartment in our Peterson housing (formerly Nehemiah). The children are still in school and mom is eager to get back on her feet so that she can provide for her family.

Another story is a little different in nature. We have successfully completed the renovations to Shepherd Home in Middletown, the building that was built in the 1920s as a home for nurses on the CT Valley Hospital Campus. This dormitory was converted to a transitional housing program for

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Shepherd Home Welcomes Veterans



IN MIDDLETOWN, 32 VETERANS have made Shepherd Home their permanent home, moving in throughout the spring months. On May 21, Columbus House celebrated this milestone with an open house event at the newly restored and renovated facility which included a flag raising ceremony with Veteran residents, a ribbon cutting and guided tours. Many guests expressed their appreciation for the state-wide support that enabled this project to come to fruition, including Mayor Dan Drew, Senator Matt Lesser, VA

Commissioner Thomas Saadi and other partners whose backing was essential.

Funders include: CT Housing Finance Authority, CT Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services, CT Department of Housing, National Equity Fund, US Park Service, CT Department of Economic Development – Historic Preservations, Middletown Housing Authority, Corporation for Supportive Housing, CT Trust for Historic



Three Veterans who moved into Shepherd Home days before the opening celebration attended the event and performed a flag raising ceremony with Dave Pina, USMC, Vietnam (3rd from left.) Photos this page: De Kine Photography.

Preservation, Eversource and the Home Depot Foundation.

We are grateful to all contributors who helped make Shepherd Home a home. For a list of these supporters, more history on Shepherd Home, and photos, please visit www.columbushouse.org/shepherd. ■

Chocolate to the Rescue



MORE THAN \$19,000 was raised for the Middlesex Family Shelter during our Chocolate to the Rescue event on March 24. Over 200 people gathered at the Inn at Middletown to sample chocolate creations from local artisans, taste hard cider samples from Spoke + Spy Ciderworks, and bid on silent auction prizes, all to benefit families experiencing homelessness in Middlesex County. The Middlesex Family Shelter is an emergency housing program which provides beds and case management for up to 50 families per year. Thank you to everyone who participated in this event!

Chocolate participants included: Chip in a Bottle (winner of both the People's and Critic's Choice for Most Creative Chocolate), Marjolaine Pastry Shop (won the People's Choice for Most Amazing Chocolate Flavor), Eddy's Bake Shop (won the Critic's Choice for Most Amazing Chocolate Flavor), Tall Order Treats, Purple Carrot Foods, MELT Chocolatier, ION Restaurant, Perk on Main, Tschudin Chocolates & Confections, and Sweet Sage Bakery. For more photos visit www.columbushouse.org/chocolate. (Photo above by De Kine Photography.) ■

Ending Youth Homelessness



COLUMBUS HOUSE has joined with local partners to achieve Connecticut's goal of ending youth homelessness by 2020. As a grant recipient from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP), the funds from YHDP allow us to better serve the needs of youth ages 18-24

and to reach the many youth that tend to avoid shelters. Columbus House partners with Women and Families Center in Meriden to employ Youth Navigator staff who connect with and identify the needs of youth – these navigators have experienced homelessness and are better able to connect with youth. We also partner with The Connection to provide four

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Recent Events

OVER \$40,000

was raised to help end homelessness through various events hosted by our supporters since February. Visit our website at columbushouse.org/events to read more and to view upcoming events!

Youth Engagement Team Initiatives (YETI), created in 2016, are the backbone for ending youth homelessness in Connecticut. The YETIs were recently honored with a Community Champions award by the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness for their tireless efforts to meet the goal of ending youth homelessness in CT by 2020. Caroline Perez, Columbus House Manager of Middlesex Services and also a YETI co-leader, is pictured 4th from right.

beds of crisis housing specifically for youth in Middlesex County. Rapid Re-Housing is offered in Middlesex and New Haven counties and moves youth directly from instances of homelessness into their own rental unit by providing short-term financial assistance. We look forward to keeping you apprised of our shared goal of ending youth homelessness. ■

We're excited to announce the following awards:

WALLINGFORD EMERGENCY SHELTER Non Profit of the Year

The Wallingford Emergency Shelter has been selected as the 2019 Non Profit of the Year by The Quinnipiac Chamber of Commerce! This award is given to an organization for their outstanding support of the community at large and their service to those in need.

Alison Cunningham, CEO of Columbus



Beds ready for guests at the Wallingford Emergency Shelter

House, and Matt Cammarota – long-term volunteer, former Wallingford Emergency Shelter Board President and current Columbus House Board member, will accept this honor during the Chamber's Annual Meeting and Awards Celebration Dinner on June 12.

We are thankful to Dee Prior Nesti, Garret Sheehan and the entire Board

and staff of the Quinnipiac Chamber of Commerce for their support of Columbus House and the Wallingford Emergency Shelter and helping to bring the Wallingford community closer together.

ALISON CUNNINGHAM Sengbe Pieh Community Service Award

On the evening of Thursday, April 25, Columbus House Chief Executive Officer Alison Cunningham was presented with the Sengbe Pieh Community Service Award from First and Summerfield United Methodist Church in New Haven. Every two years, First and Summerfield honors someone in the community who embodies the legacy of Sengbe Pieh who led the uprising on the Amistad slave ship, a significant part of New Haven's history. The awardees have always been those who seek the liberation of our communities and of ourselves. Thank you First and Summerfield for bestowing this well-deserved award to Alison.

JOE WHITE – The Carol Walter Supportive Housing Tenant Award
Partnership for Strong Communities hosts their annual Reaching Home celebration and honors two housing tenants who show commitment to

advocacy for permanent housing solutions, exhibit leadership skills, and work to make their community a better place. The Carol Walter Supportive Housing Tenant Award is named in honor of Carol Walter, a much-loved Executive Director of the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness. A respected advocate in the area of housing and homelessness, Carol was passionate and tireless in her work to end homelessness. This year, one of the recipients is Columbus House client Joe White, who will be presented with the award on Thursday, June 13 at Anthony's Ocean View. Congratulations to Joe who has been permanently housed for four years and tirelessly works on behalf of his community. Read more at www.columbushouse.org/joe ■



Joe at home in his kitchen

A Message from Alison Cunningham continued from page 1

men, which ran for many years until closing in 2014. We have restored that beautiful historic building to now include 32 apartments for Veterans. New life to a stately old home now serving those who have served our country.

While we celebrate successes, both for the individuals and families that we serve and for Columbus House, we should also be aware of those for whom homelessness continues to be a daily challenge. In a recent meeting with the manager of our Outreach & Engagement program, I heard stories of those whom the Outreach team has recently encountered on the streets. The staff came upon a man who was living in a bunker of sorts. He had literally dug himself a hole, deep enough to stand up in, with a rope to help him exit. He lined the hole with tarps to help insulate him

from the cold. The hide-out was covered by brush, hidden from passers-by. Staff estimate that he had lived there for months, surviving the harsh cold of our New England winter.

The good news in CT is that the number of people utilizing shelters is down by 10% this year over last and down 40% since 2012. That is cause for celebration! But at the same time, we are mindful of those who are living on the streets, and our teams have worked with close to 100 people this year in the New Haven region and 80 in the Middletown region. We may be used to seeing people who experience homelessness on Main Street or on the Green, but we may be surprised to learn that people are living in all kinds of places and conditions. Part of the HUD definition of homelessness is a person living "in a place not meant for human

habitation." We see that over and over in abandoned buildings, in cars, tents and the stoops of buildings, and now in makeshift bunkers.

The man in the bunker is now working with the Columbus House Recovery Support Specialist who has helped him get the health care he needs. We will continue working with him until he gets housed and beyond, providing the case management support that can help this man integrate into his community and enhance his quality of life.

Columbus House offers renewed hope for people who experience homelessness and the assistance they may need to make a new life for themselves, housed. No matter what the season, our mission is to end homelessness, one life at a time. ■

SAVE THE DATE!

July 12, 2019

HIGHER GROUND GOLF TOURNAMENT

Join us for the 23rd annual Higher Ground Golf Tournament, presented by Orange Congregational Church and Columbus House. Support local Veterans and families in need!

August 3, 2019 HOMERUN FOR HEROES

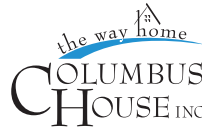
Save the Date for the 9th annual Homerun for Heroes baseball game hosted by Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin Company, and Teamsters Local 1150.

September 30, 2019 ENTERPRISE BUILDERS GOLF TOURNAMENT

Help Veterans by playing golf during Enterprise Builders' tournament at Lake of Isles in North Stonington.

Contact 203-401-4400 x131 or pphonyohee@columbushouse.org regarding these events, or visit www.columbushouse.org/events

www.columbushouse.org



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Chris Ulbrich Trek to End Homelessness!



CHRIS ULBRICH is embarking on a 256 mile trek on the Appalachian Trail to support the **Wallingford Emergency Shelter**. Starting July 1, Chris will set off on a 25 day journey, beginning in Connecticut, traveling through Massachusetts and ending in Vermont. He will be walking about 10 miles per day.

Will you show your support for Chris in his endeavor to help end homelessness? He will match up to \$10,000 in donations and you can also create your own fundraising page!

The Wallingford Emergency Shelter provides emergency shelter, case management, and supportive services to families year-round, and to single adults during the winter months. Approximately 12 families and 50 individuals are offered vital support each year.

Learn more at www.columbushouse.org/trek

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