

A Message from the Board Chair

Stepping into the role of Board Chair for Columbus House fills me with great honor and humility, and I am so incredibly grateful for the chance to serve our organization during this time of both great

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challenges and opportunities. On behalf of the Columbus House Board of Directors, THANK YOU for your ongoing dedication to supporting our unhoused neighbors. Your generous contributions of financial support, basic needs items, and your time are the foundation of Columbus

House, and your dedicated support reaffirms that we are all part of a larger collective striving to end homelessness. We are so fortunate to have you working alongside us as partners.

Today, over 5,000 individuals are experiencing homelessness in our state due to increased cost of living, rising eviction rates, and a critical lack of affordable housing. Despite these formidable challenges, Columbus House’s dedicated staff continue to serve clients with compassion and respect, assisting them in overcoming obstacles and [continued on page 2](#)



After two years of serving on our Board, Stephen Ziegelmeier accepted the role of Chair in March of this year.

A Sweet Success: \$22,000 Raised at Chocolate to the Rescue!



Participants with emcee Jim Masters (holding mic), judges Chef Chris Proseri and Priscilla Martel (left of Jim) and volunteer Vince Contrucci (right of Jim). Photo by Bill De Kine who generously volunteered his time and talent

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who participated, attended, sponsored, and volunteered on April 14th at the Crystal Ballroom in Middletown for an afternoon of indulgence and generosity. With each bite and bid, \$22k was raised at this 21st annual event in support of our Middlesex Family Shelter.

Guests sampled decadent chocolate creations from eight talented participants, voted for their favorites, and watched expert judges make their selections. An array of silent auction added an extra layer of excitement.

Spice320’s fusion of chocolate and spices from around the world filled the room with irresistible aromas and earned both the Critics’ and People’s Choice awards for Most Creative Chocolate Creations. Sweet Sage Bakery won the People’s Choice award for Most Amazing Chocolate Flavor with their “Chocolate Eclipse” – a fudgy brownie topped in creamy caramel and finished with a delicate dark chocolate layer. Sweet Harmony Cafe & Bakery took home Critics’ Choice award for Most Amazing Chocolate Flavor with a perfectly balanced rich chocolate and velvety custard Chocolate Crème Brûlée.

Scan the code or visit www.columbushouse.org/chocolate for participants, sponsors, a link to photos, and more! Thank you to all who helped raise vital funds to provide a safe space and services for families experiencing homelessness so they can get on the path to a permanent home. ■



Penelope Raises Over \$5K!

“Thank you everyone for helping my lemonade stand. I really appreciated it and hope to one day end homelessness.”

Penelope held her 4th Annual Lemonade Stand on April 7 to celebrate her birthday and raise funds – over \$5,000! – for Columbus House. With the support of her family, friends, and a generous 40% match from her father’s employer, Best Buy, Penelope has raised over \$15,000 to help our work to end homelessness over the past four years. The selfless efforts of this young philanthropist continue to inspire us each and every day! ■



Visit columbushouse.org/penelope or check out our Instagram @ColumbusHouseCT to see Penelope’s work in action!



“Never in our wildest dreams did we think of the domino effect that COVID would have.”

Angel, a US Army Veteran and chef, lost his job when COVID struck. No longer able to afford a safe place to live with his wife Patti and dog, Diego, they hocked everything to pay for a hotel room. When nothing was left to sell, they faced living on the streets. Angel connected with Columbus House’s Supportive Services for Veterans Families program and found hope. Thanks to the couple’s resiliency, our dedicated staff, and support from friends like you, Angel and his family secured a permanent home where they are now thriving.

Scan the code, or visit www.columbushouse.org/angelpatti to read their story.



A Message from Stephen, Board Chair...continued from page 1

moving closer to housing solutions that align with their individual needs and preferences. At the heart of our comprehensive range of services lie our dedicated team members, whose professional expertise and passion yield tangible results in the lives of those we serve.

Columbus House is committed to provide innovative solutions to ending homelessness. This winter, our main shelter remained open 24/7 to provide a safe, warm refuge for our guests. In the Fall we will break ground on the next generation of emergency shelter on Ella Grasso Blvd. This new shelter will provide a lifeline to individuals experiencing homelessness, offering them not just shelter, but also dignity, independence, and the opportunity to stay together with their loved ones and pets while working towards stable housing. This new, non-congregate shelter will include single and double rooms each with its own bathroom. We extend

our heartfelt gratitude to Congresswoman DeLauro for her invaluable support in securing \$1.1 million in Community Project Funding for this initiative.

As we forge ahead, your support for our work remains essential. Your engagement not only propels our mission forward but also strengthens the network of care for everyone in our community. Whether through donations, volunteering, or advocating for our cause – every contribution you make matters. Together, we can overcome the current crisis and help get people back on the path to safe housing.

With gratitude,

Stephen Ziegelmayer



What Will Your Legacy Be?

A long-time friend of Columbus House, Shelly included a gift to Columbus House in her will and recently shared what moved her to make this impactful decision:

“I attribute my interest in ending homelessness to my dad. While he lived, he was dedicated to providing a home for his three daughters. He would have done everything in his power to prevent us from experiencing homelessness. We have a family member who died of exposure to the cold and others who lived in the basement of an unfinished house. Through my association with Columbus House, I’ve learned how easily one can become homeless because of illness, addiction, and the loss of a job. As one of my grandmothers often said, ‘There but for the grace of God, go I.’ I’ve also learned how critical stable housing is to recovering one’s health and finding employment. My father was able to leave a legacy that has so far ensured that none of his daughters has experienced homelessness in spite of addiction, illness, cancer, divorce, and other challenges. My bequest gift to Columbus House honors my father by helping to end homelessness in Connecticut.”

Visit columbushouse.plannedgiving.org or contact Sarah Hoffman at 203-401-4400 x116 or shoffman@columbushouse.org to discover how you can include Columbus House in your estate plans and create brighter futures for individuals and families in our community. ■

“You Pulled Me Out of the Woods”

A Columbus House Recovery Support Specialist received these sincere words from a former client. Much gratitude to you, our supporters, who make it possible to provide the life saving services that make these results possible!

Words can't even describe how much I greatly appreciate you + everything you do have done and continue! You have always been there for me and I can't tell you how much that means to me! You literally came and pulled me out of the woods and never gave up on me! I can't thank you enough for that! I love you T! I'm so grateful for you!

Spotlight on Corporate Volunteers: Alexion, Avangrid, Pratt & Whitney



Alexion recently led a heartfelt initiative, the Valentine’s Share the Love event, gathering essential items and over \$700 in donations for our clients. They visited our New Haven Shelter to drop off their donations and deepen their understanding of our mission that they so generously supported.

Avangrid employees have been serving up meals and smiles at our New Haven Shelter – and even funding the cost of the food prepared by our staff.



Pratt & Whitney employees donated three carloads of Welcome Kit supplies and 20 gift cards, thanks to a spirited competition involving nine teams. Their contribution will be greatly appreciated by those moving into their own homes.

Our hearts are warmed by these acts of kindness that remind us of the transformative power of community. Together, we are building a more compassionate environment for our neighbors facing homelessness. ■





Save These Dates!

Sunday, June 30, 2024
Guilford Rotary Lobster Fest

Friday, August 9, 2024
OCC Columbus House Scramble

Sunday, August 18, 2024
Homerun for Heroes

Sat-Sun, October 5 & 6, 2024
Celebrate Wallingford

Thursday, December 5, 2024
Annual Meeting

Sunday, March 30, 2025
Chocolate the the Rescue

For the most up-to-date information on these and other events, visit columbushouse.org/events

www.columbushouse.org



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Looking to Volunteer?

There are plenty of ways to help!
Visit columbushouse.org/volunteer to learn more.



Advocacy in Action

“It is awesome to see all of these people here together, trying to improve the quality of life for all the people in Connecticut.”

– Cathleen Meaden, COO

Your letters, calls, and conversations with legislators made an impact during the 2024 legislative session. Thanks to the dedication of our partners, supporters, and staff, a one-time ARPA allocation of \$4.5M was awarded to

L-R: Cathleen Meaden, Columbus House COO, with case managers Cassandra Maldonado and Rebecca Colon joined our partners at the capitol on April 24 to rally for a permanent investment in our vital services.

Connecticut’s homeless services sector as session closed on May 8. This is not enough to make up for the years of underfunding for our critical programs, or the permanent investment we deserve, but is a positive step forward and proves your efforts have put us at the forefront of lawmakers’ minds.

Our advocacy work continues through the year as we prepare to fight for adequate funding during the 2025 legislative session. We’re grateful to have you by our side as we push for state leaders to recognize the indispensable value of our sector’s work in the community. Follow us on social media and at columbushouse.org/advocate for advocacy alerts. ■



Thank you to all who donated through the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven’s Great Give, raising over \$22,000 for our critical services that end and prevent homelessness! A portion of every gift will be matched by the The Community Foundation’s \$100K pool. We’re grateful for their continued dedication to creating a more vibrant, equitable community for all!

Inside: Board Chair Message • Chocolate to the Rescue • Volunteer Spotlight • Shelly’s Plan • And More!