

# the way home

News from  
COLUMBUS HOUSE  
Spring 2023

## A Message from Margaret

Margaret Middleton, CEO

**T**hank you so much for your continued commitment to the needs of our neighbors without their own homes. Your contributions, both in terms of financial donations and volunteer hours, are the lifeblood of Columbus House. You give all of us working here the constant affirmation that we are merely the frontline of an army of people committed to ending homelessness in our communities. All of us are grateful to be in this with you.

As we hope you know, we updated our mission: “To serve people experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk by providing life-saving outreach, shelter and housing and by fostering their personal growth and independence. We advocate for and



Columbus House staff advocating at the State Capitol to Rescue the Homeless Response System. Learn more and join us in our critical advocacy efforts at [www.columbushouse.org/advocate](http://www.columbushouse.org/advocate).

create affordable housing to end homelessness in our communities.” This mission retains our commitment to helping households through the immediate and urgent crisis of homelessness, but also makes clear our commitment to championing solutions [continued on page 2](#)

## Maurice: From a Hole in the Ground to a Home

**A**t a recent visit to the home where Maurice is renting a room, he proudly announced that he has a small amount of savings for the first time in many years – an accomplishment, he explains, he couldn’t have achieved if he hadn’t received help from Columbus House. Teresa (top right), his former Case Manager, tells Maurice he’s come a long way since she first met him in 2019 and he agrees. At that time, he was living in a rat infested hole in the ground that he dug himself, sick with AIDS, and in the throes of addiction. Maurice had lost faith in humanity and was resistant to help - but Teresa didn’t give up on him and began to build his trust. She assisted him in entering a recovery facility, attaining a bed at Columbus House, and eventually moving into his own apartment. A fire occurred in his first place, but that didn’t stop Maurice from finding a room to rent instead of returning to the streets. Today Maurice is sober, his HIV is undetectable, and he is able to attend medical appointments and rest for some serious health issues he’s dealing with. Maurice is searching for his own place with the guidance of his current Columbus House Case Manager and is motivated to have a larger space where he can enjoy hobbies he loves – like drawing and gardening – and continue to focus on his health and sobriety. Thank you for helping to make successes like Maurice’s possible!



Scan see the hole Maurice lived in, view his artwork, and learn more about his life.



# Noteworthy News

As part of a historic \$18M investment in serving people who are unsheltered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Columbus House was awarded a three-year grant totaling \$3.7M to support people experiencing homelessness. This grant will help 40 individuals with rental assistance and case management, as well as 11 families and an additional 10 individuals with case management to help them remain in permanent supportive housing. This grant was incredibly competitive and only a few were allocated across the United States. ■

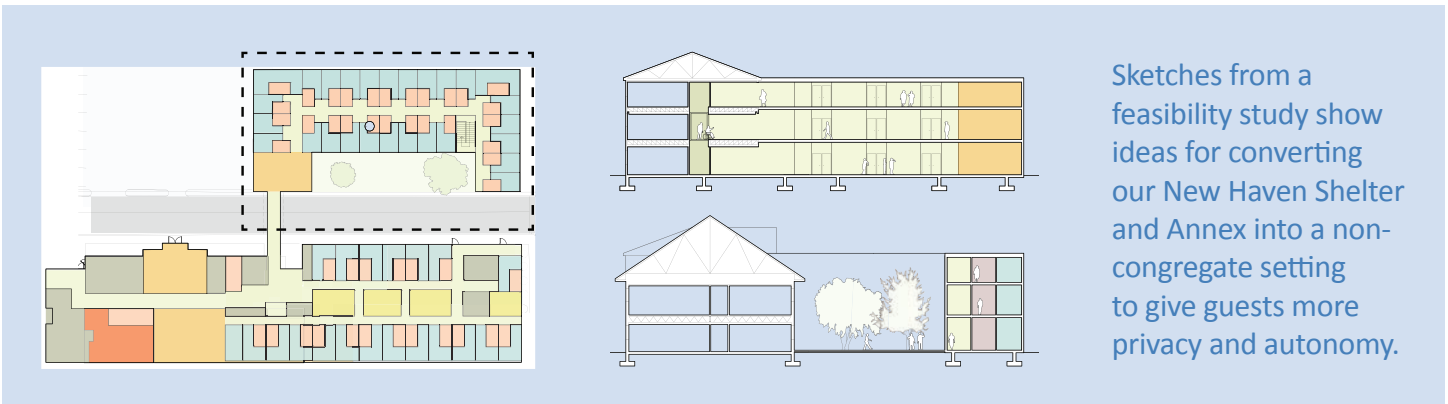


Margaret Middleton, Columbus House CEO, with (l-r): HUD Senior Advisor – Housing and Services, Richard Cho; City of New Haven Community Services Administrator, Dr. Mehul Dalal; and Liberty Community Services Executive Director, Jim Pettinelli. Learn more about the \$18 Million Federal Grant To Address Unsheltered and Rural Homelessness from the Office of the Governor: <https://bit.ly/3NJoRYe>

## A Message from Margaret...continued from page 1

to end homelessness once and for all. To advance lasting solutions to homelessness, we have been working on several new projects that will increase the affordable housing available to people experiencing homelessness and improve the experience of people when their journey includes a stop at our New Haven Emergency Shelter. One is the creation of non-congregate shelter, which will

We are also pushing forward on two projects that would provide permanent housing for as many as 78 people experiencing homelessness in Middletown. These permanent housing developments will include wraparound services to ensure that our clients can maintain their housing stability and achieve their personal goals.



provide a safe and dignified space for people experiencing homelessness. “Non-congregate” means that people will not have to sleep in a large room with others, but instead will have their own room and bathroom. While running our emergency shelter out of a hotel, we learned that providing people with their own room gave them a sense of safety, autonomy and convenience while reducing the risk of communicable diseases. We are proud to say that we have already secured significant funding commitments to get started on the design and construction of this non-congregant shelter at our campus on Ella T. Grasso Boulevard.

Your partnership allows us to expand our reach to serve more people experiencing homelessness. As we move forward with our new initiatives, we encourage you to continue to support our mission to end homelessness in Connecticut. Whether you choose to donate, volunteer, or spread the word about our work, every action counts. Together, we can create a community where everyone has a place to call home.

Once again, thank you for commitment to our neighbors. ■

## We Mourn the Loss: Karen Lenois and April Moss



An unyielding source of compassion and hope, Karen Lenois served as a loyal volunteer in the kitchen of our New Haven Emergency Shelter for decades. She ensured our neighbors were well nourished and celebrated, especially during the holidays when her care and dedication truly shined. Her enthusiasm reached countless others – inspiring young children to create hand-made cards for our guests, her fellow congregants at St. Paul VI Hamden (St. Rita’s Church) to participate in monthly meal service and making special holiday treats, and her friends and family in helping to provide vital supplies through countless drives. She was also instrumental in having Columbus House included in the Archbishop’s Appeal. Her dedication was motivating, her presence was uplifting,

and her smile was encouraging. Everyone in the Columbus House family is mourning her loss and remembers her legacy of care. To honor her memory, Karen’s family created a fund to benefit those at our New Haven Shelter. To contribute, call 203-401-4400 ext. 131.

April Moss was a kind, compassionate and dedicated nurse in our Medical Respite Program. Caring for our most vulnerable neighbors, her professional healing coupled with her nurturing demeanor improved the lives of those experiencing homelessness and provided hope to our clients. She spread light throughout our New Haven Emergency Shelter as a beloved colleague, and we are deeply saddened by her passing. ■



## Staff News



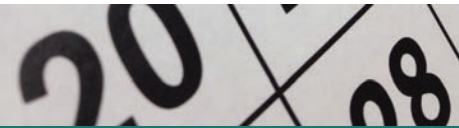
### Join us to Celebrate John!

As you know, John Brooks, our Chief Development Officer of 19 years, has retired. He was a powerful force for the agency, helping to expand support for our work to serve our neighbors experiencing homelessness. Please join us in celebrating him for his decades of service and commitment to our mission at a farewell party at The Playwright in Hamden on June 1. Stop by between 5:00-8:00 PM to personally thank him for his tireless devotion. **RSVPs are required** as space is limited. Contact 203-401-4400 ext. 130 or email [pphonyothee@columbushouse.org](mailto:pphonyothee@columbushouse.org) to reserve your spot.

### We’re Excited to Announce Some Staff Recent Promotions!

Lilla Bryan-Hemmings has taken on the role of Chief Financial Officer after 22 years of service in the Finance Department. Gladys Bradley moved into the Director of Finance seat after 15 years in the department. Aimee DeMusis is now the Director of Veteran & Middlesex Emergency Services, and John Sanford moved into the role of Senior Manager, New Haven Emergency Services. Columbus House is proud and grateful to have such committed, mission-driven staff – congratulations to all!





## Save the Dates

July 14, 2023  
**OCC Columbus House Scramble**  
 August 6, 2023  
**Homerun for Heroes**  
 December, 7 2023  
**Annual Meeting**  
 For the most up-to-date information on these and other events, visit [columbushouse.org/events](http://columbushouse.org/events)

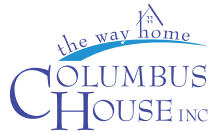
### Legacy Giving

There are creative ways to leave a legacy where Columbus House, you, and your loved ones all benefit. Discover how at: [columbushouse.plannedgiving.org](http://columbushouse.plannedgiving.org)

### Looking to Volunteer?

There are plenty of ways to help! Visit [columbushouse.org/volunteer](http://columbushouse.org/volunteer) to learn more.

[www.columbushouse.org](http://www.columbushouse.org)



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## Chocolate to the Rescue Raises 20K

To Benefit our Middlesex Family Shelter

The 20th annual Chocolate to the Rescue event was in-person for the first time since 2019, and was a great success! With new attendees and chocolate participants in addition to familiar faces, over 140 friends gathered and raised close to \$20K for our Middlesex Family Shelter. We are so grateful to everyone who participated – from our silent auction donors to our volunteers, sponsors, guests, judges and chocolatiers – thank you for helping families experiencing homelessness.

Thank you to our sponsors:

Executive Chef



Sous-Chef



**Chocolatiers** (Pictured with Jim Masters, Emcee, left. Photos by Bill De Kine.):  
 Bear's Smokehouse | Chip in a Bottle | LiLu's Customized Catering  
 MELT Chocolatier | Perk on Main | Sweet Harmony Cafe & Bakery  
 Sweet Sage Bakery | Sweets By Jenna | Tschudin Chocolates & Confections

**Judges**  
 James Arena | Priscilla Martel | Christopher Prospero | Jason Sobocinski

**Expediter:** M&T Charitable Foundation | National Equity Fund  
 Nutmeg Consulting LLC | Webster Bank

**Pastry Chef** Allison Batson | Christina Lindstrom & Scott Daigle  
 Carla and Rudy Zimmermann

**Inside: A Message from Margaret, CEO • Maurice's Story • \$3.7M Grant • Staff News**