

news from Columbus House

# the way home



L-R: Lou Brady, Cornell Scott Hill-Health Center; Kathleen Brennan, CT Dept. of Social Services; Kathleen Tynan-McKiernan, YNHH; Senator Toni Harp, Cornell Scott Hill-Health Center; Marna Borgstrom, YNHH; Alison Cunningham, Columbus House; Paula Crombie, YNHH; Dr. Peter Herbert, YNHH; Dr. Kelly Doran, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Fellow; and Peggy Dillinger, Columbus House

## Columbus House Respite Program: *New program aims to break the hospital-homeless cycle*

A ribbon cutting ceremony for the Columbus House Respite Program was held at the Columbus House Main Shelter on Monday, October 7, 2013. Columbus House, along with Yale-New Haven Hospital, welcomed over 70 guests to celebrate the opening of a 12-bed respite wing for people who are homeless and in need recuperation after a hospital stay.

The program, a first in the state, hopes to serve as a national model in breaking the hospital-homeless cycle. Features of the Columbus House

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*A message from Alison Cunningham, Executive Director*

## Support Services for Veterans Families: *One step closer to ending Veteran homelessness in Connecticut*

As I watched the three Veteran servicemen take the field prior to the first game of the World Series, I was moved by the outpouring of support given to those

Medal of Honor recipients. We have come a long way from the Vietnam era when Veterans were misunderstood, to today, when

there is tremendous respect and an unprecedented level of Federal support for the brave men and women who represent this country. And that includes support for Veterans who are homeless.

The following text from the Federal Veterans Affairs (VA) website says it all:

*VA is committed to ending Veteran homelessness by the end of 2015. No one who has served our country should ever go without a safe, stable place to call home.*

*The entire department has put its energy and resources into ending Veteran homelessness.*

*Still, VA cannot do it alone. Organizations and individuals in communities across the country are integral to providing services to Veterans and spreading the word about the resources VA provides to end and prevent homelessness among Veterans.*

We at Columbus House are honored to be among the many non-profits across the  
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- Chip's Thanksgiving Pancake Breakfast to benefit Homeless Veterans

- Columbus House Annual Meeting
- Deck the Hearth Wreath Event at The Hearth at Tuxis Pond



Make a difference by participating in our annual grass roots effort to raise awareness, funds, and much needed wish list items for those experiencing homelessness throughout the region this holiday season.

If you are interested in helping please contact Sheree at (203) 401-4400 ext. 138 or [sdimario@columbushouse.org](mailto:sdimario@columbushouse.org). In the meantime, for the most up-to-date information about Homeless for the Holidays please visit [www.columbushouse.org/holidays](http://www.columbushouse.org/holidays).

Homeless for the Holidays is sponsored by:



## Ways to get involved this holiday season:

### Make a financial contribution

Every gift, no matter how large or small, makes an extraordinary difference this holiday season. Help those experiencing homelessness find safety, shelter, compassion, support, and hope.

### Honor someone special

In addition to or in lieu of purchasing gifts, give special recognition to someone with your contribution. We will send a customized holiday greeting card to let them know you made a gift in their honor for the holiday.

### Organize a drive

Rally support from your friends, neighbors, co-workers, or those with whom you worship and collect winter season wish list items. Contact us to find out what is most needed right now or tell us your ideas!

### Welcome Kits

Many of those we serve have limited income and often need help with basic necessities once they secure housing. Help give them a warm welcome into their new home with some basic household necessities to get them started. Visit [www.columbushouse.org/WelcomeKits](http://www.columbushouse.org/WelcomeKits) for a complete list and more information.

### Volunteer

Our volunteers are a critical part of our mission. During the holiday season consider donating some of your time to help us with various projects, including sorting and distributing winter coats and holiday gifts.

### Serve a meal

Join groups from throughout the community that purchase, prepare, and serve the evening meal for our clients at our main shelter and seasonal overflow shelter.

## SAVE THE DATE!

For more info contact Sheree at (203) 401-4400 ext. 138 or [sdimario@columbushouse.org](mailto:sdimario@columbushouse.org) or go to: [www.columbushouse.org](http://www.columbushouse.org) and click on "NEWS & EVENTS"

**Thursday  
November 28, 2013**



Thanksgiving morning  
**PANCAKE BREAKFAST**  
to benefit **HOMELESS VETERANS**

*100% of proceeds support Columbus House's  
Homefront initiative for homeless Veterans*

**6 - 11 am**

**Chip's Family Restaurant**

Orange - 321 Boston Post Road

\$10 per person (cash preferred)

Fixed breakfast menu: 2 buttermilk pancakes,  
2 eggs, 2 bacon or sausage, coffee or tea.

**Thursday, December 5, 2013**



**COLUMBUS HOUSE  
ANNUAL MEETING**

**7:30 - 9am**

Join us as we celebrate **YOU**  
and all those who make  
Columbus House possible

**The New Haven Lawn Club**

193 Whitney Avenue, New Haven

Keynote Speaker

**Greg Behrman**

Founder and Director of The CT Heroes Project

Complimentary Breakfast Buffet

Sponsored by:

**Webster Bank**

Marcum Accountants and Advisors

**Sunday  
December 8, 2013**



**DECK THE HEARTH WREATH EVENT**

**1 - 4 pm**

**The Hearth at Tuxis Pond**

100 Bradley Road, Madison, CT

Music • Refreshments

Silent Wreath Auction to  
benefit Columbus House

**Call (203) 245-3311 to RSVP**



## Columbus House Respite Program...continued from page 1

Respite Program include a 24-hour stay in private rooms, visiting nurse support from Continuum Home Health, Cornell Scott Hill-Health Center, and Visiting Nurses of South Central CT, linkages to follow-up medical care, on-site case management and patient navigator services, three meals per day, and transportation to medical appointments. The program will serve both men and women.



"We want to change the way we deliver care in this country and probably the last group that we would have been able to give attention to is the group that we hope to support today," said Dr. Herbert. "I am very grateful to everyone who worked so hard to get this done."

Speakers at the ribbon cutting ceremony included Peggy Dillinger, Master of Ceremony, Chairperson, Columbus House Board of Directors; Dr. Peter Herbert, Chief of Staff and Sr. Vice President for Medical Affairs, Yale-New Haven Hospital; Lou Brady, Chief Operating Officer, Cornell Scott Hill-Health Center; Kathleen Brennan, Deputy Commissioner, CT Dept. Of Social Services; Alison Cunningham, Executive

Director, Columbus House; and The Honorable Toni N. Harp, State Senator – District 10 and Director, Healthcare for the Homeless, Cornell Scott-Hill Health Center.

Alison Cunningham explained the scope of the hospital-homeless cycle in New Haven. A Vulnerability Index Survey, a tool used by homeless service providers across the nation to gauge the risk factors for homelessness, is conducted on every client that walks through Columbus House's doors. Around one half of the clients that were surveyed reported a serious medical condition, including asthma, diabetes, heart conditions, and hepatitis. "I'm sure there are many more that have gone unreported," said Cunningham. At Columbus House, "51% of those surveyed had been to the Emergency Department at Yale-New Haven Hospital at least once within the prior three months of taking the survey."

Dr. Herbert recounted the numerous times he was faced with a homeless patient as an attending physician, "...we had satisfied the acute care issues but recognized I was turning them back also to the street with the great likelihood that they would not fill my prescriptions, that they would not be endorsed as was essential for their continuing care, and that they would be back on my service, or that of another attending at Yale-New Haven Hospital, in fairly rapid order."

By offering recuperation to those who would otherwise be discharged from the hospital to the streets or shelter, the Columbus House Respite Program will



Staff provided tours of the shelter, along with the newly refreshed Respite rooms, painted by Pearce Real Estate volunteers, and furnished with afghans generously donated by the Durham Fair Needlework Department.

reduce hospitalizations and emergency department use. Transitioning clients to permanent supportive housing through intensive support services and offering connections to outpatient care will also be a focus of the program.

Columbus House would like to thank the following for their commitment to the Columbus House Respite Program: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Clinical Scholars Program; CT Dept. of Housing; CT Dept. of Social Services; YNHHS Dept. of Social Work; Cornell Scott Hill-Health Center; Continuum Home Health; Visiting Nurses of South Central CT; US Dept. of Veterans Affairs; Sen. Toni Harp; National Health Care for the Homeless Council and Sabrina Edgington; Paula Crombie, Director, Clinical Social Work Services, YNHHS; Ryan Greyson, MD; Kelly Doran, MD; and Becca Allen, LCSW. ■

## Support Services for Veterans Families...continued from page 1

country who are "integral to providing services to Veterans." We have done so in the past through the provision of shelter, transitional programs and permanent supportive housing. This year, we are adding a wide-reaching program, SSVF (Support Services for Veterans Families) to extend that support to New Haven, Middletown, and New London Counties. Through SSVF we will be providing case management and employment services to Veterans, both singles and families, who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. We will

also provide direct financial assistance for those who need help with security deposits, rent, utilities, and even child-care. In total, we anticipate serving 300 Veterans through SSVF this year.

To do all this work, we have added 8 new staff positions, and of those, 6 are Veterans who are passionate about helping other Vets, who understand the issues from their own experiences, and who know the VA system. These Veteran employees will offer a unique and valuable connection to the SSVF clients.

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Columbus House is proud to be a part of the work of the VA and to work with them toward ending Veteran homelessness by 2015. ■



# Save the Date!

**Sunday, January 26, 2014**



## 12th Annual *Chocolate to the Rescue*

**1 - 4 pm**

**Water's Edge Resort & Spa  
Westbrook, CT**

**to benefit Columbus House's  
Middlesex Family Shelter**

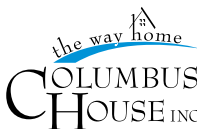
*Sample mouthwatering chocolate delicacies from  
local restaurants, bakeries, & chocolatiers*

*Observe judging from a panel of culinary experts*

*Bid on an array of silent auction items*

*Vote for your favorite chocolate creation*

# www.columbushouse.org



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email [info@columbushouse.org](mailto:info@columbushouse.org).

### Stay Connected!

[facebook.com/columbushouseinc](https://facebook.com/columbushouseinc)

[@ColumbusHouseCT](https://twitter.com/ColumbusHouseCT)

## YOU make a difference!

The heart of Columbus House's mission is to "foster personal growth and independence" for those experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness. Helping people into a place of their own is essential to this goal. Because of amazing supporters like YOU, housing success stories like these are made possible every day. **Thank you!**



"Tom" reads a tag describing the contents of a Kitchen Kit, part of a full Welcome Kit he received upon moving into his own place. Our Welcome Kits initiative helps provide those we serve with basic household necessities once they secure housing. To learn more, visit [www.columbushouse.org/welcomekits](http://www.columbushouse.org/welcomekits).

"Jennifer" experienced homelessness for nine years. In September she moved into a place of her own. She can now begin rebuilding her family and focus on her sobriety in a safe and secure environment.

"Paul" was homeless for five years before being housed in September. He has health issues and is unable to work. Now, in a home of his own, he can make staying well a priority.

Homeless since 2009, "Tom" moved into his own place in mid-October. He is feeling great and looking forward to his new life as he concentrates on staying in recovery.