A Message from Margaret, CEO

The steadfast support you show for our neighbors facing homelessness has us filled with gratitude. Every meal you prepare, every donation you give, makes it possible for us to answer the call in times of dire need. Your generosity is the driving force behind our ability to make a difference in the lives of those who need it most.

Unfortunately, our state’s housing challenges grow increasingly daunting. Rising rents and the scarcity of available rental units continue to destabilize the lives of thousands. The number of families seeking shelter in greater New Haven has increased a staggering 200% since the pandemic. While the need grows, organizations including Columbus House have faced setbacks, losing vital staff positions in 2023 with the end of COVID-era funding.

Thanks to you, we rise to these challenges. This winter, Columbus House will open three emergency programs to provide respite from frigid temperatures. We are thrilled to be restarting Abraham’s Tent. This program will reopen the Wallingford Emergency Shelter for the first time in three years and provide volunteers and clients the opportunity to build community over...

Housing Heroes: Satyra and Tianna

It’s not unusual to encounter life-changing moments in the lobby of Columbus House’s New Haven Shelter – or in any space across our many locations. While these instances can seem nothing less than miraculous, it is our dedicated staff, volunteers, supporters, and the will of our clients that are the real magic behind these transformations.

Recently, on two separate occasions, we were witness to these special moments. Right after hearing that she helped her first client find a safe, one-bedroom apartment, we snapped a photo of Satyra (left).

Just weeks later, another person visiting from their new apartment stopped our CEO, Margaret, on her way into the office. Grinning from ear to ear, they wanted to let her know that their life is finally back on track thanks to Tianna’s help (right).

Together, we can end homelessness, one success at a time – thank you for making them possible!

“Thank you to all Case Managers, Resident Support Specialists, Managers, Directors, and all staff that work on completing our mission of ending or preventing homelessness each day. I believe we all can accomplish making our clients’ feel hope and possibility.”— Tianna

“My work is very rewarding. The joy and smiles I get from the people I help are priceless.”— Satyra

Margaret Middleton, CEO with Archbishop Leonard Blair (center) and Reverend Jeffrey Romans at the Archbishop’s Annual Appeal Dinner where she was presented with $20,000 for Columbus House’s New Haven Shelter. Another $1,750 was given for our Wallingford Emergency Shelter. To the Archdiocese and all the generous parishioners who contribute to this annual appeal, thank you for your life-saving contributions!

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shared meals and activities. In partnership with Upon the Rock Ministries, we will open a triage center to provide families a safe space while they wait for placement in a family shelter. We will also open a warming center in Hamden.

Homelessness is not a matter of choice or individual failing; it’s the result of not investing in enough safe and affordable housing for all. In partnership with the Connecticut Department of Housing, we will soon close on the purchase of a hotel in Middletown which we will convert into deeply affordable apartments for households experiencing homelessness. We are proud to be part of the solution but recognize our efforts are a drop in the bucket of the estimated 89,000 units needed to meet the need for extremely low-income renters in our state. Columbus House will continue to advocate for the reforms needed to generate enough affordable housing in our state.

Ending homelessness is a difficult hill to climb, and we can only make it there together. Columbus House is so grateful to be a visible beacon of the benevolence and empathy of our community. Together, we share a vision—a vision where all our neighbors can live with peace and dignity.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Margaret Middleton, CEO

Abraham’s Tent

On November 15th around thirty dedicated friends packed the kitchen at our Wallingford Emergency Shelter to begin planning a re-imagined Abraham’s Tent program. Before the pandemic, Abraham’s Tent served 12 men during the winter months. For one week, host congregations and volunteers provided shelter, meals, and fellowship from early evening through breakfast. This winter, from January 8 – March 17, 2024 we will restart the program to serve 10 clients out of our Wallingford Emergency shelter building.

The kickoff gathering was a great success, with seven of the ten weeks being filled by our friends on the spot! We can’t wait to keep you abreast of this exciting partnership that will add ten shelter beds during the coldest weeks of the year and preserve the spirit of Abraham’s Tent.

Meet Wallace

Our grandparents and retired friends with limited incomes are increasingly at risk of losing their homes due to rising rents and a severe lack of affordable housing. Thanks to your support, a sudden tragedy doesn’t always lead to living on the streets for people like Wallace who experienced homelessness for the first time at 63-years-old. Did you read Wallace’s story of restored hope? Scan the code, or visit www.columbushouse.org/wallace.
Thanksgiving Meals for All!

Every Columbus House guest felt cared for on Thanksgiving thanks to the generosity of our dedicated friends. KBE Building Corporation ensured a feast with 35 Gifts of Gobble – complete with turkeys and all the trimmings – St. George Church provided turkeys and funds for more food, while Table Talk Pies sweetened the occasion with 480 single-serve pies. United Way of Meriden and Wallingford, in partnership with Ulbrich Stainless Steels & Special Metals, gave Thanksgiving Baskets for families at our Wallingford Family Shelter. Ridge Road Elementary School created handmade place mats for our guests, the USS Chowder Pot III cooked Thanksgiving breakfast, and Cody’s Diner provided the home fries. Your collective kindness made Thanksgiving truly special for everyone. Thank you!

Clockwise from top: Table Talk Pie staff get ready to load our car with 480 pies; Ridge Road School art; KBE Building Corporation delivering Gifts of Gobble.

New Shelter Building Plans Advance

On November 14, Columbus House submitted plans for a three-story building at 592 Ella T. Grasso Blvd. to New Haven’s Board of Zoning Appeals. The proposal features 79 bedrooms – 49 singles, 30 doubles or accessible units – with adjacent bathrooms and offers multipurpose rooms, social areas with microwaves, laundry facilities, and courtyards. The revitalized shelter will allow couples who have previously stayed away from Columbus House to reconsider us as a better option. Clients will have more privacy and live in a healthier environment with state-of-the-art air circulation and filtration. It allows our emergency services staff to redesign their program to reflect new ideas that the congregate shelter could not accommodate. It also keeps us offering cutting-edge services in unique accommodations to better serve our clients. The first step in the process was approved and we now wait for the zoning board to vote again on December 11, with the city planning commission hearing our application on January 17. Positive outcomes will lead to funding finalization from the CT Department of Housing. Construction is anticipated to take about 12 months.

Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to everyone who wrote a letter of support and joined us to speak in favor of this critical project at the November 14 meeting. Thank you for helping us through the first step in making this dream a reality!

“What Columbus House is proposing really helps provide a safe, dignified place for people to stay while they’re trying to stabilize their housing.” – Kelly Fitzgerald, United Way of Greater New Haven, speaking in favor of the building project at the November 14 Board of Zoning Appeals Meeting
2023 Annual Meeting

On December 7, 2023, our Annual Meeting was held in-person for the first time in four years! It was wonderful to celebrate the work that YOU make possible with so many friends, partners and supporters; get inspired by our Keynote Speaker, Sarah Fox, CEO of the CT Coalition to End Homelessness; and honor the recipients of the 2023 John S. Martinez Community Service Award. Visit www.columbushouse.org/annualmeeting to learn more and view photos from the event.

Thank you to our sponsors:

- Amphenol
- Yale
- The Jones Family

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

Looking to Volunteer?

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

A Special Letter of Gratitude

It’s not unusual for Columbus House staff to receive a special phone call, visit, email, or in this case, a handwritten letter from a former client. From assisting a person in securing a shelter bed, ensuring they have dry, warm clothing, and connecting them to healthcare, to helping them apply for lost identification, sign up for classes, or find an apartment – and literally everything in between – our caring staff are a key solution to ending homelessness.

A Columbus House Recovery Support Specialist recently shared this heartwarming letter from a former client. This victory that you help make possible is a triumph for us all. Thank you!