



Building a more compassionate community one person at a time THE BEACON

Fall/Winter 2024

A Semi-Annual Publication of Bethesda House Schenectady, Inc.

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



What a year it has been!

It seems as if just yesterday we had our ribbon cutting for Cara House, and already a year has gone by! Bethesda House has experienced many challenges and changes during this last year. As we continue to navigate the Agency's evolving needs and processes, we know that embracing positive changes and finding ways to empower ourselves is crucial during transition periods. Our

staff here has proven time and time again to be adaptable and resilient in the face of change.

Ensuring that change and growth occur in a way that promotes Bethesda House's longevity is at the forefront of our minds. With grace, we dedicate ourselves to being deliberate and considerate of our progression and how it will unfold over time. Every year, over 4,000 vulnerable individuals walk through our doors seeking services, with 94% suffering from mental illness and 75% from chronic health conditions. Our agency is always re-evaluating how we can step up to the plate and help them manage their ever-changing, complex needs.

Our accomplishments this year include increasing available housing by 83%, offering medical respite beds in our overnight emergency shelter, and expanding our street outreach program.

While there is much to be thankful for in the past year of work, we are also looking forward to the months ahead. Our initiatives include increasing Bethesda House's active volunteer team and marketing endeavors. We are always excited to see what the new programming year brings, the lives we impact, the programs we enhance, and what new energy and incentives are placed in front of us.

I am constantly overwhelmed by the power that your support and donations give us to touch lives and enhance services. From deep in my heart, Thank you!

Wishing you and your family and friends a joyous holiday season.

Kimarie A. Sheppard



Cara House – One Year Later

By Caroline Codd

Cara House has been officially open for almost a year. With its grand opening, we now offer an additional 26 permanent supportive housing units for the chronically homeless and re-entry populations. This has nearly doubled our number of existing units and provided critical relief to the housing shortage in Schenectady County. This looks good on paper of course, but what does it actually mean?

It means that 16 individuals who were incarcerated and 10 individuals who were chronically cycling through homelessness – living in encampments, shuttling between shelters, sleeping in parks – now have a place where they can close their door and sleep safely at night. A place to safely store their belongings, to hang their clothes, a kitchen they can cook their own breakfast in, walls to decorate, a sanctuary to retreat from the world when it feels overwhelming. The value of this level of peace and relief is unquantifiable. Some of us have felt a fraction of it when we come home after a long travel and return to our own bed. Now imagine that feeling when you can't remember the last time you had a bed of your own. It's hard to wrap our minds around, and for those we serve it can indeed feel overwhelming. One man was so moved when he saw his unit, he fell to the floor and openly cried with gratitude. This man had spent years in prison and was unaccustomed to expressing such emotion, but the relief he felt was uncontainable. That's what these 26 units mean.

At Bethesda House, we believe in the inherent dignity and value of each human life and that one's right to safe housing is not conditional on their clinical success. As long as an individual is not posing a threat to themselves or others, they are not required to be in active sobriety or to be perfect participants in their service plans to maintain their housing. We know they face a long road ahead to stability and we are not expecting immediate results. We dig into the roots of these cycles and walk with our residents compassionately and patiently. With regard to mental health and substance abuse, we know how much work one has to do to break free of these cycles and know their likelihood of success increases dramatically when they have their own safe space to come home to every day.

For the re-entry population, this looks a little different. Once they are within our care, they are still bound by the

restrictions of their parole which do require program compliance and sobriety. If someone isn't ready to meet these standards, not because of willpower but because of the hold addiction and self-destructive habits can have on one's psyche, this is when we see recidivism. The most common violation of parole we see is substance abuse. If you or anyone you love has ever struggled with addiction, you know deeply the stigma it still carries in society, how difficult it is to find adequate treatment, and the battleground it is to overcome.

Since Cara House opened, we have had one or two re-entry beds open in rotation because of this. The re-entry population already faces so many barriers to housing. They are 10 times more likely to be homeless than the general public and are often funneled back into the prison system due to policies that criminalize being homeless in the first place. Offenses that would get the general population a fine or minor write-up such as sleeping in public places, panhandling or being inebriated in public, can send these individuals right back to jail. Add substance abuse violations into this equation, and we can see how deeply challenging this cycle is to break.

This is why it is so important to secure housing for those recently released from incarceration and to wrap them in compassionate, holistic services as they work towards true freedom. Our Cara House staff spends countless hours preventing our re-entry residents from cycling back into incarceration. Not only through our programming and care coordination, but they are also periodically out in the community ensuring they are not violating their parole. We are determined to not let these individuals fall through the cracks.

We live in a society of instant gratification. This is not inherently a bad thing, but maybe a human desire to find solutions to problems, believing if we only found the right key we could open the door. But the reality is that there is hardly ever just one solution to issues that are complex and ever-changing. While Cara House offers groundbreaking programs and services to the homeless and re-entry population, we know their implementation is more nuanced than that. We can offer education



classes, trauma therapy, care coordination and more as part of a holistic service plan, but one can only fully engage when they are ready. We know engagement may not be consistent, but that doesn't make it any less powerful when they do. Progress often happens in small, scattered steps and not in one giant leap. The programs we offer are designed to create lasting change in one's life, to guide them toward a livelihood of self-advocacy, respect and independence. For those who may not be ready or able to make this change yet, we will be here

when they are. We know that safe, stable housing is one's first genuine chance to be able to enter the road to recovery and that is why these 26 additional housing units are so much more than beds. They are a second chance, a belief in the resiliency of the human spirit when it is supported and cared for. As long as our doors remain open to this "House of Mercy", that is a chance we will continue to fight for.

Source: <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/housing.html>

CALL FOR PEER WORKER



Bethesda House is actively seeking a passionate Peer Worker to join our care team. If you have experience recovering from mental health or substance abuse conditions and want to make a difference with those who are still struggling, we could greatly use your expertise. Peer Workers are vital to an individual's recovery as they not only provide support from a place of empathy, but can help educate them on resources and help them build skills to find community to strengthen their recovery plans. If this feels like a calling to you, please reach out to adminasst@bethesdaohs.org or mail your resume to 834 State Street, Schenectady, NY 12307. We would be grateful to welcome you to a team full of passionate, dedicated helpers looking to make a change.

Stories from Within: Patricia

By Caroline Codd

Patricia* has been a resident at Cara House since December 2023. After being incarcerated for 22 years, she was released on parole last summer. While she has family back in her hometown, she says she was grateful not to be discharged there as it was full of triggers, too reminiscent of the person she used to be and was looking to move past. She came to Bethesda House looking for help with housing and when she heard Cara House was offering beds specifically for the re-entry population, she immediately applied. After 22 years behind bars, she says having her own studio apartment is a blessing she is grateful for every day.

Before coming to Bethesda House, Patricia was responsible for making it to her parole-mandated appointments by herself. During her time in prison, the world had changed drastically, and she found the quickened pace of things extremely challenging. She was having panic attacks, dreading the trip she had to make to social services every two weeks or appointments to her therapist and psychiatrist. Panic attacks are intense physical responses triggered by an overstimulated nervous system, leading to symptoms such as a racing heartbeat, tunnel vision, shortness of breath, dizziness, and more. They can be extremely debilitating and for some, even though it's a psychosomatic experience, they may even feel that their lives are in danger.

While these panic attacks could have prevented Patricia from ever going outside, she persevered and never missed an appointment.

Now, at Cara House, she has a team to help manage her schedule and make her appointments. She has a support system to manage her nerves and help her feel safe in this new world she's still getting used to. For

Patricia, she didn't know just how crucial this support system would be.

In March, Patricia had a near-death experience. Bethesda House's residential team and medical team were immediately on-site at the hospital she was being treated at to ensure she was receiving proper care and attention. Every other night, Bethesda House workers were there to check on her, advocating for her, keeping her family updated and managing her care. "They made me feel so loved. Not everybody will do that," Patricia said of the experience.

She's fully recovered and back to her normal routine, but still battles with a weakened immune system. She uses the Cara House medical care office to help manage her chronic illness related pain and for basic needs like when she has a cold. While she has her anxiety under better control, she's grateful she only has to go down a floor to grab a Tylenol. It helps her feel safe. She considers the staff at Bethesda house her "extended family" and with their help, is committed to taking care of her mind and body so "[she] can be truly free".

Patricia is a testament to the power of being given a second chance and she is determined to not let it go to waste. She relies on her care team to keep her stable as she completes parole. Patricia says she can't wait to go the movies or go rollerskating, not worrying about curfew. Even with parole parameters in place, she still feels like she has her life back. When asked what freedom meant to her, she said "even when I was in chains, I was still free in my mind. My body was bound, but my mind was free." Patricia is an inspiration and we are so grateful to be part of her journey here at Bethesda House.

*name changed for privacy

Myth-busting Homelessness

By Caroline Codd

Stigmas against the homeless and impoverished populations are more than just misunderstandings. They sow beliefs that they are “other” from the rest of society, inhuman, and not worthy of empathy or aid. These beliefs have real life implications not just in how these individuals are treated, but in the programs and policies enacted to further destabilize them.

CARES NY is a leading non-profit organization that empowers communities to end homelessness through community planning, program data, supportive housing, and awareness-building. The data they collect is used to

inform the state of homelessness at any given time and their initiatives are considered best practice for effectively addressing chronic homelessness and poverty. They are a long-standing partner of Bethesda House and supporter of the work that we do.

Recently, they released “Myth-busting Homelessness” to address common misconceptions and stigmas against the population. Whether you are deeply involved in our mission or a supporter from afar, we found them to be enlightening and a worthwhile read.

Myth 1: Staying in a shelter is free

A significant portion of an individual's income (including income from benefits) is paid toward shelter. This can make it difficult for individuals to pay for necessities and save to break a cycle of homelessness.

Individuals and families staying in shelter in Schenectady are given a monthly shelter allowance and all other income must be paid towards their shelter stay.

Shelter Allowance for Family of 4 with children: **\$351/month**
Shelter Allowance for an Individual: **\$195/month**

Myth 2: Individuals experiencing homelessness don't want help

There is no evidence to support that persons experiencing homelessness are service-resistant, however many do reject what they perceive as crowded, unsafe shelter and feel the stigma associated with being homeless. Many individuals have experienced trauma that can affect their trust of the system and their feelings of despair and hopelessness. There are limited resources, making services unavailable to everyone who needs them. The events leading to homelessness are complex and removing barriers to permanent housing takes time.

As of September 2024, there are **237 homeless households** on the Coordinated Entry waitlist in Schenectady County. This likely does not represent all individuals in need of services.

Myth 3: People who are homeless just don't want to work

There are many individuals experiencing homelessness that are employed. However, various factors can make it difficult to maintain a job like not having a permanent residence and lacking access to transportation, showers, and technology. Further, one's paycheck is often not enough to cover the costs of living.

Nationally, a full-time employee making a minimum wage must work **86 hours a week** to afford a one-bedroom apartment.

For every **100 extremely low-income renters nationwide**, there are only **37 affordable homes available**.

Myth 4: People choose to be homeless

Homelessness is caused by a variety of factors like eviction, the affordable housing crisis, and living with a disability, mental illness, and/or addiction. Homelessness carries significant stigma and creates stress, anxiety and fear.

Of the Schenectady County homeless population...
3.5% are victims of domestic violence
4.9% are unaccompanied youth
17% are living with a severe mental illness

Myth 5: Providing services enables people to remain homeless

Support services and long-term permanent housing assistance, like public housing or Section 8, reduce the numbers of households that are homeless. For example, in 2005 when federal housing assistance for homeless families was cut, the number of families needing shelter went up.

Of the Schenectady County homeless population...
29% exited homeless to permanent destinations
67% exited to temporary destinations
The return rate to homelessness in Schenectady is less than **15%**

Myth 6: All people who experience homelessness are addicts

Most individuals experiencing homelessness do not experience substance abuse.

Only **17.9%** of homeless individuals in Schenectady County experience chronic substance abuse.

Myth 7: It's easy to access shelter

It's not that individuals don't want services, it's that services are often limited and/or not available for certain populations. There are limited shelters that allow children, many do not allow pets, some require sobriety, are unaccepting of LGBTQIA+ individuals or are only for those with the most severe service needs. Individuals may also choose not to accept services due to past trauma or fear of violence, etc.

1.6% of the homeless population in Schenectady is unsheltered
12.1% of households experiencing homelessness in Schenectady County include children

Myth 8: Homelessness will never happen to me

Persons living with homelessness have said they never expected to be homeless. There are many factors that can cause someone to go from being stably housed to homeless, such as loss of work, debt from an unexpected accident, or loss of social supports.

At Bethesda House, we always seek to humanize the populations we serve. They are as much a part of our community as anybody else and deserve to be seen with compassion and understanding. Dispelling misconceptions about them is a large part of this effort.

We hope you'll take these myth-busting facts and share them with your own community as part of your much-needed advocacy and deeply appreciated support of our mission.

Taking Service to the Streets

By Caroline Codd

Bethesda House of Schenectady has been a beacon of hope for the vulnerable in our community for over 32 years. With 57 permanent supportive housing units, year-round emergency shelter beds, transitional housing and a wide-range of in-house services, we offer a safe and secure space for those looking to get off the streets. But what of the vulnerable and economically disadvantaged people, who haven't made it through our doors yet?

The work we do within this "House of Mercy" is not only within its walls. Since 2018, we have offered a comprehensive street outreach program to engage with at-risk individuals in our community. When we think of "street homelessness" we may picture an individual with nothing but the clothes on their back. The reality is that many of these people have been living on the streets, in the elements for some time, believing their situation is impossible to change, that no one is coming to help them and they simply must deal with the disadvantages they face. They've acquired essential belongings and know where to find a meal, but aren't connected to long-term medical or mental health care.

The majority of this population has experienced severe trauma and suffers from chronic mental and physical disabilities that bar them from seeking the help they need. Even if they may know of services in their community, they may believe they will be turned away or treated poorly or that the

services won't be able to help. Trust takes time and perseverance to build with someone who's had the rest of the world turn away from them.

So we do what we've always done – *meet them where they're at*. Our dedicated, experienced case managers build relationships with those in encampments, abandoned buildings, or on the street with the goal of having them fully engage in a service plan and finding safe housing. Leading with compassion first, we assess their immediate safety and needs, providing hygiene and emergency kits, and continue to stay engaged until they are ready to come in for services. Some may never be ready, but we stay in touch anyway because we believe in the inherent dignity of every person regardless of their potential for clinical success.

This work takes an extraordinary amount of time and effort and as with anything, consistency is key. We are limited by the number of hours each week we can dedicate to street outreach. There is always more work to be done. But this October, Bethesda House was awarded funding through NYS OTDA Solutions to End Homelessness Program (STEHP) to expand our efforts. With this critical, competitive funding we are able to increase our weekly efforts, expanding hours to include late afternoon, early evening, and weekends. We have been working toward expanding our outreach services for some time now and are encouraged to know that this

service is recognized as a critical need in our community.

We know first-hand the transient nature of this population. Many do not stay in one place for long and have no means of maintaining contact outside of face-to-face interaction. The more consistently we are able to show up for them and keep in touch, the better we are able to help. Our goal is always to connect them to housing because we know without safe shelter, services can only go so far. But any long-term connection we can make is a success. The increase in available street outreach hours will allow us to more deeply foster these connections and more actively work toward bringing individuals to Bethesda House for services.

We must remember that individuals living on the street are human beings who believe their choices are looking out for their best interest. It can take time to shift this mindset, to get them to see the help that is available. Education is our best advocacy and an effective street outreach program is a large pillar in this effort. At Bethesda House, we will always meet them where they are at with compassion and patience, guiding them toward the lighthouse that will bring them to shore.

If you're looking to donate items to our street outreach program, we are always in need of hygiene materials such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo, and medical supplies such as bandages, band-aids, antibiotic cream, re-usable knee/ankle braces, pain relievers and more.

CALLING VOLUNTEERS

By Caroline Codd



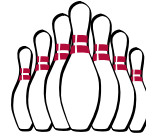
The holidays are fast approaching and what better way to spread joy than by doing something charitable in your community? We've always believed that sharing one's time to those in need is invaluable and we are so

deeply grateful to those who share

their time with us. Every holiday season, our head chef Al prepares three holiday feasts for Thanksgiving, the December Holidays Celebration, and New Year's. This is in addition to the regular daily meal we serve that is open to the public. This takes tremendous effort and we always rely on volunteers to make it a success. Come by yourself, with family, friends or co-workers! It's guaranteed to be a fulfilling experience. If you're interested in volunteering, e-mail adminast@bethesdahs.org or fill out a volunteer application on our website at bethesdahs.org. We can't wait to meet you.

Save the Dates!!!

Bethesda House's 2025 Fundraisers are scheduled!



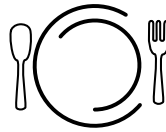
May 10, 2025

Bowl for Bethesda



August 2025 - stay tuned

Cheers! for Bethesda



October 16, 2025

Light Up Bethesda House
Max410 Water's Edge

Details for each event will be posted on our website:
www.bethesdahs.org

View our website for photos of the summer and fall fundraisers.

BETHESDA HOUSE WISH APPEAL

It's time for Bethesda House's Wish Appeal! Each year we compile a list of gifts for friends and supporters in the community who wish to donate. Bethesda House gratefully acknowledges the generous gifts we receive that help us support the needs of so many. The

items on our Wish List reflect our day-to-day needs. Donations are accepted Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:00 - 4:00 or by calling Bethesda House (518-374-7873) to make arrangements.

Day to Day

Food

- Non-perishable items

Kitchen

- Spices, coffee and tea
- Can openers
- Pots and pans
- Cooking utensils

Clothing

- Gently used items for men/women
- Men's sweatpants, sweatshirts, T-shirts in various sizes
- Practical shoes
- Winter clothing
- New underwear and socks

Hygiene Products

- Regular and hotel size shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste, soap, razors, toothbrushes and feminine hygiene products

Linens

- Sheets, towels, washcloths

- Blankets

Seasonal

- Home Depot/Lowes gift card

Our Veterans' Program needs the following:

- Twin sheets
- Twin comforters
- Pillows
- Bed bug covers (mattress, box spring and pillow covers)
- Blankets
- Hygiene kits
- Socks (varying in size)
- Underwear (varying in size)
- Undershirts (varying in size)
- Towels
- Wash cloths
- Hand towels
- Slippers (varying in size)

Adopt Our Food Pantry

A \$50 donation gives us \$200 in food products from the Regional Food Bank.
A \$100 donation gives us \$500 in food products from the Regional Food Bank.

Adopt An Apartment

Visit bethesdahs.org for details.

Gifts that Keep on Giving

Deferred gifts to Bethesda House can have a lasting effect on our future strength & sustainability. Please give serious consideration to:

- A bequest to Bethesda House
- A donation of a life insurance policy
- A gift of appreciated asset (stock, property)



Bethesda House of Schenectady, Inc.
Friends of Bethesda House/Profile Update/Gift

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

Daytime Phone _____

Fax _____

E-Mail _____

Enclosed is my contribution of \$ _____

(Please make checks payable to Bethesda House)

Credit Card: MC Visa AMEX Discover

No: _____

Exp. Date: _____ Sec. Code: _____

Signature: _____

Are you a GE Employee/Retiree? ___ Yes ___ No

(Bethesda House is a GE Match Recipient)

Would you like to learn more about volunteer opportunities at Bethesda House? ___ Yes ___ No

You can also make donations at www.bethesdahs.org

Bethesda House Donors: May 1, 2024 - October 31, 2024

Friends up to \$100

Almas, Bridget
Blaydes, Marc
Brown, Alvin
Callins, Toni
Clinton, Lisa
Corrado, Mary
Dale, Almonique
Daniels, Mae
Ferris, Grace Wilgefotis
Fessel, Linda
Fuller, Tracy
Gordon, Shelley & Darsinos, John
Guillermo, Silvanis
Hemmendinger, David & Kort, Gail
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Hobbs, Ray'chel
Hughes, Amanda
Hunt, Marsha
Jagdeo, Amit
Kazmierczak, Christine
Kelly, Kristine A.
LoCascio, Frances
Mann, Richard & Joanne
Mauro, Dean
Maynard, Skylar L
Miner, Melinda
O'Neil, Michael & Joan
Paine, Robbie
Shapiro, Ricki
Smith, Janice
The Blackbaud Giving Fund
Wexler, Margaret

Sponsor up to \$499

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Bair, Elaine
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Birbal, Annand
Bittner, Carolyn
Bouton, Susan
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Conroy, Timothy & Suzanne
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Dejager, Derek John
DeMeo, Megan
Downey, James
Eastern Parkway United
Methodist Church
Eslick, Jennifer
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The Good Shepherd
Frank and Sons Body Works, Inc
Giokas, George & Marie
Grant, James & Lynn
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Herman, Leonard
Hicks, Analine
Isabella, Mary F
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MacLaury, Kay
MacNeal, Ellen
Mausert, Richard & Kathleen
McGhee, Anne
Morrison, Patricia
Morrow, Brenda
Neville, Roy E. & Mary C.
O'Connor, Kevin J
Olmstead, Matt
Quick Response Restoration
Reilly, Kathleen
Roach, Karen
Rooney, Kalthleen
Sapone, John & Karen
Schultz, Ellen
Sheppard, Molly
Stageman, Delanne
Stroble, Terry & Anne Marie
Sullivan, Katelyn
Teresco, M J
Terwilliger, Linora
Thatcher, Crystal
Upadhyay, Roberta
Ward, Anthony
Waselauskas, Paula
Willis, Harry & Sally
Wolfram, Katherine
Woodzell, Ellen

Patron up to \$999

Denisoff, Gail
Duesterdick, Paul & Tracey
Emmanuel Friedens Church
Etienne, Mineke
Fox Pest Control
Frank, Paul
Fusco, Heather
Gerstler, William & Cheryl

Harrell, Eric & Michelle
ICCI
LeChase Construction
Mohawk Honda
Rivers Casino
Roeser, Randall & Patricia
Sheppard, Kimarie
Stone, Audrey
Williams, Susan M

Citizen up to \$3,999

Clark Financial Planning
Home Solutions Plus LLC
Lynwood Reformed Church
McCormick, Kevin
Porter, Don & Lois
Regeneron
Reschovsky, John & Sandra
Sheppard, John
SRG Architects
Stewarts Foundation
Sweeney, Jim
Terwilliger, Cathy
Unitarian Universalist Society
Of Schenectady
Werner, Richard & Eunice
Wood, Andy & Annie

Advocate up to \$5,000

Crossley Charitable Fund
Raushi, Sylvia

Benefactor Up to \$50,000

Neil & Jane Golub Foundation, Inc.
The COINS Foundation

Ambassador up to \$104,000

The Estate of Shelia A. Ryan

Bethesda House is grateful to the individuals, congregations, businesses, and private foundations who donated from \$1 to over \$104,000. Your generosity allows us to continue helping others by providing for basic needs in an environment that encourages and supports positive change.

We thank you and look forward to another successful year. Every donor is important to us. Our goal is to list each person or organization as the donor wishes. If your name does not appear as you would like it to, please contact the agency's Administration at either slotano@bethesda.org or (518) 374-7873, ext. 1220 so we may correct our records.

A very special Thank you to donors contributing through United Way, we are grateful that you chose to direct your donor dollars to Bethesda House of Schenectady, Inc. Thank you to donors who participate in the GE Match. Thank you to donors who participate in Amazon Smiles, Clynk and other Hannaford fundraising initiatives. Your gifts of spirit and generosity are deeply appreciated.

In-Kind Donors

AllTown Fresh
Burnt Hills United Methodist Church
Cathy Terwilliger
CDPHP
City Mission
Comfort Inn & Suites
Schenectady-Scotia
Congregation Gates of Heaven
Congregation of Agudat Achim
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First Reformed Church
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Friendship Baptist Church
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Holy Redeemer Church
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John Sheppard
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Lansing's Farm Market
and Greenhouses
Lynwood Reformed Church
Manhattan Bagel
Margaret Coker
Our Redeemer Lutheran
Panera
Price Chopper
Rivers Casino & Resort
Schenectady Ole Timers
Baseball Club

Schenectady Quilters
Sharran Coppola
Sisters & Brothers Church of the
Latter-day Saints
St. Gabriel's Church
St. George Episcopal Church
St. George's of Clifton Park
St. Joseph's Catholic Church
St. Kateri Tekakwitha
St. Luke's Parish
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
The Ladies Philotochos
Society of St. George
Greek Orthodox Church

Honorarium/Memorial Name

Anne Christman
Mary Christoffel
Robert Christoffel
Marianne Sheppard
June Schermerhorn
Clarie Racicot
Barbara Koster
George Moffett
Mark Bonitatibus
Linda Jateau
Elaine Ognibene
Michael & Beverly Roscoe
Richard Healy

Bethesda House

Is an interfaith ministry to the homeless, disabled and economically disadvantaged citizens of Schenectady County, building a just, hospitable and inclusive community one person at a time by affirming the dignity and addressing the needs of each guest entering this House of Mercy.

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Sharon Lotano
Finance Manager



Design and Printing by Lane Press of Albany

Photography by Jessica Gravelin

Fundraising – a Critical Element for Non-Profits

By Caroline Codd

“Fundraising is the gentle art of teaching the joy of giving.”

– Hank Rosso

Fundraising makes a difference! Bethesda House’s Development Committee has regular meetings to plan our annual events to ensure they are successful, meaningful, and fun. We have three large fundraising events a year and enjoy connecting with our supporters at each and every one. All proceeds go directly toward our mission of providing comprehensive, compassionate services to those who are vulnerable in our community.



Cheers! for Bethesda

On August 8th, 2024 we held our annual summer fundraiser at Centre Street Pub in Schenectady. So many of you came out to support us even in the rain, and it was a blast! Hilltop the Band played an incredible live set all night, getting event attendees and regular patrons dancing the night away. We raised over \$3,000 for our mission and had a great time doing it!

Thank you to Centre Street for being such incredible hosts that evening and for your support in our community.

Stay tuned for updates on next year’s event!



Light Up Bethesda House

On October 17th 2024, we had Bethesda House’s 14th Annual Fall Fundraiser at Max410 at Water’s Edge. We out-raised our last two fall fundraising events – realizing over \$18,000! The proceeds go directly toward our mission of providing comprehensive, compassionate services to those who are vulnerable in our community.

Matthew Olmstead of TFL Entertainment (tflentertainment.com), emceed the evening again this year. His contagious energy and dance challenges made the event a lively occasion. TRIVIA was a success again this year – covering topics from sports to 80’s billboard hits! There was dancing and team comradery, great food, and laughter. We love wrapping up the year with this event as a way for us to come together and celebrate our accomplishments over the year.

We received an extremely generous donation of \$50,000 from the COINS Foundation, who have been a long-time consistent supporter of Bethesda House’s mission. We are so grateful to them.

Thank you to our Sponsors: John & Sandra Reschovsky, SRG Architects, Stewart’s Shops, Jim Sweeney, TechSolutions, The Terwilliger Family, Richard & Eunice Werner, Annie & Andy Wood, The Christoffel Family, ICCI, Rivers Casino & Resort, Gary & Kathleen Dunkerley, Fox Pest Control, John Sheppard, LeChase Construction, Mohawk Honda, Nott Street Office FedEx & UPS, Quick Response Restoration, and Sunmark Federal Credit Union.

Thank you to our Honorary Committee members: Keith & Patricia Barney, Susan Bouton, Rachael Chabot, Andrew Clark, Margaret Coker, Sharran Coppola, Kim & David Cummins, Mineke Etienne, Bill & Cheryl Gerstler, Leonard Herman, Ellen Shultz, Delanne Stageman, Kimarie Sheppard, MJ Teresco, Richard & Eunice Werner, and Paula Waselauskas.

A Special Thank You to...

Max410 at Water’s Edge for your long-standing generosity to our mission, Friends and Supporters who donated raffle baskets and Times Union, who sent “Were You Seen” photographers to document the event!



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

OCTOBER 16, 2025 FOR OUR 15TH ANNUAL EVENT!