



ability to overcome multiple difficulties. With help, second chances are possible, and recovery is real.

Thanks to everyone who supported our mission this year of ending homelessness. With your help, we have delivered assistance to 3,800 men, women, and children through providing services with dignity, compassion, and respect. I am grateful to you and the second chances you help us provide to those we serve.

Kara A. Capone

Chief Executive Officer



"Nothing is impossible. The word itself says 'I'm Possible!'"

- Audrey Hepburn

Now is the time of year that signals the season of giving thanks and showing gratitude. Even though the days become shorter and the air crisper, I am always warmed by the thoughtfulness and generosity of our supporters!

The fall is also a time when I think of the quote from Albert Camus, "Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower." It is a reminder to me of those we serve and their resiliency. Those autumn leaves, although falling, are given a second chance to become something else. Something better. The people we serve may have less than us, but they are not less than us. They are strong and although may be at a low point in their lives, have demonstrated the



Below: Guests check in for the 3rd Annual Hope and Home Celebration at The Society Room of Hartford on October 21, 2021. This marked a return to an in-person format for the event.

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For more information about
Mercy Housing and Shelter, visit
www.mercyhousingct.org.

For more information about
My Sisters' Place, visit
www.sistersplacect.org.

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Mercy Housing and Shelter and My Sisters' Place always has, and always will, treat people with the compassion and dignity that they deserve no matter the color of their skin, heritage or sexual orientation. We are proud of our inclusiveness.

Rising to the Occasion



Volunteers from St. Catherine's visit St. Elizabeth House.



Brown bag meals ready for pickup in the Friendship Center.

For close to 20 years, members of the parish at St. Catherine of Siena in West Simsbury have been committed to supporting Mercy and My Sisters' Place. Groups from St. Catherine's come on Saturdays once a month and Sunday evenings to visit with our residents. Every year, the parish Youth Group holds a car wash to raise money that benefits our programs and services.

Amid the COVID-19 outbreak, many shelters and nonprofits lost the support of volunteers during the time

they were needed most. The parishioners of St. Catherine's never stopped their food distribution ministry; in fact, they increased their volunteer efforts during the worst of the pandemic. Whereas volunteers used to make only sandwiches, St. Catherine's added hot meals to the mix- even barbecuing when the weather permits. The parish makes 1,000 sandwiches every month for shelters throughout all of Hartford, and they strive to offer recipients a meal that is both balanced and nutritious.

Parishioner Rich Sickinger explained that it's the people- the clients- that bring him and his fellow volunteers back each month. While the circumstances of the pandemic presented unique challenges for St. Catherine's ministry, Rich acknowledged that the challenges of the pandemic have been even greater for those they aim to help. The work continued safely, through a time of uncertainty, because, as Rich explained, "Food insecurity doesn't take a day off." ■

Winter is Coming!

A Winter Services Report published by the National Coalition for the Homeless found that 700 people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness are killed from hypothermia annually in the United States. As winter weather quickly

approaches, Mercy and My Sisters' Place are actively collecting coats, hats, gloves, scarves, socks, and other clothing to protect individuals in cold temperatures. If you have any questions about the donation of specific items or would like to

coordinate a drive, please contact Deanna Doerr, Community Outreach Specialist, at 860-808-2036 or ddoerr@mercyhousingct.org. ■



Hope and Home 2021

We were thrilled to hold our 3rd Annual Hope & Home Celebration in-person on October 21st. Over 150 people came together at The Society Room in Hartford and supported the work of Mercy Housing and Shelter and My Sisters' Place through bids on auction items, donations to purchase "Food for a Day" for people at The Friendship

Center (our soup kitchen), and contributing to furnishing a Virtual House for those moving into a home for the first time. We surpassed our financial goal of \$125,000, which ensures The Friendship Center can continue to serve people in the community with meals, showers and connection to other resources. It also supports our Youth Program, which

will provide the educational and enriching afterschool and summer programming as well as highly individualized case management services that ensure our formerly homeless children receive the support they need to thrive.

We are especially grateful for our sponsors:

Silver Key

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Lena's Restaurant &
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The Mercy Community
Ryan Business Systems
Washington Trust



Check out photos from the event
at hopeandhomect.com!

Bequest is Best



Mr. and Mrs. Richard Whinnem, long time supporters of Mercy Housing & Shelter.

A bequest to a nonprofit organization is a donation of financial assets that is made as part of a will or trust. Bequests can be particularly tax advantageous for donors with large estates. But more importantly, bequests are important to nonprofits like Mercy Housing and My Sisters' Place because they are usually large gifts that are oftentimes not restricted and enable us to do our work and fulfill our mission.

Earlier this year, Mercy Housing and Shelter was the beneficiary of a bequest in the amount of \$108,000 from Mr. and Mrs. Richard Whinnem. Dick and Meg Whinnem supported Mercy for over 20

years in different capacities: through annual donations, attendance at fundraising events, and service on our Event Committee and Board of Directors. We plan to transfer this extremely generous gift to Mercy's Board Designated Endowment account, where it will honor the Whinnem's memory as a long-term legacy in support of Mercy's mission.

If you are considering a planned gift to Mercy Housing or My Sisters' Place, feel free to discuss your intent with us. You can reach our Director of Development, Christina Lessard, at 860-808-2044 or clessard@mercyhousingct.org. ■

A Life Well Lived

Mercy Housing and Shelter mourns the loss of a long-time employee, Lee McCoy. Lee, or "Pastor Lee" as he was called, worked for Mercy as a monitor for almost 32 years at St. Elizabeth House, and was extremely dedicated to the clients who resided there. Kathy Shaw, Chief Operating Officer, said at the time of his

passing "Pastor Lee leaves us with a legacy of caring, kindness, and compassion." Mercy is extremely grateful for Pastor Lee's dedication to our clients. ■



Pastor Lee McCoy.

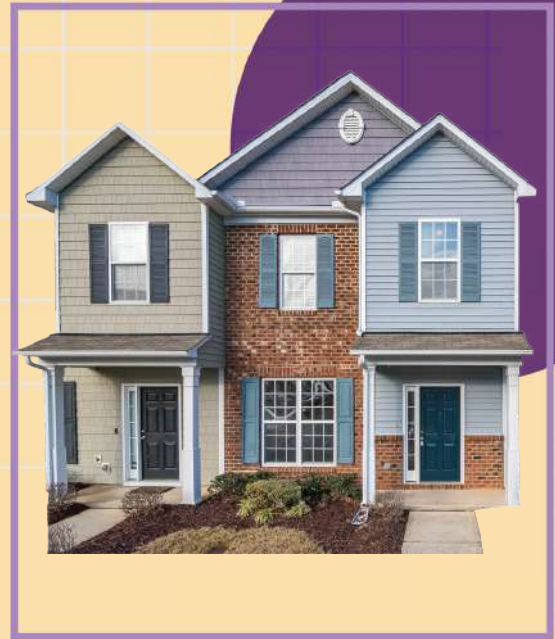
New Security Deposit Program

The ability to pay a security deposit is a common barrier in acquiring housing. My Sisters' Place runs several programs to help people pay their deposits as a way to prevent homelessness. The newest program is a collaboration with First Congregational Church of Vernon to assist low-income people with security deposits on apartments in Vernon, Tolland, Ellington, Manchester, and South Windsor. More information is available at sistersplacect.org. ■



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH OF VERNON

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



MAKING BRIGHTER FUTURES A REALITY

Holiday Wishes

The Holiday Season is here! We are looking for individuals and corporate donors to help us make the holidays brighter for those who receive services from Mercy Housing and Shelter and My Sisters' Place. We are also in need of non-perishable food items; new adult sweatpants and sweatshirts in all sizes; gift cards in \$25 denominations to Walmart, Amazon, Stop & Shop or Target; and new household items such as dish sets, silverware sets and small appliances.

If you are interested in making a contribution, please contact Deanna Doerr, Community Outreach Specialist, at 860-808-2036 or ddoerr@mercyhousingct.org. ■





Street Outreach in Hartford: An Essential, And Needed, Resource

Street outreach, as defined by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, is: "...reaching out to unsheltered homeless individuals and families, connecting them with emergency shelter, housing or critical services, and providing them with urgent non-facility-based care."

In layman's terms, it is engaging with an individual or family living outdoors (or somewhere not fit for human habitation), providing access to resources that can help them, and addressing their immediate needs. Engaging in street outreach is a coordinated, housing-focused and person-centered process; ensuring that an individual experiencing homelessness is safe and is included in making decisions about their care.

Street outreach is an important first step in helping an individual experiencing homelessness acquire a place to live. According to the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness, street outreach helps to bring unsheltered individuals into Connecticut's Coordinated Access Network which links to resources such as housing and healthcare. They are often the most challenging to engage in services due to behavioral health histories, lack of medical records, or language or cultural barriers.

While Connecticut's homeless population decreased by 11% over the last year, the number of unsheltered individuals statewide has increased; demonstrating the need for street outreach services. Mercy Housing and

Shelter Corporation is one of only a few organizations in Hartford to provide this essential service. Mercy has a designated Outreach Case Manager, Mary, whose main focus is connecting with those experiencing homelessness in Hartford and connecting them with whatever help that individual or family may need at that time. Mary comes to the role with lived expertise and has always told others that, "One day at a time, you can make it." She spends part of her time in Mercy's Friendship Center (soup kitchen) to learn who might be in need of services rather than just a hot meal. The rest of the time, Mary is out on the street, under bridges or in parks, developing trust with those who need a guiding hand off of the street and into a safe place. ■