



I am proud to lead an agency that provides the support necessary for people like Patty to overcome life's challenges and not only succeed personally, but be the role model of strength for her children.

I want to express my gratitude for your support that makes so much possible. I appreciate the incredible team of professionals at Unity House who work tirelessly every day to Make Life Better.

David L. Bach  
Chief Executive Officer

## The lives of Patty and her children are changed for good, thanks to you.

Facing homelessness, "Patty" came to Unity House for help. She had a history of struggle, notably around housing stability. She and her children faced relocation multiple times, disrupting the children's education each time. Patty was easily overwhelmed by maintenance issues and did not always communicate with her landlord, which created a cascade of consequences. Some maintenance issues, despite her best efforts, remained unresolved. Post-pandemic housing shortages and rising rents only added to Patty's challenges. Patty and her family were stuck in a bad cycle.

Unity House's Community Housing Assistance Program, or CHAP for short, was able to help Patty. Working with a dedicated case manager and a HUD Housing Specialist, Patty was able to find a new apartment that felt safe and secure for her and the children. They moved in, and Patty started in our PROS Program.

PROS stands for Personalized Recovery Oriented Services. It's a mental health program based out of Unity House's Menands location. For Patty, the classes, the structure, and the self-direction of the program, were each empowering in their own way.

Patty has demonstrated unwavering dedication and great progress. For apartment-related issues, she can communicate effectively with her landlord. Using email allows her to include her case manager and housing program director, to keep everyone in the loop. For Patty, it helps to know she has a team rooting for her. There are people available if she needs support on follow through, whether it's over a leaky faucet or getting herself to her program. Patty's successes built up her confidence. The mix of stable housing, mental health services, and practical supports has been the recipe for success for Patty. Her children have greater stability and Patty is better able to manage her day-to-day responsibilities.

Patty's resilience and commitment are to be commended and her successes celebrated. Her journey has been amazing to witness. To some, Patty's goals may seem simple. She wants to continue to improve her mental stability and maintain safe housing for herself and her children. It's what we all want to see.

Please consider a gift to help more parents like Patty. Your support strengthens families and helps moms like Patty find their footing.

# Making Holiday Magic

**Last December, the request came in late: Can we help a displaced family with holiday gifts?** Moira Geracitano, coordinator for the Children’s Holiday Program, sprang into action. She got a list of the children’s ages, genders, and sizes for clothing and shoes.

Thanks to supporters of the Children’s Holiday Program, Moira was able to put together boxes filled with new, age-appropriate toys as well as a variety of necessities such as pajamas, underwear, and winter coats. There was even a bag of personal care products for Mom, a woman seeking refuge at Unity House’s residence for victims of domestic violence.

Unity House often responds to crisis, addressing an emergency and then charting a path to sustained stability. The work is demanding and offers little time to consider luxuries, such as gifts at holiday time.

“For parents, the stress of trying to meet your child’s needs, much less wants, is incredible,” says Moira. As coordinator, “I’m grateful that I can play a part in helping families in this way. It’s a tremendous undertaking made possible only with lots of help.”

*I have a ‘tween daughter and I had nothing to give her, even though I was working two jobs. After coming to the food pantry, I signed up for the Children’s Holiday Program. I picked out snow boots, a hairdryer, new books, and a nice art set. It totally made me cry. When my daughter asked why I was crying, I told her I was just so happy, and she said, ‘Me too, Mom.’ This was the best Christmas ever.*

*-K.L., a single mom to her 12 year old daughter*

**Thank you for your generous support which helps over 1,200 children each holiday season. You’re helping to put the sparkle in the holiday season, meeting needs, and relieving the stress of parents and staff who work with them. You help make life better on so many levels.**

## Monthly Giving

Your monthly donation helps children in many ways, across Unity House programs and services.



A Child’s Place



Domestic Violence Services



The Unity House Law Project



Clinical Services



Community Resources



Northeast Career Planning



Housing Support Services and Case Management

# Making Life Better, now and in the future

**It was her friend Mary Jane Smith who urged Susan Shipherd to volunteer at Unity House.** Susan has become even more involved now that she has retired from full-time work and joined the Unity House Board of Directors.

In addition to sharing her time, Susan has given her financial support to various programs at Unity House. Among her favorites are the Fall Festival at A Child's Place and the Deuteronomy Fund, which helps fill needs that other sources of funding cannot cover.

The Deuteronomy Fund was founded by Mary Jane and her husband John Lyons, also an advocate for people in need. To Susan, the Fund is a flexible way for Unity House to fill immediate needs. And it's a testament to Mary Jane and John's spirit of giving.

Susan also plans to leave a legacy gift. "I learned how easy it was to include a gift to Unity House in my estate plan," she says. "I still support Unity House with regular donations, and I see this as a way my support can carry on." Making plans gives peace of mind. Including a legacy gift to charities she values gives satisfaction to Susan, "I feel fortunate that I'm able to contribute to the work Unity House does. I learned a lot from Mary Jane and John, mostly that there is always a way to help each other."

It's thanks to the tremendous ongoing support of donors like Susan that helps make life better for the people who come to Unity House.

**To learn more about leaving a legacy, contact Stefanie Bastien at [Sbastien@unityhouseny.org](mailto:Sbastien@unityhouseny.org) or call (518) 274-2607 x4133.**



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# A Life Changed for the Better

**“Maria,” like many guests, first came to Unity House because she was facing food insecurity.**

A conversation with our food pantry intake staff revealed Maria needed more than just food. A young mom to twins, she needed housing and a job. Maria found both through Unity House, eventually landing a job working in the very pantry from which she first sought help.

## Self-Empowerment

Maria utilized services she was eligible for while working full time and being a single parent. Maria went back to finish school. When her children’s school let out for the summer, she signed them up for Unity House’s Travelling Summer Camp. The kids loved it and Maria loved having a safe space for her kids.

Maria was steadfast in the pursuit of her goals, which included a move closer to family and a higher-paying job. Just like a single instance can lead to a series of downturns, so too can a small success become a building block for the next step to greater self-sufficiency.

For Maria, the foundation was a welcoming intake worker who helped Maria identify her strengths and needs, draw upon her abilities, and see her potential, starting as a Unity House staffer.

Maria’s last day at Unity House was bittersweet, but her parting words summed up the goal: making life better.

“Bye guys and thank you. Unity House changed my life.” Not what you expect to hear on your colleague’s last day of work.



## An Evening of Unity: A Cocktail Party with Purpose

**Thursday  
October 24, 2024**

Loft 433, River Street Troy  
6-9 pm

Honoring **John Baackes** with our Founders Award and **Water Thorne** with our Community Hero Award

Visit our website for tickets or call (518) 274-2607 x4135



Special thanks to the **Robison Family Foundation** for their generous support of our Traveling Summer Camp. School-age children enrolled in our camp, at no cost to eligible parents, had a great summer of fun and enrichment!



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## Core Values

With passion and integrity, Unity House embraces the view that everyone deserves equal economic, political, and social rights. We work together to open doors of access and opportunity for everyone, particularly those in greatest need.