

Homelessness in America is a Revolving-Door Crisis

Generational poverty

Livable income

New housing resources are needed for low income people



Address systemic problems as well as provide emergency relief

Communities building strategies that address factors contributing to homelessness

Access to mental health providers

Access to healthcare

Core educational deficits: preschool and grade school - strengthen building blocks

Welcome to the 2016 Spring/ Summer edition of the Beacon!

Each Bethesda House staff member has a personal mission to serve the poor, make positive changes in people's lives, and commit to being a voice in the community that supports systemic and structural change to end homelessness in our community. In our newsletter, you will read about the many exciting initiatives of Bethesda House, as we work on our daily goals to help people reach their fullest potential while addressing their disabilities.

One such initiative is an intensive case management program begun in 2015 and continued in 2016 that assists individuals in emergency shelters who are in need of permanent housing. This program is a testament to the concept of providing outreach services and securing affordable housing for our homeless population. Our contract with Schenectady County has already proven to be successful.

As we end our current fiscal year and plan for our next, we are strengthening our community supports and increasing our efforts to end homelessness.

I am deeply grateful for your continued support and partnership in addressing poverty.

Thank you!

Kimarie A. Sheppard



Richard, Resident



Dave, Resident



Wendy, Melissa (Pray Program Supervisor), Pam

WE HAVE BEEN BUSY!

**We are blessed with wonderful community partnerships ~
Take a Look!**

WHAT'S NEW IN OUR EDUCATION PROGRAMS?

Thank you, to Ricky Cruz, SUNYA SW Intern, GE Global Research, and the Elfun Computer Rehabilitation Center. We are fortunate to be the recipient of computer lap tops, printers, and a projector all of which will enhance our education and literacy programs. We have identified educational software, which will aid in the success of our literacy students. Gil Strizich, is teaching English to our Spanish speaking attendees as well as creating our educational curriculum. We are very excited about our partners who have been so generous helping to bring our vision to fruition.

SCHENECTADY COUNTY DRUG COURT PARTNERSHIP:

Bethesda House is partnering with Schenectady Drug Court. We will be receiving referrals for drug court participants that are required to complete 50 hours of service in order to graduate from the program. In addition, we will work with individuals who have been sanctioned for not meeting other program requirements. This initiative provides additional points of contact that will aid in our efforts to have conversations regarding drugs, violence, housing, and income stabilization.



Ronya, Assistant Director –
Case Management

CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION NUTRITION CLASSES:

We have enhanced our nutrition classes by including nutrition coordinators from area grocery stores. Class participants put their learned skills to practice; together participants and nutrition coordinators ensure healthy grocery shopping. We are in our fourth year of our healthy eating initiative and we have seen amazing results from reducing weight, controlling diabetes, and for some, reducing emergency room visits.

ALLIANCE FOR POSITIVE HEALTH:

Our long-term partnership with Alliance for Positive Health has benefited hundreds in our community. The first Monday of every month, a representative from this agency, administers HIV/STD tests and connects members of our community to appropriate resources.

CASE MANAGEMENT~ HOME CONNECTIONS:

Bethesda House's new program is designed to engage with individuals in emergency shelters, to ensure that they are adhering to their Department of Social Services *Individual Living Plan*, and to provide permanent housing as quickly as possible. Bethesda House's Intensive Case Manager, Csiko Sawyer, has been very busy meeting the many demands and working with our Case Management/Social Work/Program Team to streamline this new initiative. This program, while still in its infant stage, has brought into focus the harsh reality of the challenges people who are homeless with moderate to severe disabilities face. Bethesda House has been providing services for over twenty-four (24) years; seasoned staff have commented that what this program has revealed is a glaring reminder of the breakdown in systems that result in people cycling back into homelessness.



Chef Jake preparing for nutrition class

Working with area providers to resolve these concerns has created a dialog that shines light on forward movement to end systemic deficits in our community services.

NO ONE IS BORN WITH THE INTENT OF BEING HOMELESS OR POOR; CIRCUMSTANCES AND CHOICE LEAD MANY TO DESPAIR. CHANGE IN PERCEPTION AND METHODS ~ IS HOW WE PROCEED TO ADDRESS SOCIETAL DEFICITS AND SOCIAL INJUSTICE. POSITIVE CHANGES IN HOW WE ARE ADDRESSING ISSUES NOW WILL RESULT IN A HEALTHY COMMUNITY THAT FOSTERS GROWTH.

My Father's Work

Lance Armour

My father's workshop
a triple beam scale
on my kitchen table.
I'll never know why

I never knew why
men would be knocking
and knocking
until three in the morning.
Fidgety, consumed.
I never knew why.

I never knew why
house engulfed
stenches of skunk
I just wondered what the green stuff was
my father was rolling up.
Now,

Now I know why.
I know why people work.
I know why people buy.
Later on
I had a friend
He was only 25

I'll never know why.
He worked in the same shop
I'll never know why

His work was cut short
By one gun.
And two shots.

Bethesda House is located in a neighborhood that is witness to a high volume of crime, drug use, and poverty. We are the safe haven for people who seek refuge from despair, violence, abuse, and a world that closes in creating inescapable darkness.

Our Case Managers and Social Work staff offer guidance and solace to calm the raging inner voices and provide a path for those individuals who are seeking a way out, comfort, housing, or security.

Our Program staff open doors to basic living needs such as food, clothing, hygiene, lockers, mailboxes, education, health needs, and peace.



DRUG ADDICTION, MENTAL ILLNESS, & HOMELESSNESS

by Caroline Codd

To those who have suffered or have seen a loved one suffer from drug addiction, we know all too well that these horrific afflictions do not discriminate. Race, class, and gender mean nothing to a mind that is controlled by doubt and led to self-medicate. Studies have shown that loneliness and isolation can lead one time users into the depths of addiction; escaping from this darkness is difficult and often times fatal.

A beautiful person is overcome by something dark and ugly and we are compromised with feelings of helplessness and an overwhelming urge to lend support to the person before us, who suffers with turmoil and pain. But eventually our hearts and minds go numb after repeated lies and deceit; hopeless feelings of exhaustion force a decision to no longer extend a hand.

The relationship between addiction and homelessness is complex and controversial. Many who suffer from addiction



to alcohol and drugs never become homeless, yet those who are poor and addicted clearly are at greater risk of homelessness. Substance abuse is both a cause and a result of homelessness. Those who are homeless may turn to drugs and alcohol to cope with their situation.

Substances are used to attain temporary relief from their problems, but in reality, situations become exacerbated and any capacity to regain stability is greatly diminished. Many homeless people have co-occurring disabilities



of substance abuse and mental illness. Often those with untreated mental illness use street drugs to self-medicate. Homeless people with both substance disorders and mental illness experience additional

obstacles to recovery, such as increased risk for violence and victimization and frequent cycling between the streets, jails, and emergency rooms (Fisher and Roget, 2009). Sadly, there are few treatment options available to those who suffer from these co-occurring disabilities. Many programs for the homeless with mental illness do not accept those with substance abuse disorders, and many programs for homeless substance abusers do not treat those with mental illness (National Coalition for the Homeless).

On a local and national level, there is a critical need for services to address substance abuse and mental illness concurrently and it is in the forefront of service providers, researchers, and government's collective mind.

Outreach workers offer solutions to problems that have gone unattended for far too long in our society - the need for client centered treatment, affordable housing, peer support, and education. Funding is being poured into research and societal studies that have proven the negative power of isolation versus the positive power of interactivity in an addict's road to recovery. That treatment and prevention are more effective than punitive approaches to substance abuse and that engagement in mental health services that offer outreach and regular connections provide the path to stabilization.

Changing the mindset of treating these illnesses separately may be the first step in keeping those who abuse substances and who suffer from mental illness on the road to healing and free to participate in a world that offers all who are suffering a fighting chance.

Repeated Acts of *Kindness* by Caroline Codd

One of the warmest winters on record just ended and a cool spring began. But no matter the temperature, a chill in the air or a balmy night, the nightmarish darkness still haunts those who are without a cushion of comfort.

The plight of the homeless and impoverished may get pushed to the back of our minds this year simply because we can't imagine anyone enduring hardships of inclement weather. At Bethesda House, we know that the poor and homelessness are so much more than images seen in the media. It's the father working odd jobs to put food on the table. It's the elderly women studying for her GED in the hopes to get a higher paying job. It's the children who pour in for our daily meal and the veterans who have been

unable to find their footing upon their return home. It's the community we embrace with loving arms each time they enter our *House of Mercy*. The weather may be calm, but those we serve are still in need of the cushion of comfort and love that comes with each waking day. Bethesda House not only serves as a shelter from the outside but also for the inside, we offer counseling in money management and nutrition, access to clean clothes and warm meals; we offer opportunities for growth and healing. These are the gifts that truly make all the difference. From our home to yours, we extend endless gratitude for your repeated acts of kindness and selflessness that make these gifts available – this year and every year.

BETHESDA HOUSE SPRING APPEAL

It's time for Bethesda House's Spring 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 Monday - Friday, between 9:30am - 4:00pm. *Please call 518-374-7873 for details.

Day to Day

Food

- Non-perishable items

Kitchen

- Spices, Coffee, Iced/Hot Tea, Lemonade

Clothing

- Gently used items for men/women

Practical Shoes

Summer Clothing/Dresses

New Underwear and Socks

Hygiene Products

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

Linens

- Sheets, towels, wash cloths

Seasonal

- Home Depot/Lowes Gift Card

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 www.bethesdahouseschenectady.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 using PayPal
at www.bethesdahouseschenectady.org**

Bethesda House Donors: November 2015 - April 2016

Friend Up to \$100

Ambrosino, David
Amell, Joan
Benoit, Thomas
Berk, Stephen
Bloodgood & Joanne Herrick, Sheila
Boyd Sr, Ralph & Catherine
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Tobiessen, Jon & Nancy
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Tupper, Leland
Valachovic, Dorothy
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Wilson, William & Lois
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Sponsor Up to \$499

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First Reformed Church Of Scotia
First United Methodist Church
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Foye-Petrillo, Melissa
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Fraternal Order Of Eagles Bel Jar
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Kathleen Nataro

Kautz, Edward J.
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Koester, Jeffery & Michele
Kreifels, Deborah
Little, Meredith
Long, Robert
Marty's True Value Hardware
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Mausert, Richard & Kathleen
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McGhee, David & Alice
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Neville, Roy E. & Mary C.
Niskayuna Senior High School
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Roman Catholic Diocese Of Albany
Royston
Sankar, Richard
Schenectady Firemen's Association, Inc.
Schenectady Ole Timers Baseball Club
Schenectady PBA
Sciocchetti, Michael & Linda
Seigel, Martin
Shank, Thomas & Anna
Shuff, William & Pat
Sisters Of St. Joseph
Stachnick, Kathleen
Stanford United Methodist Church
Stecher, Christian & Ruth
Steers, Ray
StorFlex Holdings, Inc.
Styles, Constance
The Evangelical Lutheran Church
Of The Messiah
The Troy Savings Bank
Charitable Foundation Inc
Thompson, Dorothy
Tobiessen, Joanne
Tolge, Bruno P. & Ruth A.
Vullo, William
Walbridge Construction
Walther, Anita
Wegener, Eve & Thomas
Weiss, Thomas
Wetteland, Lindsey
Wilkinson, Charles
Williams, Susan M.
Wingle, Ray
Wood, Andrew & Anne
Zampino, Richard & Melissa
Zimmerman, Ronald F.

Patron Up to \$999

AMF Refrigerated Products Company
Armstrong, Rosemarie
CARES, Inc. Homeless
Awareness Benefit Concert
Christman, Anne
Coppola, Sharran A.
Diamantis, Joanne
Functional Communications Corporation
General Electric Woman's Club
Gibelius, Nancy
Golub, Neil & Jane
Jones, Christopher & Pat
Lahon, Darryl
McCormick, Kevin
Roecker, David & Lauren
Roeser, Randall W. & Patricia
Sheppard, Kimarie
The Community Foundation
Vassolas, Gloria & George
Werner, Richard & Eunice

Citizen Up to \$3,999

Christ Community Reformed Church
Christoffel, Robert
COINS Foundation
Depierre, Michael
Eastern Parkway United
Methodist Church
Fidelis Care New York
First Reformed Church of Schenectady

Hebert, Clifford & Janet
MacNeal, Ellen
Ladies Of Charity Schenectady Vicariate
Lisha's Kill Reformed Church
Porter, Don & Lois
Ramsey, Jeanne
Reschovsky, John & Sandra
Stewart's Foundation

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Crossley, Margaret
Frueh, Rev. Robert
Khan, Genghis & Nahla
Little, Mark & Terri
SEFCU Foundation
Sweeney, James
William Gundry Broughton Foundation

Business In-Kind

BJ's
Congregation of Agudat Achim
Eastern Parkway Methodist Church
Friendship Baptist Church
Grace Lutheran
Immanuel Lutheran
Ladies of Charity Schenectady Vicariate
Lane Press of Albany
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Starbucks
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St. George Episcopal Church
St. George/St. Stephen of Schenectady
St. Kateri Tekakwitha
St. Joseph's of Scotia
St. Mary's of Galway
St. Joseph's of Glenville
Subway
Temple Gates of Heaven
The Ladies Philotochos Society of
St. George Greek Orthodox Church
Union College
Unitarian Universalist Society

Bethesda House is grateful to these individuals and organizations who donated from \$1 to \$20,000. Your generosity allows us to continue our mission this spring and summer with helping others by providing for basic needs in an environment that encourages and supports positive life changes.

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.

A 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 participated to donors who participate in the GE Match.

If your name does not appear as you would like it to, please call Bethesda House at 518-374-7873, ext. 116 so we may correct our records.

Thank you for your continued support.

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.

BETHESDA HOUSE

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Designed by: Molly Sheppard Graphic
Design & Photography
Photography: Jessica Gravelin



FUNDRAISING

“Every man must decide whether he will walk in the light of creative altruism or in the darkness of destructive selfishness.”

— Martin Luther King Jr.

Bethesda House actively fundraises in order to fully support the services that we provide. Without this commitment from Administration and our Board of Directors, we would not be able to have the wide variety of services that we offer or have the ability to serve the number of people that we do each day.



Catherine Casolo

Bethesda House's 4th Annual Bowl for Bethesda was held, May 6, 2016. We had a great turnout with sixteen (16) lane sponsors and team fundraising. Thank you to event coordinator, Rick Mausert, who challenges everyone to do their personal best to fundraise for Bethesda House. A special *Thank You to our Lane Sponsors*: Coldwell Banker Prime Properties, Stewart's Shops, Genghis and Nahla Khan, Rick and Kathy Mausert, Sharran Coppola, Tom Weiss, Schenectady PBA, COINS, Schenectady Fire Association, Walbridge Construction, Frank & Sons Body Works, AMF Refrigerated Products, Greenbush Tape & Label, Inc., Armer Funeral Home, BL's Tavern & Grill, and Bennett Contracting.

Thank you to Boulevard Bowl, who has hosted our event each year. The Ally's team is very professional and accommodating; they help us each year make this night a great time for everyone.

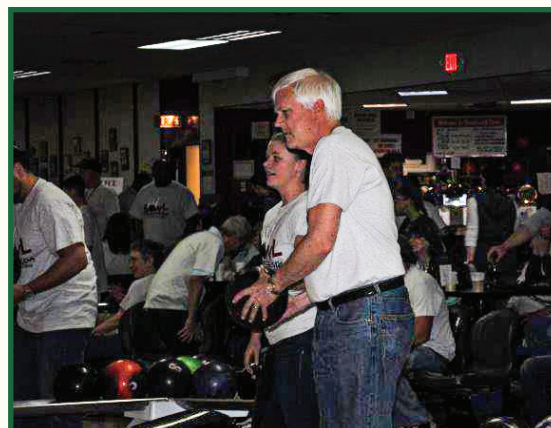
SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!



Sue Williams and her team from Eastern Parkway
United Methodist Church



Team COINS with Steve DiBiase



Rick Mausert and Lauren Mausert



(L-R) Carole Merrill-Mazurek, Karen Sapone,
John Sapone